UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

DATE: 6/26/02

I, Ebru Dirsel-Duffield, hereby submit this as part of the requirements for the degree of:

Doctor of Education

in:

Teacher Education, Literacy/TESL

It is entitled:

Influence of Context in Nonnative-Speaking Teacher’s Identity Transformation

Approved by:

Dr. Mary S. Benedetti
Dr. Ruth Benander
Dr. Chester H. Laine
Dr. Eric Paulson
INFLUENCE OF CONTEXT IN NONNATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING TEACHER’S
IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Division of Research and Advanced Studies
of the University of Cincinnati

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (Ed. D.)

in the Division of Teacher Education, Literacy/TESL Program
of the College of Education

June, 2002

By

Ebru Dirsel-Duffield

B.A., Istanbul University, 1992
M.A., Bilkent University, 1996

Committee Chair: Dr. Mary S. Benedetti
Abstract

The present case study investigated the process of transformation in 5 nonnative English-speaking teachers’ (NNETs’) perceptions regarding their identity and self. The purpose of the study was to better understand and describe NNETs’ perceptions of who they were and who they became as a result of their sojourn and/or pursuing further education in a L2 educational and cultural setting (i.e., the U.S.). The results indicated that: 1) There was a multiple array of perceptions regarding self in NNETs’ identity (re)construction; 2) NNETs’ perceptions regarding self and value orientations changed over time; 3) NNETs discovered the “hidden” culture (Hall, 1976) in themselves while exploring L2 culture; 4) NNETs underwent adaptation difficulties; and, 5) NNETs developed survival strategies to cope with these difficulties.
Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge the contributions of the nonnative English-speaking teachers, my colleagues and fellow graduate students, who took part in this study. By sharing their voices, experiences, and their feelings, they mirrored their world as well as mine.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my dissertation advisor, Dr. Mary S. Benedetti, for her contributions, helpful criticism, invaluable guidance, moral and professional support throughout the preparation of this dissertation.

I wish also to thank my family in Turkey for their support and belief in me. Thank you Mom and Dad for your inspirations and love that you send me from 6,000 miles away.

My dear husband Chriscim, I am not only indebted to you for the technical support you provided throughout the graduate school, but I would like to also express my appreciation to you for being such a patient and understanding spouse and a friend in the course of this intensive and challenging period in our lives. Your presence meant a lot to me during the hard times and the good.

Finally, very special thanks to my baby in my tummy. Dear Baby, thanks for being such a good boy/girl, especially during your first (and last) months. More importantly, thanks for making your mommy smarter, happier, and more motivated during the last seven months of this dissertation process.
# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

- Overview of the Study ................................................................. 4
- Brief Overview of the Literature .................................................. 6
- Purpose of the Study ................................................................ 8
- Research Questions .................................................................... 9
- Definition of Terms ....................................................................... 10

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature and Theoretical Framework

- Literature Review ........................................................................ 11
  - Nonnative English-speaking Teachers in TESOL .......................... 12
  - Social Identification in the Formation of Identity ......................... 17
  - Cross-cultural Adaptation .......................................................... 24
- Theoretical Framework ................................................................. 32

Chapter 3: Methodology and Procedures

- The Overview of the Study .......................................................... 37
- Research Design ............................................................................. 37
- Research Site .................................................................................. 40
- Sampling and Participants .............................................................. 41
  - Background of the participants .................................................. 45
- Role of the Researcher ................................................................. 47
- Instrumentation and Data Collection ........................................... 48
  - Instruments ................................................................................ 48
  - 1. Qualitative interviews ............................................................. 48
II. Other sources of qualitative data.................................................................52

Data Collection ...............................................................................................55

I. Interview data collection..............................................................................55

II. Documentary data collection....................................................................58

Data Analysis ..................................................................................................60

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion.................................................................66

Theme 1: NNET’s Identity and Self....................................................................68

a) NNETs as International Graduate Students ..............................................68

b) NNETs as Nonnative-speaking English teachers.........................................72

c) Perceptions of NNETs Regarding Their Native Culture and Co-nationals.....78

d) Perceptions of NNET Sojourners Regarding the Host Culture and Host Nationals
............................................................................................................................82

e) Perceptions of NNETs Regarding Other Inter-nationals.............................88

Theme 2: NNET’s Cultural Adjustment.............................................................91

a) Factors in Cultural Adjustment.................................................................92

   i) Personality factor in NNET’s cultural adjustment.....................................92

   ii) Time factor in NNET’s cultural adjustment..........................................95

b) Outcomes of Cultural Adjustment ............................................................98

   i) Change and transformation in NNETs’ self.........................................98

   ii) Cognitive dissonance..........................................................................106

   iii) Coping strategies used during cultural adjustment............................110

Discussion .......................................................................................................124

Multidimensional Presentation of Self in Identity Formation..........................125
Time: A Friend or Foe? ................................................................................................. 130

In-betweenness: A Positive Marginality ........................................................................ 132

Understanding and Coping with Cross-cultural Difficulties ........................................ 134

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations ........................................ 140

Summary ....................................................................................................................... 140

Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 142

Limitations ................................................................................................................... 148

Recommendations ....................................................................................................... 149

References .................................................................................................................... 153

Appendices..................................................................................................................... 160

Appendix A: Interview Questions .................................................................................. 161

Appendix B: Demographic Data Sheet ......................................................................... 163

Appendix C: Data Codes ............................................................................................... 164

Appendix D: Informed Consent ..................................................................................... 165
Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview of the Study

Although the practice of students traveling from one country to another has been established for centuries, particularly in Europe, it is not until recently that the students’ cross-cultural experiences have become the focus of study. One of the destinations that foreign students choose to further their education is the United States. Their growing number, which started soon after World War II, reflects the high value placed on a U.S. education.

The number of international students attending colleges and universities in the United States increased by 6.4% in the 2000/2001 academic year to a total of 547,867 according to Open Doors 2001, the annual report on international education published by the Institute of International Education (IIE) with support from the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Almost half of the total number of students (44.6%, or 244,398) came to the U.S. to pursue a graduate degree. The other 260,848 students studied in undergraduate programs, and the remaining 42,621 were in the U.S. for other educational purposes (e.g., certificates, licensure, etc.). Based on the annual IIE data release, China leads the growth of international student enrollment as the top sending country (59,939); India is (54,664) the second-leading sender of foreign students; and finally Japan (46,497) remains as the third-largest sender. The IIE report also shows that business and management (19.4%, or 106,043), engineering (15.2%, or 83,186), and mathematics and computer sciences (12.4%, or 67,825) were the top leading disciplines in which international students majored.
Education is one of the fields international students choose to study in the U.S. According to the IIE report, the number of graduate foreign students in education-related areas is 14,053, which is 2.6% of the total. Further, there was a 9.1% increase in the total number of the students who enrolled in the education programs, compared to the figures in the 1996-97 academic year.

IIE also collected individual student data in the academic year of 1997-98 and published the data in a separate report called Profiles. According to the Profiles report, the majority of international students who enrolled in graduate education programs came to the U.S. from native English-speaking countries (countries in North America (e.g., Canada), Oceania (e.g., Australia, New Zealand), and Western Europe (e.g., the United Kingdom). The remaining students, however, were nonnative-speakers of English mostly from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

Among the education-related areas, Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), also known as English Language Teaching (ELT), has been one of the fields both native and nonnative-speakers of English teachers are interested in pursuing further training. Without a doubt, one of the reasons for the increased interest in TESOL is the fact that English has shifted from being a foreign language to having global language status. In parallel to this, as more people want to learn English and the demand for educating more English teachers in the profession has increased, the number of native English-speaking teachers has become inadequate to meet worldwide demands. As a result, many nonnative English teachers have started to come to North America (e.g., the United States and Canada) for TESOL training.

However, when these nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNETs) from
different language and ethnic backgrounds come to the United States, they raise many questions about what it really means to function effectively in another culture. Some tend to reflect consciously and some others critically on their own culture. Others, on the other hand, might not routinely test their assumptions about the personal qualities they possess. The moment they begin making comparisons and contrasts between the two cultures, and questioning personal and cultural view and so forth, they unconsciously (or perhaps consciously) go through a new phase and process in their lives: transformation and change.

The concept of transformation, as it is used in this study, is the continuous change of one’s own understanding and perspectives in order to think critically and challenge ideas of how cultural beliefs and perceptions regarding one’s identity are constructed in the world and mapped onto oneself. Thus, NNETs’ identity transformation in the study is examined as a continuous process, not an end. In the process of identity development, one does not achieve a level of mastery and then cease to grow. In NNETs’ case, during their adaptation to a culturally different context, they see their selves existing within a collection of various cultural and personal frames. In other words, they feel they are never detached from their past experiences and they continue to carry the perspectives gained through other cultural experiences during this “life transition” period, as Bennett (1993) calls it.

Brief Overview of the Literature

Earlier studies on identity focused on the social and cultural adaptation, and identity of international students as sojourners (a person who stays at a new place
temporarily), or language teachers teaching in English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as second language (ESL) contexts at large. However, little research has concentrated on the formation of English teachers’ (both native and nonnative-speakers of English) professional, linguistic, and cultural identities in the TESOL profession. Much of the research ignores the influence of context in the identity transformation of nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNETs) during their sojourn in the U.S. In addition, no previous study has examined the adaptation process that NNETs go through in an altered social context. This is problematic because changing a social context and the influence of the altered context over the identity and self might cause a change (positive or negative) on NNETs’ perceptions regarding who they are as language teachers and individuals. NNETs might develop new and different understanding towards issues like socio-cultural identity, self-image, interpersonal relations, intercultural communication, cultural diversity, and so forth; and as a result they might achieve a personal growth both in their professional and personal lives. Thus, there is a need to learn about the influence of context in the (re)construction of language teachers’ identities both at personal and professional levels in order to better understand the conceptualization of NNETs’ identities as teachers, students, and sojourners and to explore the causes (and the outcomes) of change and transformation they go through in their identities. It is also important for teacher trainers and mentors in teacher education programs to realize and empathize the experiences and perceptions of NNETs adapting to a second language (L2) context. Being aware of their students’ feelings and cross-cultural experiences might help teacher trainers and mentors, as role models, to find more effective ways to address the
educational needs of their students. In being cognizant of these needs, the researcher reviewed the literature with three strands of concentration:

1. The dichotomy between native-speaking English teachers (NETs) and nonnative-speaking English teachers (NNETs) which has led to the assumption that good teaching is determined by nativeness;

2. Self-identification and social identification of NNETs that helps them establish the formation of their personal and professional identities; and,

3. The cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions that are integrated in the process of NNETs’ cultural adaptation to a L2 context.

The first area presents discussions centering around the perceived dichotomies between NETs and NNETs. This strand provides insight into problems such as the ownership of English and the power struggle among the TESOL professionals. The second strand of research is on the significance of social identification in the formation of a professional identity. This research emphasizes group membership in the process of establishing self-identification of individuals (as teachers, students, or sojourners), and includes concepts such as social identity theories. Finally, literature regarding the process of cultural adaptation, which includes concepts such as social distance and different models of the acculturation theory is relevant to this study.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study focused on nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNETs) who migrated to the United States for the purpose of advanced education. The purpose of the study was to better understand and describe NNETs’ perceptions of who they were and
who they became as a result of their sojourn and/or pursuing further education in a L2 educational and cultural setting (i.e., the U.S.). In other words, the study aimed to examine the process of transformation and change in NNETs’ perceptions regarding their identity and self. It was important to note that the process of transformation, as discussed in this study, was not static; it was continuous.

Although the main focus of the study was to discuss the teachers’ transformation and change in their perceptions related to self and their professional, linguistic, and cultural identities, this transformation could not be fully understood without reference to their cultural adjustment to the L2 context. Therefore, this focus was explored further as the second objective, which described the cultural adjustment of NNETs.

**Research Questions**

The following questions guided the study addressing the objectives previously discussed:

1) To what extent does L2 culture influence the built-in L1 self and identity of a NNET in the course of his advanced education in the United States?

2) As a result of further education and/or living in the United States, do NNETs see any “change” and “transformation” in their self and identity at the personal and professional level (i.e., as a teacher, student, and sojourner)?

3) What are the difficulties and complexities (e.g., linguistic, sociocultural, psychological, etc.), if any, that NNETs encounter during their adaptation to the L2 (i.e., the U.S.) culture?
Definition of Terms

Various terms are used throughout this study; therefore, it is essential for a common understanding to be established between the researcher and the reader. Thus, the following terms and definitions are provided:

Enculturation: Process of learning and acquiring one’s native culture unconsciously during childhood simply by participating in human interactions with others.

Acculturation: One’s learning of or adapting to another culture.

Assimilation: One’s being admitted into another culture as an equal participant.

Cross-cultural communication: Communication that involves comparing and contrasting cultures.

Intercultural communication: Communication that includes the actual interaction of people from various cultures.

Identity: An individual’s knowledge that he or she belongs to certain social groups, groups that are self-chosen and which have emotional significance to the particular group membership.

Self (self-perception, self-concept): Characteristics that individuals ascribe to themselves, which take the form of (or incorporate) socially given linguistic categorizations.

In-group: Group to which one belongs.

Out-group: Group with which one does not identify.

Transformation: A process of change. Change, in this sense, is not static; it is a constant flux.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature and Theoretical Framework

**Literature Review**

A review of the literature reveals that minimal research had been conducted on the subject of nonnative English-speaking teachers’ (NNETs’) identity transformation as a result of changing cultural context. Much of the research conducted in cross-cultural studies has focused on sociocultural adaptation and identity in broad terms. Some research concentrating on the formation of NNETs’ professional, linguistic, and cultural identities in the TESOL profession specifically examined the perceptions of NNETs’ identity in teacher education programs in the U.S. However, almost no literature exists which specifically deals with the influence of context in the identity transformation of NNETs during their sojourn in the U.S. Literature on the adaptation of international graduate students in general, or nonnative English-speaking student-teachers and their adaptation in a L2 context and the influence of the new context on their identity in particular is scarce.

Three areas of research in the literature provide a foundation for discussing issues pertinent to the identity change and transformation of NNETs in the L2 context. In reviewing the first strand of the literature, the researcher realized that the issue of native-speaker teacher versus nonnative-speaker teacher has been controversial for quite some time. Only recently has the emphasis in TESOL professionalism started to shift from nativeness and authenticity to the teacher’s knowledge, skills, and expertise. In the earlier studies, it appeared that there were some people in academic environments who believed that successful teaching depended on nativeness.
The literature suggests that in relation to NNETs’ perceptions regarding who they are, it is also essential to portray who they become as a result of their sojourn in a L2 cultural setting and/or receiving further education in a L2 educational setting. Thus the researcher found it important to examine the influence of the L2 context over the NNETs’ transformed, changed, or recently developed perceptions regarding their personal and professional identity. When the altered social context is likely to render many in-group comparisons irrelevant and introduce new ones, awareness of the new in-group realities are developed, resulting in a transformation of social identity.

The third strand of literature relevant to this study focuses on the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation and, in relation to this, the transformation of self. The researcher realized that it is possible to describe NNETs’ cultural adjustment to a L2 context in various ways, and also to describe the cross-cultural adjustment phenomena, the researcher believes it is necessary to refer to the physical and emotional discomfort the NNETs experienced.

*Nonnative English-speaking Teachers in TESOL*

According to Crystal (1997), the present status of English was determined by the following factors: (a) the expansion of the British colonies in the 19th century, and (b) the dominant power of the United States over the world’s economy. Crystal argued that “such dominance, with its political and economic underpinnings, currently gives the Americans a controlling interest in the way the language is likely to develop” (p. 53). Similarly, in the world today, the spread of the use of English in education, informational technologies, travel and politics motivates more people to learn the English language.
While this great demand for English has increased the number of English users to almost 2 billion (Crystal, 1997), the situation has also alarmed TESOL professionals. The need and interest which rose with the globalization of English and the recognition of world Englishes (Crystal, 1997; Kachru, 1992) has stimulated considerable growth in the number of English language teachers, since the solution to world ESL/EFL needs is found to lie in providing language teachers with a high degree of training (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Kachru, 2001; Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Morita, 2000; Nunan, 1999a, 1999b) However, even the combined resources of all the English-speaking countries are inadequate to provide the materials, texts and teachers needed to meet worldwide demands. Since the number of native English-speaking teachers (NETs) has not been sufficient to supply the world demand, a need for nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNETs) has grown more, and so has the concern regarding their roles and effectiveness in the profession.

NNETs’ concerns, perceptions, identities, and the examination of the categorization of “nonnative English-speaking professionals” in TESOL has generated a great interest since the 1960s. In fact, the issue of native speaker (NS) versus nonnative-speaker (NNS) has been controversial for quite some time (Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Phillipson 1992, 1992). For example, Chomsky defined a native speaker of English as an “ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly” (cited in Braine, 1999, p. xv). According to the Chomskyan notion, linguistic competence is based on intuitive knowledge of what is grammatical and ungrammatical in a language, and that is what gives the native speaking teacher superiority.
Medgyes (1992) also examined the question of linguistic acceptability among NS and NNS teachers of English. Taking language competence as a variable of teaching skill, he considered NNETs as inferior and handicapped. He concentrated on the differences between NETs and NNETs in terms of their teaching practice. He argued that NETs and NNETs teach English differently because they use English differently; thus a NNS could never achieve a NS’s competence. However, he suggested that NNETs have some other strengths. For example, they can (a) serve as successful “imitable models” for language learners, (b) teach learning strategies more effectively, (c) provide more information about the English language, (d) can better anticipate language difficulties, (e) be more empathetic to the needs and problems of language learners, and (f) take the advantage of sharing the learner’s mother tongue.

However, in recent years, nativeness has no longer been seen as a key element in effective second language teaching. As Kachru (2001) stated:

Those privileged constructs of “nativeness” in English studies are debatable on the cross-cultural, functional and pragmatic grounds. In other words pedagogy and “nativeness” are clearly not related, and well-trained English language educators from any circle have the credential for teaching English. This myth has over the years developed into linguistic apartheid or racism. (p. 3)

Other ELT professionals and scholars unraveled the causes and consequences of the NS-NNS dichotomy and made the nonnative English-speaking teachers’ voices heard regarding their profession.

Phillipson (1992) addressed the relationship between the native and nonnative-speaking professionals labeling the issue the “native speaker fallacy.” He tried to falsify
the notion that the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker. He pointed to a number of weaknesses and contradictions in the fallacy. He also claimed that the knowledge of how the English language worked, insights into the language learning process, and the ability to analyze and explain the language were within the reach of nonnative teachers as well. The features ascribed to native speakers of English could be attained through training, he claimed. He underlined the importance of teacher training in ELT, emphasizing the fact that professionalism required “creation and legitimation” of a certain type of knowledge or expertise. Phillipson (1992) argued that the untrained or unqualified native speaker is a “menace because of ignorance of the structure of the mother tongue” (p. 14) and that those who are not certified as professionals do not have same competence and should be “prevented from practicing.”

Similarly, Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999) directed attention to the issue of raising “collective consciousness” (p. 127) of teacher trainees in the present TESOL programs. They drew attention to the fact that successful teaching does not depend on nativeness, but rather on the teacher’s knowledge, skills, training, experience, and personality. For Samimy and Brutt-Griffler, in effective teacher education programs, there needs to be a stronger emphasis on the issues of multidimensionality and expertise, rather than nativeness and authenticity. They also suggested that teachers of English as a second or foreign language should have proven experience and success in learning and using a second/foreign language themselves, and that they should have profound familiarity with the language and culture of the learners they are responsible for. In their study, Samimy and Brutt-Griffler also shed light on the beliefs and perceptions of nonnative professionals. Their study revealed that NNS teachers perceived themselves as
having certain strengths by the very nature of their being nonnative-speakers of English. They did not feel “inferior” or “less competent” than NS teachers in teaching, but rather perceived themselves as “advantaged” as a result of (a) having empathy, (b) being able to understand the needs of L2 learners, (c) being a role model, and (d) having acquired immense knowledge of English grammar. However, they admitted that they felt “disadvantaged” in comparison to NS teachers due to perceived language needs, a lack of role models, and/or perceived prejudice based on ethnicity, accent, or nonnative status.

Regarding the issue of the race and ethnicity of nonnative English-speaking teachers, Amin (1997) underlined the fact that there is a need to define the terms native and nonnative to emphasize that there is no intrinsic connection between race and ability in English. In her study, she examined the connection between the attitude of ESL students to non-White teachers and their investments in learning English. She argued that students who had negative perceptions of their teacher as a minority and a nonnative-speaker of English had a negative impact on their teacher’s identity formation. Like Kachru (2001), Amin also claimed that such conceptualizations of NNS teachers were constructed on the basis of racism, and “this association of the native speaker with ownership of English and good pedagogy disempowers the non-White teacher” (p. 582).

Like Amin, Tang (1997) also focused on the professional identity of NNS teachers in terms of their power and status in TESOL. Based on the results of a survey conducted in a teacher retraining course for NNS teachers in Hong Kong, she reported that NNS teachers perceived that NS teachers were more respected models in English language learning. However, she underlined the fact that perceptions regarding the “threatened” (p. 578) confidence and authority of NNS teachers vary from one country to
another. For example, in some countries, like China, NNS teachers do not feel themselves inferior or less able than NS teachers. On the contrary, in their classes, the shared mother tongue is seen as a useful tool in teacher-student interaction. Also, the teachers’ previous L2 learning experience offer them a better understanding of the problems and weaknesses of their students. Finally, the NNS teachers perceived themselves more advantaged than their counterparts since they favor error correction, and better prepare students for tests and examinations.

In sum, in the field of TESOL, the questions raised about whether English belongs to native speakers of English, to speakers of standard English, to White people, or to those who speak it regardless of their linguistic and cultural histories have had a direct impact on our perception of the relationship between language, identity, and the ownership of English.

Social Identification in the Formation of Identity

The relationship between language and identity is a complicated one. Every time language learners speak, they do not only exchange information among them, but they also organize and reorganize a sense of who they are and how they relate to the world (Peirce, 1995). They are, in a sense, engaged in identity (re)construction and (re)negotiation. Thus, when conceptualizing the link between the language and identity, it is necessary not to overlook the experiences of individuals. In the case of language teachers and learners, their social and cultural roles and identities, as teachers or students, as sojourners or nationals, or as members of families and society at large are transformed and negotiated over time through language.
Heller (1987) argued that individuals negotiate a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time through language. Also, she claimed that it is through language that an individual gains an access (or is denied access) to social networks. Thus, for Heller (1987), ethnicity might limit an individual’s ability to participate in some social networks; and language might “symbolize group identity and become [an] emblem of that identity, especially when there is contact with other groups whose way of being are different” (p. 193). She also defined “language choices” as the choices of language code which serve to “indicate social relationships based on shared or unshared group memberships” (p. 187), and therefore help form social identity in specific contexts.

Like Heller, Gumperz (1982) focused on language in the formation of social identity and believed that social identity and ethnicity are established and maintained through language. He conducted research on specific speech events to explore the relationship between speakers’ choices of linguistic categories (e.g., phonology, morphology, syntax) and the social situation. Blom and Gumperz (1972) examined code-switching, either between languages or between varieties of the same language, to see in what situation and with what interlocutors code switching occurred. They argued that “linguistic alternates within the repertoire serve to symbolize the differing social identities which members may assume” (p. 421). Gumperz (1982) also underlined the fact that code switching signals various group memberships and identities. According to this, we code language signals in-group membership, and they code language is considered to be the language of the majority group, thus signaling out-group membership.
Social identity is not only a focus of research in sociolinguistics; it has attracted the attention of social psychologists as well. One of the most notable theories of social identity was developed by Tajfel (1974, 1981) and Tajfel & Turner (1979). In Tajfel’s social identity theory, he proposed that there are three main processes in an intergroup context: categorization, identification, and comparison. During the process of categorization, individuals learn to recognize linguistic or other behavioral cues in order to understand and categorize the social environment. They define appropriate behavior by reference to the norms of groups they belong to and learn the valuation applied by the in-group and out-groups to this membership. The second important idea, the process of identification, involves the categorization of self. Individuals identify with the groups that they perceive themselves to belong to. However, sometimes they perceive themselves as *us versus them*, and other times *me versus them*. Identifying themselves as group members and thinking of themselves as unique individuals are both considered to be parts of their self-concept. The third idea focuses on the process of social comparison which involves awareness of the social identities of both the in-group and the out-group. That is, group members compare their social group with others in order to maximize the positive distinctiveness of their own group.

Drawing on Tajfel’s social identity theory, McNamara (1987) conducted research on the transformation of social identity among non-English-speaking immigrant groups in Australia. In his study, he was mainly concerned with changes in language attitudes, particularly attitudes toward English and toward the home language. His study confirmed that relations between salient social groups (i.e., Israelis and Australians) provide categories through which individuals (i.e., Israelis) allocate others (i.e., Australians) and
themselves to category membership and learn the valuation applied by the in-group and salient out-groups to this membership. Likewise, the study confirmed that recognizing the linguistic cues and other behavioral cues (i.e., the experience of anti-Semitic social attitudes together with the Christian symbolism in the Australian culture) act as a reminder to the native Hebrew speaking Israeli families of their Jewish “otherness” (p. 219). McNamara’s study also underlined that social identity is not fixed but depends on the particular in-group setting in which the individual finds himself. When the new social context is likely to render many in-group comparisons irrelevant and introduce new ones, awareness of the new in-group realities develop, resulting in a transformation of social identity.

In their theory of ethnolinguistic identity, Giles and Johnson (1981) concentrated on language as a salient marker of group membership and identity. Like Tajfel, Giles and Johnson also discussed group membership and groups in terms of identification due to positive and negative associations with in-group and out-group membership. They argued that individuals compare their social group to out-groups in order to make their own groups distinct and reflect positively on themselves. If the comparison is negative, individuals choose different dimensions (e.g., adopting the language of the group they view positively) as the basis of comparison in order to achieve positive distinctiveness and a positive social identity. Furthermore, Giles and Byrne (1982) discussed three strategies adopted by minority groups in an attempt to create a better self-concept: individual mobility, social creativity, and social competition. In the individual mobility, members of the minority group put more positive values on the out-group membership and as a result abandon their in-group membership and face linguistic adaptations which
might result in linguistic assimilation (e.g., subtractive bilingualism), or even language erosion. In social creativity, members of the minority group do not abandon their in-group membership; they choose to restore the positive identity of the group, instead. Social competition is a strategy in which in-between group comparisons become more active when the subordinate group members realize that their inferiority is based on unfair power differentials. As a result, individuals challenge the status of the dominant group and choose linguistic distinctiveness as a dimension to maximize the positivity of their group.

Although Hansen and Liu (1997) underlined the fact that the work of Tajfel (1974, 1981) was particularly influential in introducing the notion of social identity, they articulated several theoretical concerns about the theory. They claimed that while Tajfel acknowledged the dynamic nature of social identity, he did not discuss multiple group membership in his work; he discussed individual’s belonging to one group or the other instead. Hansen and Liu argued that most individuals belong to several groups based on their ethnicity, gender, personal beliefs, and so forth. Furthermore, language also serves as a determinant in one’s choosing ethnic group. The individual chooses to identify with a certain group through using the language of the group. Hansen and Liu also criticized Giles and Johnson (1981) for attempting to “cast diverse people into narrow categories of ethnolinguistic identity” (p. 571). They argued that Giles and Johnson did not count differences in characteristics among individuals (e.g., ethnicity, language, appearance, personality) when they were developing their theory. Hansen and Liu were also concerned about the validity and the reliability of the methods employed in the work of both Tajfel and of Giles and Johnson. They argued that the use of questionnaires,
observations, and interviews did not allow for dynamism since such applications could only report onetime occurrences.

Peirce (1995) claimed that second language acquisition (SLA) theorists struggled to conceptualize the relationship between the language learner and the social world, and she criticized them for not developing “a comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context” (p. 12). She also argued that SLA theorists have failed in examining how power relations affect the nature of learning. Based on the relationship between language learners and language learning context, Peirce proposed her own conception of social identity in the field of SLA which she equated with *subjectivity*. Central to the perspective of subjectivity are three main characteristics: “the multiple nature of the subject; subjectivity as a site of struggle; and subjectivity as changing over time” (p. 15). In the first notion, the individual is depicted as diverse, contradictory and dynamic. Second, social identity is produced in multiple social sites, all of which “are structured by relations of power in which the person takes up different positions—teacher, mother, manager, critic” (p. 15). Finally, an individual’s social identity can change over time.

Along the same argument, Peirce (1995) also proposed that the concept of motivation as discussed in the field of SLA does not capture the complex relationship between the relations of power, identity, and language learning. She drew attention to the theoretical weaknesses of the notions of instrumental and integrative motivations in SLA (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) and she suggested the primacy of the conception of investment in the target language, rather than motivation. She underlined the fact that her concept of investment attempted to capture the relationship of the language learner to the
changing social world, unlike Gardner’s notion which considered the language learner as a fixed and ahistorical individual who desired access to material sources that were the privilege of the speakers of the target language. She argued that “when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world” (p. 18). Thus, Peirce believes that an investment in the target language is an investment in a learner’s social identity.

In an attempt to examine teachers’ construction, conceptualization, and interrogation of their identities and the relationship between their identities and teaching practices, Duff & Uchida (1997) conducted a study which focused on the lives of four EFL teachers (both NSs and NNSs of English) in Japan. In the study, the researchers explored the teachers’ changing understandings of what constituted culture and how the teachers viewed themselves in terms of their various social and cultural roles. The study revealed that the teachers’ perceptions of their social and cultural identities were “deeply rooted in their personal histories, based on past educational, professional, and (cross)cultural experiences” (p. 460). In the study, sociocultural identities were also found to be subject to constant negotiation and construction due to changing contextual elements. The teachers were constantly negotiating “the curriculum, the institution’s expectations of them, their own teaching/learning preferences, and their comfort level in dealing with (cross)cultural issues and materials” (p. 469). Duff and Uchida’s study on sociocultural identity formation is significant in the literature not only because it focuses on the relationship between the language learner and the language learning context, (as
did Peirce), but it also allows further understanding of the transformation of the social identity of the language teacher in a cross-cultural context.

Cross-cultural Adaptation

Previously in the chapter, the relationship between language, identity and culture as reflected in language teacher and/or learner’s self-identification was addressed with an emphasis on issues such as the concerns about the ownership of English, power differentials among TESOL professionals, NS-NNS dichotomy, NNETs self-perceptions, construction of self through language, the linkage between identity and social context, identity construction through group memberships, and (re)construction of identity in a cross-cultural context. The following section discusses other studies which explored the relationship between individual attributions and the social environment, and investigated how this relationship constituted a significant part in the process of identity construction. To be more specific, these studies examined the phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation and (in relation to this) transformation of self which occurred during NNETs’ graduate studies in the U.S.

In an attempt to describe NNETs’ cultural adjustment to a L2 context, Adler (1974/2000) suggested four adjustment stages. The first stage is referred to as the enculturation process in which the behaviors of the individual are predicted according the values of the home culture. The second stage is a transition between the processes of enculturation and acculturation, in the sense that the individual perceives differences between the home and host culture and becomes engaged in the development of new cultural values. This stage also refers to NNETs’ experience of living in between two
worlds (as a result of creating a new self in addition to the old). The next stage deals with individual’s developing self-awareness and appreciation of cultural differences both in home and host cultures. Finally, Adler pinpointed a readjustment stage individuals must go through during reentry to the home culture. At this final stage, it was confirmed that transformation and change in the self are needed to readjust to the home culture. In relation to one’s relationship to the cultural context, Adler also identified the development of a new cultural identity, or rather “a social-psychological style of self process” in which a person develops an essential identity inclusive of life patterns different from his own and “has psychologically and socially come to grips with a multiplicity of realities” (cited in Weaver, 2000, p. 241). This new type of person, “multicultural man,” is not “frozen in a social character,” but is “more fluid and mobile,” “more susceptible to change,” and “open to variation” (p. 241).

Another model suggested in the literature regarding an individual’s adjustment to a new culture is the model of intercultural sensitivity. In this model, Bennett (1993) emphasized the development of multiple cultural frames of reference and aimed to increase sophistication in dealing with cultural difference. Bennett was mainly interested in the way people construed cultural difference and in the varying kind of experiences that accompany different constructions. The early stages of the model (i.e., denial, defense, minimization) corresponded with varieties of ethnocentrism; however the latter stages (i.e., acceptance, adaptation, integration) are termed ethnorelativism, and include concepts such as Adler’s “multicultural man,” and Bochner’s “mediating person,” and Heath’s “maturity” (cited in Bennett, 1993, p. 27). Ethnorelativism was synthesized into a construction of a new identity which begins with the acceptance of cultural difference as
inevitable, through adaptation to cultural differences with intercultural communication skills, and finally to integration.

Adler (1974) and Bennett (1993) were not the only theorists who underlined the importance of *difference* in cross-cultural experiences. Classic statements of the importance of difference were also made by Whorf, Hall, and Singer (as cited in Bennett, 1993). They all agreed with the fact that what sojourners experience in the host culture is constructed according to variable cultural patterns and that these differences enable them to understand and communicate cross-culturally. Moreover, as Whorf also suggested (as cited in Bennett, 1993), the most obvious of cultural differences is language and through language the cultural differences are recognized and accepted. Languages are not simply codes with which to communicate similar ideas, but shapers of thoughts and realities (i.e., notion of linguistic relativity). The theory that languages affect the thought processes of their users is also called the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. According to Whorf’s hypothesis, if speakers of different languages do not understand one another, it is not because their languages can not be translated into one another; but because they do not share the same way of viewing and interpreting events, or the same meaning underlying the words. In other words, the linguistic relativity principle argues that understanding across cultures (and languages) does not depend on linguistic structure but on “common conceptual systems, born from the larger context of our experience” (Kramsch, 2000, p. 13).

The literature includes other studies which investigated how the relationship between the individual attributions and the social environment constitute a significant part in the process of identity (re)construction. For example, Schumann’s Acculturation Model brought a different point of view to the issue of individual’s adaptation to a new
culture. Schumann (1976) described acculturation as the social and psychological integration of the language learner with the target language speakers. According to Schumann, the acculturation process was determined by two factors: (a) social distance, and (b) psychological distance. As Ellis (1994) pointed out, “social distance concerns the extent to which individual language learners become members of the target language community,” whereas, “psychological distance concerns the extent to which individual learners are comfortable with the learning task” (p. 231). Schumann argued that the language learner would acquire the target language and learn the norms and behaviors of the target language only to the degree he acculturated. In other words, when the social distance between the two cultures is minimal, the language learner acculturates enhancing language learning. On the other hand, when there is a great social distance between the two groups, little acculturation takes place, and the language learners do not become proficient speakers of the target language. Thus, he differentiated between the two types of acculturation. According to this, the individual will either be psychologically open and socially integrated with the target language community so that he can enter the target culture; or he will choose to adopt the language, norms, and behaviors of the target language community, denigrating his native culture and embracing the superiority of his adopted one (i.e., assimilation).

However, bicultural and multicultural assimilation into two or more different cultures are different and not necessarily associated with the negative connotations of assimilation. Gonzalez (in press) pinpointed the multidimensional nature of the process of acculturation, that is, getting assimilated and becoming multicultural occurred at the same time during acculturation. Thus, she argued that Schumann’s acculturation model is
unidimensional in the sense that the individual is forced to make a decision between assimilation and multiculturalism. She also underlined the fact that the change in self and identity emerge through combining both the old and new beliefs and value systems, and the multicultural individual was able to “solve cognitive dissonance dilemmas in value and belief systems by simply adopting different behaviors and attitudes for different psychological domains” (p. 7).

Similarly, Suinn, Khoo, and Ahuna (1995) observed the process of acculturation as a multidimensional phenomenon and examined assimilation and multiculturalism as elements of continuous change. Suinn et al. claimed that acculturation occurs at three levels: (a) assimilation, (b) resistance to assimilation, and (c) multiculturalism. In assimilation, the individual might change his ethnic value orientations by adapting the cultural value systems and beliefs of the host community. At the opposite end, the individual might reject becoming part of the dominant culture, and choose to retain his ethnic norms and values. On the other hand, if the individual maintains his own cultural identity while adapting the new cultural norms and values of the host culture, he becomes identified with both cultural groups, achieving multiculturalism. Moreover, being able to develop parallel value systems corresponding to both the host and home for different psychological domains (e.g., gender roles) allows him to avoid cognitive dissonance.

Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bujaki (1989) developed a model in which they described different forms of attitudes toward acculturation. They argued that when individuals become part of a culturally different community, they face two important issues. They have to make decisions between: (a) maintaining and preserving their ethnic norms and values, and (b) determining whether the norms and values of the target
community are worthy of adopting. Berry et al. claimed that they are “dichotomous (yes/no) decisions” (p. 187), and each individual answer given to each question refers to a specific cell in their fourfold model. Each cell in the model is considered to be an acculturation strategy (i.e., assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization). When an individual answers “no” to the first issue but “yes” to the second, that individual is considered to be assimilated which indicates that his identity is absorbed by the target culture. If the individual answers “yes” to both issues, then he integrates, which implies that he chooses both to preserve his cultural identity and to become part of the target culture. When the individual answers “yes” to the first issue but “no” to the second issue, it indicates rejection of the target culture. He chooses to maintain his cultural identity and rejects becoming part of the target culture. Finally, if the individual answers “no” to both issues, then he experiences marginalization. Marginalization is considered to be the individual’s loss of cultural and psychological contact both with the ethic culture and the target culture.

In the case of the NNETs in the present study, the severity of the very act of adjustment was greater, according to Weaver (1993), since the adjustment involved a completely different culture. To describe the cross-cultural adjustment phenomena, particularly to refer to the psychological difficulties of NNETs’ cultural adjustments, different terminologies, such as culture shock, were used in different acculturation studies. However, for some theorists culture shock is considered to be a normal aspect of adaptation to a new culture (Adler, 1975; Weaver, 1993). The phrase recently became a popular part of the international sojourner’s jargon to describe the physical and emotional discomfort experienced by those who move from a familiar environment to a new social
environment and situation (Weaver, 1993). There are other terms used to describe the same phenomena, such as homesickness, transition process, uprooting, or even an occupational disease as suggested by Kalvero Oberg, who first used the phrase culture shock in the late 50s. According to Oberg (1960), culture shock is caused by the loss of familiar physical and social cues of interaction, such as physical objects, words, gestures, and customs. Oberg defined four stages of culture shock: honeymoon, crisis, recovery, and adjustment. The honeymoon stage is the period when everything looks wonderful to the sojourner. The new culture appears to be overwhelming in a positive sense. In the crisis stage, the sojourner hates everything. He is confused and disoriented, and he feels isolated and lonely. During the recovery stage, extremes suddenly meet in the middle. The sojourner realizes the fact that he likes some things and dislikes others, and it is perfectly reasonable to feel that way. Language becomes important, and the person is now able to converse more easily in the target language. He gains self-confidence, which in return leads to more acceptance of the host culture. The final stage of culture shock is described as the adjustment stage. During this stage, the sojourner considers the place he lives as home. This stage of adjustment is more psychological than physical.

In addition, NNETs also experience another type of shock, internal shock, during their adjustment. It is caused not by their maladaptation to the L2 context; on the contrary, NNETs’ achieving successful adaptation in the U.S. results in some psychological complexities related to their selves and identities. The literature reveals that most of the problems and difficulties regarding the self occur during the advanced stages of cross-cultural adaptation. In these studies, it was argued that an individual who has internalized two or more cultural frames of references frequently faces inner conflicts
(Bennett, 1993; Gonzalez, in press; Ochs, 1993; Seelye & Wasilewski, 1996; Yoshikawa, 1988). Moreover, when some of the expectations of self and society which are determined by the cultural values of the host community are in contrast with the native culture, individuals often experience situations in which they have to switch back and forth between the two cultures. Living between two cultural worlds results in giving them hard times in fitting in or standing out from the crowd. As Goldberg suggested (cited in Bennett, 1993, p. 111):

When an individual shaped and molded by one culture is brought by migration, education, marriage, or other influences into permanent contact with a culture of a different content, or when an individual from birth is initiated into two or more historic traditions, languages, political loyalties, moral codes, or religions, then he is likely to find himself on the margin of each culture, but a member of neither.

There might be times that the conflict between the two belief systems and values force the individual to develop an “encapsulated marginality” (Bennett, 1993) or “blurred identity” (Ochs, 1993), not allowing him to construct a unified identity. However, at other times, in the process of experiencing disintegration as a function of cultural shift, the individual becomes fully conscious of self-differentiation. The emergence of such “in-between-space” situations (Seelye & Wasilewski, 1996) provides for the emergence of a third alternative identity: “blended identity” (Ochs, 1993) or “identity-in-unity” (Yoshikawa, 1988). Such consciousness of the individual’s need to form clear boundaries in the face of multiple cultural perspectives is considered a positive outcome in one’s transformation of identity.
The major influence in the present study of explorations of NNETs’ self-perceptions and identity transformation originates in constructivist thinking, with an emphasis on social constructionism. Constructivism, or as it is also called naturalistic inquiry by Guba and Lincoln (1994), attempts to make sense of or to interpret experience in which individuals do not find or discover knowledge but construct or make it. Constructivists believe that what is real is a construction in the minds of individuals, therefore, what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of subjective perspective. They emphasize the pluralistic and plastic character of reality, which means that reality is expressible in a variety of symbol and language systems, and reality is stretched and shaped to fit acts of individuals (Sewandt, 1994). According to Schwandt (1994), “we invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and further, we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience” (p. 126).

Social constructivists also examine the process of knowledge construction, however, they focus on the world of intersubjectively shared, social constructions of meaning and knowledge. As Holstein and Gubrium (1994) point out, social constructionist approach concentrates on the social construction of meaning and knowledge through daily social interactions (e.g., communication, negotiation, conflict). Kenneth Gergen, who labeled the term social constructionism, draws attention to the assumption that “the terms by which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people” (cited in Sewandt, 1994, p. 127).
Thus, in this approach, conventions of language and social interactions require further attention as they shape the collective generation of meaning.

Social constructionist views regarding individuals’ attempts to construct reality in their social context provide the foundation for other theories about development, cognitive dissonance, self perception, social identity, and so forth. The present research study, however, is particularly based on the notions of social identity theory.

The social identity of language learners is particularly a focus of research in disciplines such as social psychology (e.g., Giles & Johnson, 1981; Tajfel, 1974, 1981), sociolinguistics (e.g., Blom & Gumperz 1972; Gumperz, 1982; Heller, 1987), and second language acquisition (SLA) (e.g., He, 1995; Kramsch, 1993; Ochs, 1993; Peirce, 1995). Social-constructivist methodology aims to capture “the ebbs and tides of identity construction over interactional time, over historical time, and even over developmental time” as well as allowing researchers to examine “the building of multiple, yet perfectly compatible identities: identities that are subtle and perhaps have no label, blended identities, even blurred identities” (Ochs, 1993, p. 298). According to the social-constructivist notion of identity, identity is conceptualized as “a process of continual emerging and becoming” (He, 1995, p. 216). In addition to the fluid nature of sociocultural identities, it is also important to note that social identities are subject to change across time and space (Heller, 1987; Kramsch, 1993; Peirce, 1995, 1997; Tajfel, 1974).

Although the research of social psychologists regarding the understanding of social identity of second language speakers and its relationship to language have made considerable contributions to the field, their theories seem to fail in conceptualizing the
relationship between the language user and the social world. In their studies, second
language speakers were forced to belong to one group or the other, as in Tajfel’s
research, without being given a chance to choose among other options (e.g., multiple
group membership). Similarly, in the field of sociolinguistics, ethnic, gender, and
language differences among second language speaker groups, or variables (e.g.,
personality, appearance) affecting identity construction within the same group were
ignored, as in Giles and Johnson. More importantly, in both disciplines, in the studies
such as Tajfel’s, and Giles and Johnson’s, there appears to be a tendency to group
individuals into rigid and determined categories which deny the individual and dynamic
nature of social identity.

However, for sociolinguists and SLA theorists, the social-constructivist
orientation claims that language plays an important role in identity development in
integrating the second language speaker and the second language context. In this sense,
identity development is subjective and in a flux as the language context changes. Such an
attitude to reconceptualize the second language user as the individual and the language
with reference to its social meaning is particularly significant in the exploration of the
perceptions of NNETs’ transforming identities in this study. Being second language
speakers themselves and sojourners in a second language context at the time of the study,
language (i.e., English) was a salient marker of their group membership and identity for
the NNETs, which was also the notion reflected Giles and Johnson’s ethnolinguistic
identity theory. However, as Heller and Peirce pointed out, the focus there was directed
to the choice of language and language use in specific contexts. Such choices indicated
social relationships based on shared or unshared group memberships. Likewise, during
their sojourn in the U.S., the NNETs in the present study belonged to several ethnic
groups that could be defined by language, and also there were times that they wished to
identify with a certain group in specific context. Therefore, language was not considered
as a “medium of communication but [it was considered] with reference to its social
meaning” (Peirce, 1995, p. 13).

Following Peirce’s social identity theory, the researcher takes the position in this
study that second language speakers’ complex identity can only be understood “with
reference to larger and frequently inequitable social structures which are reproduced in
day-to-day social interaction” (Peirce, 1995, p. 13). Peirce also argued that:

It is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across
different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person
gains access to, or is denied access to, powerful social networks. (p. 13)

In short, the review of the literature demonstrates that much can be learned about
social construction of NNETs’ identities. Yet, there are many more issues that need to be
explored such as NNETs’ identity transformation as a result of adapting to an altered
social setting, and their cultural adaptation to a L2 setting. From what the researcher has
learned about NNETs’ cultural and social identities, she believes that there is a need for
her research study in the field of TESOL concerning the perceptions of NNETs regarding
their transforming (or transformed) identities as a result of migrating to a L2 social
setting. She believes that changing a social context and the influence of the altered
context over the identity and self might cause a change (positive or negative) on NNETs’
perceptions regarding who they are as language teachers as well as individuals. Thus, she
believes that the social-constructivist lens that forms the theoretical framework of this
study helps her to better examine the phenomenon. In particular, she aims to explore through Peirce’s social-constructivist theory that: (a) NNETs’ identities are not static, (b) their identities change over time, and (c) their identities are reconstructed, renegotiated, and transformed through language and its cultural context. Furthermore, the researcher believes that it is necessary to explore the new and different understanding NNETs have developed towards issues like socio-cultural identity, self-image, interpersonal relations, intercultural communication, cultural diversity, and so forth, since they might have an impact on their identity (re)construction. This study might also serve a useful purpose for teacher trainers and mentors to realize and empathize the experiences and perceptions of NNETs in their programs who are in the process of an adjustment to an altered social context. Being aware of their students’ feelings and cross-cultural experiences might help teacher trainers and mentors, as role models, to find more effective ways to address the educational needs of their students.
Chapter 3: Methodology and Procedures

This chapter aims to conceptualize the methodological framework employed in this study. The sections in the chapter discuss the data collection techniques and procedures in general. A greater discussion of the research site, the sampling methods, and the research participants are then presented in particular. Finally, the chapter concludes with a description of the data analysis process.

The Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study is to better understand the transformation of identity of a group of NNETs during their sojourn in the U.S. In order to understand the phenomenon of identity transformation, it is necessary to refer to the cultural adjustment process NNETs underwent at the time of the identity (re)construction. The research concentrates on NNETs’ perceptions regarding who they were and who they became during their sojourn in a L2 cultural setting. Also, the sociocultural and psychological outcomes of the cultural adjustment process (e.g., adaptation difficulties, acculturation, assimilation, power differentials (i.e., NS vs. NNS status), etc.) are described in detail.

Research Design

The ideal qualitative research method for the present study was a case study. Case studies, generally speaking, examine one particular event or particular setting, or a single subject in its natural environment with no control and manipulations. In this study, a group of nonnative-speaking English teachers who were studying in graduate Teaching
English as a Second Language (TESL) programs in the U.S. were examined. Without any manipulation, the researcher explored and interpreted the nature of the development of each NNET’s L2 (second language) and C2 (second culture) identity transformation in a natural research setting through inductive analysis of the data (Patton, 1990; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994).

Gall, Borg, & Gall argue that case studies observe the phenomena through focusing on specific arguments (cited in Kurubacak, 2000). Likewise, the phenomena in this study appeared to have many aspects, and the researcher concentrated on a specific area for the inquiry. In other words, the particular phenomena of nonnative teachers’ identity transformation and their cultural adaptation to the U.S. was selected for description. To achieve this, the researcher aimed to bring to the fore the personal experiences and intensity of reflections of the participants in order to understand the essence of the identity transformation and cultural adjustment phenomena in greater detail.

Individual case studies of a total of five NNETs in two separate graduate TESL programs were conducted in the study. The emphasis was on the process of change and transformation in the NNETs’ identity development. In order to better understand the process of change and transformation, the researcher considered the following issues: (a) How did the cultural adaptation occur? (b) How did the length of sojourn play a role in their adjustment to the new culture? (c) What was the impact of previous L2 knowledge over the adaptation process? (d) What was the impact of teaching experience on the adaptation process? (e) How did the teachers react to the cultural differences during their adaptation to the U.S. life? (f) How were their identities influenced/threatened by the host
culture? (g) To what extent did their identities change and transform? (h) What sort of cultural and psychological complexities (if any) did the identity change lead to?

This study was descriptive in nature. The researcher made use of numerous descriptions, patterns, and themes of the phenomena. Also, the researcher used an inductive approach for the study in which individual experiences of the participants were the focus of attention. According to Patton (1990), the inductive approach begins with the individual experiences of actors “without pigeon holing or delimiting what those experiences will be in advance of fieldwork” (p. 45). Thus, to recognize the nature of the phenomena (i.e., identity transformation and cultural adaptation), it was essential to encourage the participants to express their feelings, thoughts, and experiences during the interviews. Besides, the procedures in this methodology forced the researcher to seek the multiple interpretations and perspectives of the actors (i.e., the participants) during the research inquiry. In this way, “coding procedures (including the important procedures of constant comparison, theoretical questioning, theoretical sampling, concept development, and their relationships) help to protect the researcher from accepting any of those voices on their own terms, and to some extent forces the researcher’s own voice to be questioning, questioned, and provisional” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 280). According to this, the inductive analysis of the data was employed in the following manner: (a) The researcher focused on investigating and understanding the identity formation and cross-cultural experiences of NNETs in its natural context; (b) she illustrated the NNETs’ multiple perceptions and interpretations as they emerged; and (c) these emerged concepts were formulated and analytically developed, and their conceptual relationships were posited. As a result, the grounded theory approach was found to be the best approach for
this study since it allowed the researcher to go “into and close to the real world so that the results and findings are grounded in the empirical world” (Patton, 1990, p. 67) and “connect [the] multiplicity of perspective with patterns and processes of action/interaction that in turn are linked with carefully specified conditions and consequences” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 280).

In conclusion, the qualitative case study and grounded theory approach of the present study helped the researcher to generate detailed descriptions and explanations of NNETs’ perceptions regarding their identity transformation and adaptation to a L2 setting during their graduate studies in the U.S.

Research Site

The sites where the study was conducted were graduate Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) programs with nonnative English-speaking student-teachers from various parts of the world. From the cultural adaptation standpoint, the differing ethnicities of the student-teachers contributed a greater diversity and richness in the expressions of their experiences.

The research was conducted in two separate Research I institutions located in the Midwest, both of which offered a variety of teacher education programs at the graduate level. In one of these institutions, the researcher herself was also enrolled as a graduate student where she was able to conduct certain parts of the study. In the 2001-2002 academic year, both programs had a considerable number of students from different world regions such as Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. In the researcher’s institution, for example, among the forty-four students who were currently
enrolled in the program, thirteen were nonnative-speakers of English who came from Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Iran, Korea, Lebanon, the Netherlands, and Turkey.

**Sampling and Participants**

In selecting NNETs for the study, *purposeful sampling* and *typical sampling* approaches were used (Patton, 1990; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). To study the process of identity change and adaptation to a L2 culture, it was necessary to consider the length of time NNETs spent in the host culture. Accordingly, the NNETs in the study were grouped as the “rare group” (i.e., NNETs newly arrived in the U.S.), the “medium group” (i.e., NNETs who had been exposed to the U.S. life and U.S. culture for 2-4 years), and the “well-done group” (i.e., NNETs who had been in the U.S. for 4 plus years).

In addition, due to the nature of the study, there was a need for a variety of individuals with differing cultural backgrounds and teaching experience since their past and present experiences both in their home country and in the U.S. were significant to the study. The participants were selected according to which would allow the researcher “to learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Thus, the sampling approaches served their purpose well in the sense that they allowed the researcher to make use of the variety of types of participants for the designed study and better explore the issues under study.

It was not unusual to encounter discrepancies in the experiences of the novice group (i.e., the rare group) and the experienced groups (i.e., the medium group and the well-done group), particularly in the issues such as cultural adaptation, adaptation difficulties, perceptions regarding the host culture and host nationals, and so forth. In
fact, the varying perceptions (regarding how the process of identity transformation and change took place in the altered social context) of each group constructed a typical case for the study. This method of sampling in analytical induction is called *purposeful sampling* in which the researcher has a particular purpose in selecting samples for the study whose subjects are believed to facilitate the expansion of the developing theory (i.e., employing information-rich cases) (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998).

In selecting the participants for the present study, the following additional criteria were used: (a) The volunteering participants were enrolled at a graduate TESL program or recently graduated from a TESOL education program at the time of the study, (b) they had experience in the ELT (English language teaching) profession in their home countries and in the U.S., and (c) no participants from the same country of origin were employed for the study.

Several strategies appear in the literature for purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). For the present study the *typical case sampling* approach was used since the participants in the study played the role of “key informants” (Patton, 1990, p. 173) in the sense that they could provide a profile of a typical case of identity transformation and cultural adaptation of NNETs studying in the U.S. Likewise, the nonnative English-speaking international student-teachers in the study could help identify what was typical in terms of what NNETs felt and experienced during their sojourn in the U.S. Their individual cases could describe and illustrate typical cross-cultural and intercultural experiences of NNETs who came to the U.S. to pursue further education. However, as Patton (1990) argues, “the sample is illustrative not definitive” (p. 173). Thus, as far as the issue of generalizability was concerned, the researcher did
not follow the rule of generalizability as it is traditionally defined. The researcher was aware that the term typical was formed on the basis of research on a small group of NNETs who were taken to represent the experiences of other NNETs in their respective groups. Besides, the teachers differed from each other in terms of their cultural backgrounds, prior teaching responsibilities and experiences, preferred teacher roles and teaching styles, personalities and so forth. Life experience is individual, and developing generalizations that categorize an individual’s experience into groups denies the individual. That is why the researcher does not intend to claim any overarching generalizations rather than the case in the present study itself; instead she expects readers to come to their own conclusions concerning generalizability through reading the study. If not, the researcher lays claim to generalizability on the basis of the similarity of the present case study to others reported in the literature.

Typical sampling in this study was done in the following manner. A total of 5 participants were employed for the study. For the purpose of convenience, 3 graduate students from the graduate TESL program in which the researcher was currently enrolled were asked to participate in the study. Two of these students were pursuing their Ed.D. degrees, and the third student was working on his M.Ed. degree at the time of the study. The researcher had informal conversations with the potential participants during the first week of the Fall Quarter in September, 2001 to find out about their biographical backgrounds and willingness to participate in the study. It appeared that each participant represented a different time zone in terms his or her length of stay in the U.S. For example, the masters student was “new” in the culture and represented the characteristics of a typical rare group time zone in the sense that he had recently arrived, and was not yet
very familiar with the American culture. His length of stay in the U.S. was less than 3 months when the study started. The doctoral students, on the other hand, represented the medium group and the well-done group time zones in the sense that both were more familiar and more experienced sojourners compared to the masters student. One of the doctoral students had been living in the U.S. for more than 2 years, and the other student had been living in the U.S. for more than 4 years at the time of the study. During the initial conversations, the researcher explained the study and the research process to them and let them know about her role as a researcher in the study. After the initial contact with the participants, the researcher was able to identify the NNETs who matched the criteria (as discussed on pages 40 and 41). In the first week of October 2001, the three participants were individually asked to read and sign the informed consent which described the research process in detail (see Appendix D). From the outset, the teachers were informed that the study was about NNETs’ experiencing a transformation and change in their personal and professional identities during their graduate studies in the U.S.

As mentioned earlier, the concept of time in this study played a crucial role since transformation and change occurred over time. Therefore, it was difficult to find the “right” participants who represented the defined time zones in the criteria. Furthermore, there were three time zones, but for the reliability and accuracy of the research, the researcher needed more participants who would be right for the study and, perhaps more importantly, who would want to volunteer. Therefore, the remaining 2 participants for the study were recruited from another university in the same region. One was a recent Ph.D. graduate of the TESL program in his institution, and the other was a third year Ph.D.
student in the same program. The initial contacts with the participants were made via the internet through the listserv of the State professional organization. The research study and the research process were explained through multiple email messages during the month of July 2001. The informed consents with the detailed description of the study were mailed to their home addresses. However, during the course of the study, the Ph.D. student asked to withdraw from the study after the second interview due to her heavy work load. She was released from the research study with no penalty. Therefore, data containing personal documents (i.e., electronic journals) were incomplete, because she was not able to respond any of the electronic journals. However, the other data collected through face-to-face interviews with her were analyzed (with her permission) and reported in chapter 4.

**Background of the participants.**

The demographics of the participants in the study are summarized and displayed in Table 1. In order to maintain confidentiality, the names of the participants were changed. In addition, any identifying characteristics of the participants were either changed or eliminated from the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background of the Participants</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Degree of current study</th>
<th>Sojourn time</th>
<th>ELT experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dawa</td>
<td>Burkina</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Ph.D.(completed)</td>
<td>7 yrs.</td>
<td>30 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Years in Country</td>
<td>Years in U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawa</td>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>4 yrs.</td>
<td>23 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paco</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>23 yrs.</td>
<td>20 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eun-jin</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>3 yrs.</td>
<td>10 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeina</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>2.5 yrs.</td>
<td>20 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ming</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M.Ed.</td>
<td>3 mos.</td>
<td>4 yrs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dawa was an African male from Burkina Faso. In his early fifties, married with three children, he had a Ph.D. degree in TESL. He was teaching in the Department of Black Studies at the same university from which he earned his Ph.D. degree. Dawa had 30 years of ELT experience at various levels both in his country and outside his country. He had previous experience in a L2 and Foreign Language (FL) context prior to his sojourn in the U.S. He also held two masters degrees from universities in England and in the U.S. At the time of the study he was living in the U.S. for 7 years.

Paco, a Colombian man was in his early fifties. He was a first year doctoral student in the TESL program with Ming and Zeina. He had a graduate assistantship from his department. He had 23 years of ELT experience both in his country and elsewhere. He taught English at several levels from secondary school to university. Paco completed his Masters degree in the U.S. in the late 1980s. In addition to his Masters education, he had also been to the U.S. for other educational purposes (e.g., summer courses). Paco was extremely familiar with the American culture and experienced in cross-cultural interactions. He had lived in the U.S. for 4 years prior to his recent sojourn.

Eun-jin, a married woman in her early thirties from South Korea, was in her third year in the doctoral program in the same TESL program that Dawa graduated from. Eun-
Eun-jin’s husband was also a graduate student at the same university. She had a university graduate assistantship from her department when the researcher met her. Later on, she found a job on campus in Career Development Services. Before coming to the U.S., Eun-jin never lived in another L2 setting. In her home country, she taught English at universities and language institutes. She taught Korean in the U.S. She had 10 years of teaching experience in Korea and the U.S. She had been living in the U.S. for 3 years at the time of the study.

Ming, a Chinese man in his mid-twenties, was pursuing his Masters degree in TESL. He also had a teaching assistantship from the TESL program of his university. Before coming to the U.S., Ming taught in China for 4 years in secondary schools and universities. It was his first year in the graduate school and his first time in the U.S., in a L2 context. At the time of the interviews, he had been living in the U.S. for 3 months.

Zeina, a married woman originally from Lebanon, through marriage was a Canadian citizen. She was in her mid-forties and had two children. Before coming to the U.S., she and her family lived in Canada for over 10 years. She had a total of 20 years of ELT experience in various parts of the world including Lebanon, Oman, Greece, Canada, and England. Zeina was in the same teacher education program as Ming and Paco. It was her first year in the doctoral program, and she also had a graduate assistantship from the university. She had been living in the U.S. for over 2 years at the time of the study.

*Role of the Researcher*

The researcher and the participants in the study share similar characteristics. Like the participants in the present study, the researcher is also a nonnative-speaking English
teacher and taught English for years before migrating to the U.S. The researcher herself has also experienced a cultural change and adaptation while living in the U.S. She has been living in the L2 context for almost four years and still believes that her social and cultural identity transformation is not yet complete. She is also aware that the transformation period involves the negotiation of a new identity with the old one, and it takes time. Like the participants in the study, the researcher carries multiple identity roles: as a student, a teacher, a sojourner, a nonnative English speaker, an immigrant, a foreigner, a wife, and so forth. Therefore the researcher considers the participants in the study a sort of mirror image of herself. Through the study, she develops the emic (or, insider’s) perspective of the NNET’s identity and their cultural adaptation to an altered social context. Through writing this dissertation, the researcher has come to understand the process of cultural adaptation in a way that she did not know it before.

*Instrumentation and Data Collection*

*Instruments*

Two different qualitative instruments were designed for this study to provide detailed information for analysis: (a) qualitative interviews, and (b) personal documents (i.e., demographics questionnaires and electronic journals).

1. *Qualitative interviews.*

The researcher in the present study developed in-depth interviews as qualitative instruments. They were the main sources of this case study. The questions in the
interviews were originated and modified during the pilot study (Dirsel-Duffield, 2000) which conducted in the Spring Quarter of 2000 academic year. The data analyzed in the pilot study were collected through in-depth interviews and follow-up contacts with NNETs from January to March 2000. In the study, three nonnative English teachers coming from different ethnic backgrounds were employed. The study provided ideas on what the significant issues to focus and how to structure the interviews.

In recent decades, more and more qualitative interviews have increasingly been employed as a research method (Kvale, 1996). According to Kvale, there are seven stages of interview investigations: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting. The first stage, thematizing, suggests clarification of the theme investigated and formulation of the research questions. Thus, before the interviewing process started, the researcher clarified the research topic and formulated some questions for the topic under the investigation. Data gathered previously through the pilot study revealed topic areas in general such as perceived cultural differences, cross-cultural challenges, identity roles, identity (re)construction, change, impact of context on identity, cultural adaptation to a L2 setting, and so forth. In particular, generating additional questions such as how the NNETs in this study interpreted their new life in the new country, how they communicated socially, what cultural experiences they went through, what difficulties they faced in their daily lives, and how they started and completed the adaptation process helped the researcher to focus on specific areas which were also useful in the coding stages. In short, through the use of such key questions, insights on how the subjects interpreted the world and functioned in a L2 context were examined, and further questions were formulated for the interviewing sessions.
The formats of the interviews employed in the study varied. Both individual (face-to-face) and focus group interviews were obtained. During the individual interviews, each participant was asked the same questions and the questions were worded in an open-ended fashion. While formulating the interview questions (see Appendix A), the researcher made sure that the questions were clear, precise and motivating (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The first individual interview was used to generate new interview questions and provide direction for the subsequent one and the focus group interview. As a result, a total of three interviews were conducted with each participant.

Patton (1990) argues that open-ended interviews should allow research participants to respond in their own terms. In this way, the researchers can decide “what dimensions, themes, and images/words people use among themselves to describe their feelings, thoughts and experiences” (p. 296). Similarly, Bogdan & Biklen (1998) point out that through the descriptive data produced by the subjects’ own words, the researchers establish insights “on how subjects interpret some piece of the world” (p. 94). Therefore, in this study, using the open-ended questioning format allowed the participants to take whatever direction they wanted and to use whatever words they needed to express their thoughts and feelings. It was important for the nature of the study to project the feelings and interpretations of NNETs’ regarding their cultural adaptation and their identity transformation. It was also essential for the researcher to establish rapport and neutrality in the study. Using open-ended interviews permitted the researcher to convey neutrality with regard to the content of what the NNET was willing to share with the researcher. All the NNETs in the study were aware that the researcher respected
them and realized that what they were saying was important because of who was saying it.

Focus groups are focused around specific topics or guided by general questions, and they always have well-defined, particular goals (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In order to get high-quality data in a social context, as the present study aimed for, it appeared to be necessary to make use of a focus group interview where the participants could consider their own opinions in the context of the opinions of the others. In the study, the NNETs who participated in the group interview focused on the topics and issues, such as teacher identity, social identity, cultural identity, cultural adaptation, acculturation, U.S. culture, U.S. academic culture, and so forth. Furthermore, through the dynamic atmosphere and conversational and friendly tone created by the group throughout the interview, as also mentioned by Patton (1990) and Bogdan & Biklen (1998), the researcher was able to gather efficient information on the identity and cultural adaptation phenomenon. However, gathering data using focus interviewing technique with a mixed group like the one employed in this study was intriguing and challenging. Although the group being interviewed was homogeneous by design, in the sense that they were all international students, experienced English teachers, and have been sojourning in the U.S. for specific time; interviewing them was still a cross-cultural happening. There were differing norms and values governing the interactions in the group. Conducting and participating in such an interview required special sensitivity and respect for differences on the side of both the researcher and the participants. Moreover, both the researcher and the participants were aware that they were not in the study to change or judge values and norms of their peers. The mutual friendship and understanding established among the group members and the
maturity and personality of each participant in the group helped the researcher to get valid, reliable, meaningful, and useful information.

II. Other sources of qualitative data.

Additional data were collected through personal documents in the study. According to Plummer and Taylor and Bogdan, any first-person narrative is considered a personal document (cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In this study, two different kinds of personal documents were gathered. First, the participants were given demographics questionnaires (see Appendix B) prior to the first set of interviews. They were asked to answer the questions in the questionnaire in the 15 minutes before the first interview started. The purpose of designing the demographics questionnaire was two-folded: (a) to gain a general understanding of the NNETs’ perceptions of themselves as teachers, students, and sojourners, and (b) to generate possible areas of focus for the on-going interviews. The questionnaire contained both open-and-closed-ended questions. There was a total of 12 questions in the questionnaire.

In addition to the demographics questionnaires, electronic journals (e-journals) were also collected from the participants as personal documents. The e-journals aimed to explore the NNETs’ process of adapting to the target culture while detecting the challenges and frustrations of cultural immersion. Therefore, throughout the study the NNETs were encouraged to reveal their thoughts and beliefs regarding their cross-cultural experiences. The e-journal entries were collected through electronic mail (e-mail) messages to provide rich data for the study. A virtual arena (i.e., a listserv) was set up for the NNETs to post their reflections for the weekly e-journals. The listserv was named
TESL-NNET: Identity and Transformation Research Group as it was believed to describe the study well to its participants. The listserv made it possible to create, manage and control electronic mailing lists on the internet. The researcher posted weekly discussion topics, and all participating NNETs e-mailed to each other, asynchronously exchanging experiences and suggestions on the listserv. The e-journal data were collected mostly during the on-going interviews starting from October 2001. A total of six entries were gathered between late-October 2001 and mid-January 2002.

Using a listserv was an ideal research tool for the nature of the study for multiple reasons. First, using e-mails as a means of communication was convenient to catch the NNETs’ everyday life happenings efficiently and successfully. The personal reflections in the e-journals, in this sense, were fresh and “on-the-spot” which meant they were simultaneous and naturally occurring; so did their daily experiences in the new L2 context. Furthermore, the interactions between the researcher and the participants involved initiating topics, responding, probing, and reflecting. The participants’ responses raised new questions and issues to be discussed as more issues emerged during the face-to-face interviews and/or the e-journal postings. Another advantage of using electronic media as a means of communication was to provide instant guidance to the novice and less experienced. The researcher aimed to transfer the outcomes of the previous experiences of the experienced group in the host culture to the novice group through the exchange of e-journals. The novice group was encouraged to create more flash backs for the experienced group, and as a result more input was provided for the study. Besides, a listserv was a preferred tool by the researcher due to pragmatic reasons. Considering the fact that not all participants were close to the point where the researcher
was conducting the research, the communication through a listserv created equal opportunities for all participants to take part actively in the study.

Other advantages of using a listserv for the study were:

1) Using a listserv was fast because both sent and received messages were delivered in a matter of seconds, or occasionally minutes.

2) A listserv was more practical and painless because it required no special typing skills or computer language knowledge in order to use the listserv effectively.

3) Making use of e-journals through a listserv served a better purpose than the traditional paper journals, in the sense that it reduced the burden of the obligation of writing a diary and/or responding to the others (The participants knew that, unlike traditional paper journals, they were not expected to write long reflections, and there were no penalties for late postings.).

4) Making use of e-journals allowed no delays, stress, and frustration because it eliminated the difficulties of using traditional methods of delivery (i.e., dropping it off at a certain place at a certain time).

5) For the researcher, data were collected and analyzed in a more organized and professional manner and relatively hassle-free.

A listserv is managed by a list owner. The list owner is the person with formal responsibility for the operation of the list such as, for all administrative matters and for answering questions from the list subscribers. In this study, the researcher herself was the list owner and the moderator for the TESL-NNET: Identity and Transformation Research Group. She defined the list's charter and policy, that is, what the list was about and what were the general rules all subscribers (i.e., the NNETs) needed to be aware of.
For security and comfort purposes, the listserv was a closed (and private) list, in the sense that it was small, more focused, and exercising some measure of access control. The participant-subscribers (i.e., the NNETs) were added to the listserv by the list owner herself and no other person outside the study was allowed to send messages to and/or view messages in the TESL-NNET: Identity and Transformation Research Group.

In sum, questionnaires and e-journals were collected from the participants as personal documents. The questionnaires served for the purpose of collecting demographic data, while e-journal entries were more descriptive and richer in content. In order to collect the e-journals in a more organized manner, a listserv was designed. Using a private listserv enabled the participants to construct their personal arena where they could talk freely and exchange ideas and thoughts, and they could receive instant guidance (from the experienced to the novice). At the same time, through the reflective commentaries of the experienced NNETs, the e-journals helped to confirm or disconfirm the challenges and difficulties the novice NNETs described. During the mutual exchange of responses, the NNETs revealed some coping strategies they developed after having lived in the host culture for a certain period of time. Making use of such strategies not only helped the novice to “survive,” but also the researcher, particularly when triangulating the data at the analysis stage.

Data Collection

I. Interview data collection.

The interviewing process took 17 weeks from August 2001 to December 2001. A total of three interviews took place: two individual interviews and one focus group.
interviewing session. In addition to the individual (face-to-face) interviews with each participant, the focus group was also designed as a research tool in an attempt to bring participants together and, in this way, create a social context for the study. The focus group acted as a follow-up stage in the interviewing process since it allowed the researcher to re-observe the important topics and issues emerged in the previous interviews. The following section describes the interviewing process in a greater detail.

In August 2001, first the Korean and the African NNETs were interviewed. Next, the Colombian, Chinese, and the Lebanese NNETs were interviewed in October 2001 for the first set of the interviews. The second set of the interviews were held in the month of November 2001. First the African and the Korean NNETs were interviewed, then the Lebanese and Colombian NNET, and finally the Chinese NNET was interviewed during the month of November.

The researcher allowed the NNETs to set the face-to-face interview dates and location themselves for both interviews. The interviews with the Korean and African NNETs were held in their home institution which was located in a city several hours the researcher’s home institution. The first interview with the Korean NNET took place in the main library of the university campus, and the second interview was at another library close to her office on campus. The first interview with the African NNET was in a classroom on the first floor of the Black Studies building on campus, and the second interview was held in his office on the top floor of the same building. The interviews with the Lebanese, Colombian, and the Chinese NNET were held in the researcher’s home institution. The first interview with the Lebanese NNET was in a classroom, and the second interview with her was held at her house which was located almost 15 miles off
campus. The first interview with the Colombian NNET was at a café close to the campus, and the second interview with him was recorded in the researcher’s car during a trip to the researcher’s house. Both of the interview sessions with the Chinese participant were held in a classroom.

Each face-to-face interview lasted between 45 minutes to one hour. All interviewing sessions were tape recorded. At the beginning of each interview session, the researcher asked some entrée questions to make the participants more comfortable and familiar with the issues to be discussed. Both of the interviews went very smoothly in the sense that the participants were very eager to share their thoughts and experiences, and no significant interruptions were experienced.

The focus group interview was held in the researcher’s home institution since the majority of the participants were from the same city. It took place in a classroom on the main campus. There were four participants present for the session: Dawa, Ming, Paco, and Zeina. The Korean NNET, Eun-jin, had withdrawn by the time of the focus group interviewing. Thus, she was not in the interview. Dawa was the NNET who had to do the longest driving. Thus, his traveling expenses (i.e., gas and parking) were reimbursed by the researcher. Similarly, Zeina was also reimbursed for gas and parking expenses since she had to take an extra trip to the university for the interview. However, the other NNETs, Ming and Paco, lived in a walking distance of the university.

The focus group interview lasted almost one hour and 45 minutes. The entire interview session was highly interactive. Each participant was very good at keeping the discussions on topic; no participant attempted to dominate the session. The session was videotaped (in addition to the tape recording) since it made it easy to reconstruct the
interview later on, although the tape was transcribed soon afterwards. The videotaping solved the problem of recognizing who was speaking and when since there were times that several NNETs spoke at once. Besides, using a videotape helped the researcher to catch facial expressions that the NNETs displayed. In this way, she was also able to better interpret the NNETs’ comments as well as to develop cultural meaning and understanding through body language.

II. Documentary data collection.

Two different kinds of personal documents were developed for the study. First, the one-time demographics questionnaire was employed in the months of August 2001 and October 2001 while the first set of interviews was taking place. The second personal document, on the other hand, produced continuous data. The participants were continuously asked to reflect their comments and interpretations in electronic journals (e-journals) regarding their perceptions of identity transformation and cultural adaptation process. The exchange of the e-journals went on from October 2001 until January 2002.

The demographics questionnaire (see Appendix B) consisted of 12 questions; both closed-and-open-ended questions. It aimed to help the researcher identify the sample size, characteristics (e.g., gender, age, country of origin, etc.), and distinctive elements (e.g., personal differences in expectations or handling the cultural adaptation, professional goals, etc.) of the study and so forth. It was delivered prior to the interviewing session during the first interviews. The NNETs were given approximately 15 minutes to answer the questions before the interview started. The following information related to participants was covered in the questionnaires: 1) country of origin, 2) whether English is
the participant’s second or foreign language, 3) gender, 4) age, 5) type of education the participant is receiving in the U.S., 6) reasons for education in the U.S., 7) time spent in the U.S., 8) previous ELT experience, 9) previous living experience in a L2 setting, 10) and 11) evaluation regarding adaptation to the American culture, and 12) cross-cultural experiences.

The e-journal data collection process took place slowly, but surely. Most of the times, the reflections NNETs sent to the listserv were distributed immediately. All the participants and the researcher were able to view each other’s e-journals within 1 to 20 minutes, depending on the individual mail system. However, due to the technical difficulties hotmail.com users were experiencing, the Colombian NNET occasionally was not able to receive the messages from the group. In such cases where the researcher did not hear from the participant for more than one week, she chose to make contact with the NNET personally and tried to sort out the problem as the moderator of the listserv. As a result, the NNET who lost contact with the group was sent the discussion question(s) of the week individually by the researcher. In the meantime, the messages posted during the NNET’s absence in the virtual environment were forwarded to the NNET by the researcher.

The researcher tried to post the discussion topics on a weekly basis in order to continue the data collection process in a more disciplined and organized way. Nevertheless, due to the technical problems the NNETs occasionally suffered and/or their heavy work load did not permit the researcher to collect the data as she wished. Although the entries were supposed to be posted on the listserv every Monday of the week, there were times that it took the researcher two weeks or even three weeks to receive the
responses from NNETs. However, for archival purposes, it appeared to be necessary to keep the Monday as a due day for weekly discussion questions/topics until the end of the data collection. Another difficulty the researcher came across with during the data collection process was the three-week Christmas break, which temporarily put the data collection on hold in December 2001. Both the researcher and the Colombian NNET traveled to their home countries for the holidays. In short, common technical problems, NNETs’ personal work load in their graduate programs and jobs, and the Christmas break caused minor interruptions during the data collection process. Therefore, a total of only 6 entries were gathered during the data collection process.

Data Analysis

In this study, *inductive content analysis* method was used to analyze the data. According to this, the information that the interviews and the e-journals conveyed was made systematically comparable and an objective coding scheme was applied to the data. The systematic analysis of the data began by reading the main written documents (i.e., e-journals) and the transcriptions of recorded verbal communications (i.e., the interviews) to reinforce potentially significant and recurrent themes and patterns developed during the data collection phase and to generate new themes previously unrealized. The researcher carefully read the open-ended interviews and the e-journals and wrote her comments and took notes in the margins. She repeated the reading process three times and revised her comments and notes before she started to code and categorize the themes and patterns. The researcher made sure that the most thorough analysis of the categories would be accomplished after all the data had been coded.
During the initial stages of the data analysis, the researcher identified and examined the data units. The combination of the following units (elements) in the interviews and the e-journals were counted for the analysis: a) words, b) themes, c) persons, d) paragraphs, and e) concepts.

The specified words or terms the participants used in the interviews and the e-journals, and their frequent use by the participants was important for the researcher to create the related theme, pattern, or category. For example, as a result of the NNETs’ frequent use of the words willingness to accept, careful observation, keeping internal self, and preparedness, the researcher created the pattern, coping strategies.

The themes in the data were detected out of the sentences and strings of words the participants used. For example, the participants’ perceptions about themselves as students, nonnative English-speaking teachers, and sojourners; and their perceptions regarding the native culture and co-nationals, the host culture and host nationals, and the inter-nationals emerged the category Identity and Self. Likewise, the sentences describing the Americans, and other international sojourners helped the researcher identify the sub-themes NNETs’ perceptions regarding the host nationals and NNETs’ perceptions regarding the inter-nationals of the Identity and Self category.

The persons, the participants, in the study were significant to the analysis. The researcher counted the number of times specific participants mentioned the specific word or themes. The researcher was not only interested in how many different times the specific of word and/or theme was mentioned by the specific participant but also in how many different participants mentioned the specific word and/or theme.
The use of *paragraph* as a unit of analysis was helpful in an attempt to code and classify the various and numerous words and themes stated and implied in a single paragraph. However, sometimes it was hard to analyze more than one thing at the same time within the same paragraph.

Finally, the *concepts* involved the words grouped together into conceptual clusters that constituted the study. The analysis was extended to an interpretative reading of the data underlying the physically presented data. Stated in different words, the researcher inferred from “deep structural meaning” (Berg, 1995) in addition to analyzing the physically present and countable data on the surface. For example, when asked to describe the host culture and the host nationals, the participants’ use of words such as *honest, friendly, a land of opportunities, technologically advanced, ideal, accessibility* and so forth clustered around the conceptual idea of *appreciation* (of the host culture).

After the careful examination of content analytic units, the actual process of coding started. The codes and categories the researcher created were not preestablished and imposed on the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998); they were developed out of the interpretative analysis of the data. According to this, thirty-one codes (see Appendix C) and two thematic categories, Identity and Self, and Cultural Adjustment, were found. In order to present the perceptions of the NNETs in the most direct manner, reliance upon induction was necessary. In short, the development of these inductive categories allowed the researcher to ground the themes/categories and hypotheses to the data.

The researcher implemented the following guidelines when conducting the data coding: (a) She asked the data a specific and consistent set of questions, (b) she analyzed the data minutely, (c) she frequently interrupted the coding to write a theoretical note, and
(d) she did not assume the analytic relevance of any traditional variable. The following section presents the detailed discussion of each of these guidelines.

1) By asking the data a specific and consistent relevant set of questions, the researcher aimed to keep the original objective of the research study in mind. However, she was aware of the fact that the data was not expected to be molded to that study. In fact, some unanticipated results emerged from the data. For example, the researcher’s initial research interest was the NNETs’ identity change and transformation, whereas, the extensive examination of data revealed the fact that the phenomenon of identity transformation could not be understood without examining the phenomenon of cultural adjustment of the NNETs.

2) It was important to analyze the data minutely. The more codes the researcher had, the more ensuring it was to ground the theories and hypothesis to the data. Such a tendency to code extensively helped the researcher to create many themes, sub-themes, and patterns, and as a result to identify the two categories (i.e., Identity and Self, Cultural Adjustment) which framed the study.

3) The researcher scribbled notes during the coding process. These were the notes she took in order not to forget the ideas relating to the similarities between the NNETs’ comments; identifications and descriptions of the concepts. The notes resulted in many interpretations, questions, and even possible answers which seemed to emerge as the researcher coded. However, she was aware of the fact that she had to
hold these as tentative at best. She also knew that contradictions to such early conclusions might have been emerged during the coding of the next piece of the data.

4) The first guideline was germane to the coding process. Thus, the researcher was interested in the transformation identity and cultural adjustment experienced by the NNETs. She was not interested in any traditional variables such as age, gender, country of origin, and so forth and she did not want to impose any assumptions on the data. However, the data revealed that sojourn time, previous experience in another L2 or FL setting, and the perceived cultural distance between C1 and C2 might have been analytically relevant. Thus, when the data showed these variables to be relevant, she, naturally, accepted this result.

In sum, the analysis strategy employed in this study involved the interaction of two processes: specification of the content units (i.e., word, themes, persons, paragraphs, and concepts) and application of these units (i.e., coding the units into categories). It was enjoyable to identify the content analytic elements in the transcripts and the documents. On the other hand, it was not easy for the researcher to describe the tactics she used for developing the categories (i.e., Identity and Self, Cultural Adjustment) or for operationalizing these tactics. The conceptualization and the operationalization of the categories were determined by the nature of the research and the specific characteristics of the data (e.g., responses to interview questions, reflections in the e-journals, etc.). The development of categories derived from inductive reference emerged from the data.
Besides, the categorizing tactics used were consistent with the research questions posed and with the essence of the phenomena under investigation.
Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the results of the study through a systematic analysis of themes and patterns emerging from the data. During the interpretation of the themes, several sub-themes and patterns were revealed exploring the phenomenon of identity transformation and cultural adaptation process of nonnative English teachers (NNETs) in the U.S.

During the interpretation of the themes and patterns, selected quotes of the participants’ positive and/or negative self-images were introduced. Quotes displayed the interaction of the interview conversations illustrating the findings explored during the data analysis. Also, quotes “exemplify the material used for the researcher’s analysis” (p. 265), as Kvale (1996) argued.

The verbatim in the quotes were not changed in an attempt to display what exactly was said in what circumstances. In order for the reader to understand and interpret the verbatim better, throughout the chapter the researcher preferred to code each quotation with the following abbreviations: (a) I1 (interview 1), (b) I2 (interview 2), (c) FI (focus-group interview), and (d) EJ (electronic journal).

The findings in the chapter attempted to address the following research questions of the study:

1) To what extent does L2 culture influence the built-in L1 (native language) self and identity of a NNET in the course of his advanced education in the United States?
2) As a result of further education and/or living in the U.S., do NNETs see any “change” and “transformation” in their self and identity at the personal and professional level (i.e., as a teacher, student, and sojourner)?

3) What are the difficulties and complexities (e.g., linguistic, sociocultural, psychological, etc.), if any, that NNETs encounter during their adaptation to the L2 (i.e., the US) culture?

In order to illustrate the findings in an orderly manner, the researcher prefers to present the chapter in two sections where two major themes of the study are discussed: (a) identity and self, and (b) cultural adjustment. In each section, there are other sub-themes and patterns discussed relating to the issues of NNETs’ perceptions of self and identity and their cultural adjustment. The sections in this chapter also aim to shed light on the research questions posed.

The first emerging theme, *Identity and Self*, mainly represented the NNETs’ self perceptions (i.e., perceptions about their professional, linguistic and cultural identity), and their perceptions concerning the host nationals, co-nationals, and inter-nationals. The sub-themes emerged in this section were as follows: (a) NNETs’ self perceptions as international graduate students; (b) NNETs’ self perceptions as nonnative-speaking teachers; (c) NNETs’ perceptions regarding their native culture and co-nationals; (d) NNETs’ perceptions regarding the host culture and the host nationals; and (e) NNETs’ perceptions regarding other inter-nationals.

The second theme discussed in this chapter is *Cultural Adjustment*. The Cultural Adjustment section consists of three sub-themes: (a) factors, (b) outcomes, and (c) coping strategies. The first sub-theme discusses the factors influencing the cultural adjustment of
Theme 1: NNET’s Identity and Self

This section provides in greater detail descriptive analysis and discussion of the NNETs’ perceptions in the following areas: (a) as international graduate students, (b) as nonnative-speaking English teachers, (c) regarding their native culture and co-nationals, (d) regarding the host culture and the host nationals, and (e) regarding other internationals.

a) NNETs as International Graduate Students

As international students, none of the NNET participants felt themselves inferior or superior to their American peers; instead they insisted on referring to themselves as “different” from Americans. All participants agreed that they brought something unique and different with them to the culture hosting them (i.e., C2). The NNETs indicated that they were aware of the culturally-diverse nature of the American classroom and society and it appeared that they perceived their representing a different culture as an advantage which made them fit into the society better.

For example, Ming appeared to be proud of his “multicultural identity.” He said he viewed himself as a person who “develop[s] branches of different cultures.” Holding a
multicultural identity also meant being “multi-lingual and multi-literal [literate]” for Ming. He continued, “The language I’m speaking [Chinese] represents the culture and then bring me to that cultural identity. And also, I’m advocating the diversity of human being. I appreciate this and I evaluate people from different cultural background.”

The NNETs in the study perceived themselves to be motivated, determined, strong-minded, and hardworking graduate students. They concentrated on studying and spending all their time to work hard on assignments (e.g., academic research and papers). Ming made this statement on this issue:

I have high expectations, aspiration, motivation. . . . I’ve always wanted a better future, and looking for a better future; working hard. . . . To me what is important is not material life; more important is academic life. Actually my life here is very simple. I try to keep my life as simple as possible so that I can concentrate on studying, working. (FI)

Eun-jin agreed, and shared similar beliefs:

Also I have strong motivation and needs. I came to this country to be a professor at the university I graduated from. So this kind of strong motivation and my future career are helping me. . . . my parents, my friends’ expectations in Korea [motivate me]. (I1)

However, all participants admitted that the American academic life in general is more challenging than the academic life in their home countries. They were spending more time studying and doing research for their studies. They were not happy with the fact that their studies and research were taking all their time, leaving them no time to
relax and enjoy themselves. The Asian NNETs in particular complained about not having enough time to socialize and make friends. For example, Eun-jin said:

> We have lots of things; we don’t have time to socialize. We live in our world; we can’t have time to share. We can’t have time to enjoy. Even though sometimes I have time unexpectedly, I cannot ask to enjoy to talk something ‘cause I know the person has lots of things, important things. (I2)

The NNETs felt the U.S. was the ideal place to pursue one’s education. They trusted the expertise of their American professors, and they found them very supportive and unbiased. On the other hand, they indicated that how the U.S. education system worked and what was expected from a teacher/student in the U.S. (e.g., teacher/student roles) appeared to be dissimilar to the system in their home countries. For example, Dawa claimed the education in the U.S. aimed to encourage the students to be independent thinkers and engage them into research. The students were expected to be critical thinkers who were supposed to question and analyze the subject matter. He commented on the issue as follows:

> In my system students are not that independent. You have the teacher who comes and who passes information, knowledge. He or she is the one who knows, and you rely on him or her to get all the info, and you try to assimilate it, to make it yours. That’s not the case in this system here. Students probably learn this from high school, from elementary school I don’t know, but you have to become independent not to rely on the teacher or instructor for everything. It’s not he just throws out the info. You have to find it for yourself; but it’s really difficult. (FI)
For Ming, the American professors were more “demanding” compared to the professors in China. On the other hand, he said they let you “focus” on your studies more. He also believed the American classroom has a more “free,” “casual,” “relaxed,” and “fun” atmosphere filled with “heated discussions” and “laughters.” He explained his impression in these words:

The professors in America are more demanding than those in China. I feel a lot of pressure. I feel I am always pushed to achieve something. Every week I have to write one or two journals. Before to do so, I have to read a lot but in China the most difficult [thing] for the students is to get in [a university]. Once you get in, you stay. You don’t need to worry about much. So in China the expectations from a graduate student at the entrance level is high because of peer competition. . . .

The competition is intense. In the US, I see it’s much easier to get in [a university]. Another thing is I can focus on my study more [in the US]. . . . Actually young teachers in China are adopted the “American” . . . teaching style. There is a casual relaxed atmosphere . . . free, casual, a lot of discussion, heated discussion, and the classroom is full of laughters . . . just like a talk show . . .

David Letterman’s talk show. (12)

Eun-jin’s impressions and experiences about an American classroom were very similar to Ming’s. Eun-jin seemed to favor the interactive classroom atmosphere in the U.S. where students were expected to contribute in the classroom discussions. She expressed her feeling in these words:
What I understand of an American classroom is . . . I can learn and other students can learn. . . . When I have an idea and when I contribute my ideas to others . . . there is classroom discussion. . . . sometimes we can have different opinions. (I2)

Ming claimed that the American students were more “outspoken” and “active” in class and “involved” with the subject matter than the Chinese students. However, his classmates’ involvement in class sometimes looked like they were trying to “monopolize” the class, because he thought they loved “speaking too much.” Ming also believed his American classmates liked to challenge the professor or even dare to ask “stupid questions” to the professors. He said:

The students here in America tend to be more active, more involved. Sometimes they tend to monopolize the class. They speak too much. They talk too much. They’re willing to take the initiative. They are willing to take the risk of asking . . . a stupid question. Also, they are willing to challenge the instructor. In China, if you challenge the instructor and if the instructor cannot respond to your question, you feel embarrassed. Not only the teacher but the whole class. (I1)

Similarly, Eun-jin seemed to be shocked when she realized that it was acceptable to challenge the professor no matter how old the professor was. She also pointed out that that students’ having different ideas from each other was perfectly acceptable in the system.

b) NNETs as Nonnative-speaking English teachers

When the NNETs were describing themselves as language teachers, they indicated that their nonnative English status did not make them “bad” or “good” teachers;
what mattered for the NNETs was the necessity for a teacher’s professional development and improvement. They highlighted the rationale behind their enrollment in their present graduate programs; they all wanted to become “better” and “more knowledgeable” teachers. Therefore, they did not believe in the pseudopower struggle between native speaking (NS) and nonnative-speaking (NNS) English teachers. Also the NNETs underlined that depending on the context “there are areas where a NS would be more useful than a NNS, and there are areas it would be vice versa” as Dawa argued. Almost all the NNETs appeared to be confident teachers as NNS of English. Some of them considered themselves superior to NS teachers, if not their equal. They believed their EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching background would bring extra advantages to the language classroom, such as empathy, where English was taught as a second language. However; among the participants, only the Korean NNET, Eun-jin, did not seem to be confident with her English proficiency as an English teacher, and she indicated that she did not feel competent enough to teach in the U.S. She also thought that the NNS teachers could not find job as teachers of English due to their “nonnativeness.”

Eun-jin described herself as “an advanced ESL speaker” who was still “in the process of learning.” Therefore, she revealed that if she were the ESL student, she would not want to learn English from another NNS. She explained:

Even though my English is not bad, it’s hard to feel confident in teaching English in the US. . . . When I teach, I say I should have confidence in any teaching, but here because of my status as a foreigner, as a person who has a different accent and a different way of speech, it’s hard to feel comfortable. . . . If I were a student . . . I wouldn’t have a NNS teacher who has a different accent. But when they
[language learners] come to another country, they expect they have a NS teacher and through them they learn the language but at the same time I think also they want to learn the culture as well as the language. . . . I can teach something but I’m in the learning process. I think I’ll be in the learning process forever. I think I will have this feeling forever if I stay in the US. (I1)

Zeina appeared to draw attention to the similarities between the NS and NNS teachers rather than the differences between the two. She believed both teachers shared equal advantages in the English language teaching profession. For her, country of origin or ability to speak the language natively was not a distinctive feature of a good language teacher. On the contrary, she preferred to give more credit to further training over nativeness. She thought as long as both the NS and NNS teachers had similar degrees of education and training, they should not be treated differently. She expressed her thoughts in these words:

As long as you have the right education, it doesn’t matter if it’s a NS or NNS of English. As long as they both have the same professional background and they are both well-trained, it doesn’t really matter whether you are a NS or you are not a NS. There are advantages I would find either or. (I2)

Dawa indicated that the students in the U.S. had a prejudice against NNS teachers. He thought it was a prejudice based on “ignorance” and a reaction to the unfamiliar and the unknown:

At the beginning of my TAship, I had some problems because most of the times students have hard time with my accent, and ignorance of course. For example, when they don’t know [what the lecture was about], they said; “oh, he is a NNS,
that’s why I can’t understand.” In reality, it has nothing to do with the accent. It’s something to do with they have a new context and they aren’t expecting everything to be like that. . . . In reality, it has nothing to do with the accent. (I1)

He was aware of the fact that he had a different accent as a result of his ethnic-linguistic origin and the education he received in British English. However, he did not seem to consider his different accent and his NNS status as a disadvantage to his profession or to the students; on the contrary he believed his being a NNS teacher would bring many benefits to a language classroom that perhaps a NS teacher would not be able to bring. He pointed out that having a NNS teacher would force the students to listen to the subject more carefully and concentrate more on the subject; to be more tolerant to different speakers of English; and to find out different roles and experiences of a teacher coming from an “exotic” culture. He explained:

I say the things that a NS wouldn’t say that they aren’t used to; I’m straight forward. . . . They know that I’m doing it for their own good, but also they know that what they did wouldn’t please the teacher. It’s not appropriate in any education classroom. Being a college student is not only enrolling in a university. There are things that as a college student you need to know. Recently, I asked them who is the Secretary-General of the U.N. Only one student in the section out of fifty knew the answer: Kofi Annan. I guess these are things for example that a NS may not ask them. He may think that maybe it’s not important but to me it’s important. Teaching is not just learning about nations in Africa, it’s also learning about what’s going on in the world. . . . I also take my own experiences, my international experiences. [He gives examples] This is what happened when I was
teaching in Burkina Faso. This is what happened when I was in Japan. They like it. In such a context, in an African traditional family, in such a situation, this is what the father would do. They like that. This is something that NSs can’t bring because they don’t know about it. (I2)

Dawa also believed that “in the context of ESL, the trained NS has more advantages than the NNS” because “there are situations depending on the students’ needs where they need a NS and there are situations where they need a NNS.” He continued, “you can count on a NS in terms of some of the cultural information they have,” whereas, for example in an EFL context, “a NNS is able to explain the things that are not part of his training, things like students need when they get out of the classroom.”

Dawa indicated that the cultural differences made it “hard” for him to teach in the U.S. The teacher roles he was responsible for in his home country seemed quite different from the roles of a teacher in a Western culture (e.g., teacher is the facilitator). Moreover, he still seemed to be having some conflicts regarding the way he identified himself with the assumed teacher roles in the U.S.:

Especially in Africa, we say it takes a village to raise a child. So, it’s quite different. . . . Back in Africa, the teacher is not only a teacher, he is an educator. . . . We had some delegation from the parent to act as a parent, as a father, or as a mother. . . . this is something liked by the students, by the parents, by the whole society, but not the kids here. In the US, you come to class to teach. The education of the kid, the student, is not your problem. It’s the family’s . . . so this makes it really hard for someone who is used to the system back there. This just itself creates a few problems. (I1)
Eun-jin also seemed confused because of the differences between the expectations and roles of a teacher in Korea and in the U.S. She said:

The teacher [In Korea] is believed to be the person who delivers the knowledge, and students receive the knowledge. I thought I [was] expected to know almost everything or to be perfect, and I also tried to do that. Now I know it’s impossible. But at the time, I thought I should be. That can be authority. At the same time that can be also confidence in my teaching. That makes me confident. That makes other students to feel; “Oh, she knows a lot.”; “She’s the person we can follow.” They trust that they can expand their learning. . . . When I teach, my teaching still tends to go to teacher-centered rather than student-centered because of my background. (I1)

As a NNS of English and a teacher, Ming revealed that he considered himself a role model, or as he put it, “a success example of learning English.” He thought being a NNS was “more advantaged” since NNS teachers themselves had the experience of learning a foreign language, and therefore, they could feel more empathy towards English language learners. According to Ming, as a NNS English teacher, he was aware of the language learning process, and he was able to introduce his own learning techniques to his students that he found helpful when he was a student himself. Like Ming, Paco also believed that his being a NNS of English was an “advantage” over a NS teacher because he argued NNSs could see the problems and difficulties of learning a foreign language “from the inside.” He did not think that “a NS can see it in more objectivity.” Like Ming and Paco, Eun-jin agreed that a NNS teacher would be a good role model, and that language learners could benefit from their NNS teachers in many different ways. Although Eun-jin
did not feel comfortable as a NNS teaching English in the U.S., and she herself preferred to learn English from a NS (both of which seemed to be conflicting with her statements below), she said there were many advantages of having a NNS:

I [as a NNS] might know their errors or mistakes, what their needs better than NS teachers, and also, in terms of maybe grammar also, they, the NS teachers, can use the certain points of grammar, but they might not explain better than us. . . . I learned the grammar and so . . . through that I can explain certain grammar points in different ways than the NSs sometimes. . . . I notice their problems better than NS teachers. . . . I can share my experience as a language learner as well as a language teacher. (I1)

c) Perceptions of NNETs Regarding Their Native Culture and Co-nationals

As far as the cultural characteristics were concerned, most NNET participants perceived their native culture (C1) to be different from the host culture (C2) in terms of academic life, social and personal relationships, intra and interpersonal relations, value of family and friendship, and concept of time. In the study, it was observed that all the NNETs wanted to keep strong ties between themselves and the C1 while living in the U.S.

As previously mentioned, each NNET in this study comes from a different ethnic and cultural background. However, the data indicated that there were more similarities the cultures shared than perceived differences. For example, spontaneity was favored in both African and Hispanic cultures. The time concept was significantly different for these cultures; people in their cultures preferred living not a pre-organized and pre-planned life.
Three of 5 participants stated that their people were tolerant, sociable, outspoken, interactive, curious and inquisitive. These commonalities among the cultures (i.e., African, Hispanic, and the Middle-eastern cultures) constituted a significant part of the process of cultural adjustment and identity construction for these 3 participants. In addition, it resulted in generating similar expectations, accomplishments, and even failures and disappointments on the NNETs’ part.

Dawa described his native African culture as “interactive,” “outspoken,” and “spontaneous” as well as inquisitive and curious. He said:

People live outside on the streets [In Africa]. It’s exactly the opposite here because you are outside only for some purpose, where could you get something, and you run into your house. You close your house, you close your door, and that’s it. It’s the opposite back there. You don’t close your door. It’s open. (I1)

Dawa also indicated that his native culture put a lot of importance on education and the notion of family. Likewise, Paco pointed out that the interaction among Colombian people was “different” from the way American people interacted. He said:

At home, out of curiosity, if you are in trouble people would come to you and ask you, “what’s wrong with you?” . . . . People create certain kind of protecting shields around them [in the U.S.]: [they say] “I don’t want to hear.”; “I don’t want to see.”; “I don’t want to talk.” On the other hand, when I reflect it to my culture we exaggerate that to the other extremes. We need to find a middle ground. We shouldn’t be like this, but we shouldn’t be like the other one either. At home, it’s totally opposite. I mean people all interfere and walk into your lives. People there act under the impression that your life is everybody’s life. (I1)
When asked to describe her native Lebanese culture, Zeina had a lot to say:

When I look at myself as a Lebanese, this is what I am really. We grew up in a country that hospitality industry is the biggest industry. You can come anytime. I don’t want to change that because it’s me; my sociability; . . . servitude: [She describes servitude] the capacity to be able to help others without expecting anything in return. I found that in our Lebanese culture. You help them; you’re called *kadum*. It means serving, *serviable*. You serve people. . . . The other thing [is] the non-materialistic world [view]. We don’t live because we’re going to have so many things. We live because we have so many people. The people are important to us. The eminent of human nature is important to us. . . . [There is] the openness to other cultures. Nobody scares us in our country. . . . There is sincerity. (I2)

In addition to Lebanese people’s being hospitable, sociable, serviable, non-materialist, tolerant, and sincere, Zeina, like Dawa, also indicated that pursuing a quality education was important in Lebanon. She explained:

The other thing about us is the higher education. I’m very proud of the education I received in Lebanon. Our education wants you to be very rounded all the way. So I have to have the history of France, the history of England, the history of America. I know all about America before I even figured out where America is.

(I2)

The concept of time appeared to be a distinguishing characteristic between C1 and C2. The African and the Latin American NNET both pointed out that people were not concerned about time in their home countries.
As Dawa put:

In my culture, time does not really exist. . . . It is human beings [that] exist.

Tomorrow [or] today doesn’t really mean anything. If I answer your question now . . . [or] tomorrow, it’s the same thing. (I2)

Paco similarly indicated that:

In my culture, we need to be very episodic. You ask a question to a person, and my goodness it takes two years before the person starts answering your question. . . . If you ask this question to my father, it would take him three hours to give me a simple answer. I say “Dad, please give me the answer. Please, say yes or no?”

You see it’s a cultural thing we tend to elaborate. We weave stories. (FI)

The Asian cultures were portrayed very differently from the other three cultures in the group. While The African, Hispanic, and the Middle-eastern cultures shared the cultural concepts such as interaction, outspokenness, spontaneity, warmth, and so forth, the Asian participants were found to lack these values and norms in their cultures. The Korean and the Chinese cultures were portrayed as traditional, ambitious, “industrial,” and “collectivist.” Ming specifically indicated that more and more people wanted to learn English these days in China because of China’s changing world policy, which he believed had an impact on changing the traditional structure of the society. According to Ming, China was interested in the “globalization trend” which made China to “open [herself] into the outside world [and] involve in the universal community economically and politically.” Like Ming, Eun-jin also pointed out that in Korea communication in English was considered as a necessity for globalization. She said, “They [the Korean authorities] think globalization is one of the important things for our country to have more power.”
On the other hand, if there was one thing that both the Asian cultures shared with the other cultures in the group, it was the priority and respect given to the elderly. Both Ming and Eun-jin indicated that in their cultures, for example, it was not socially acceptable to ask a question to a teacher who represented old age and wisdom. It was also very common to have the old people in the family to live with the young in the same house. Paco indicated that in Colombia, old people were not treated and neglected as “useless objects.” Similarly, in Dawa’s culture, the elderly carried a different “status”:

Old age is associated with wisdom, knowledge, experience, and as such, [thus,] elderly people come first. They are owed respect and deference. Their word is powerful, their advice is precious. No one would ever think of sending their grand-mother or grand-father to a nursing home. (EJ, 12/11/2001)

d) Perceptions of NNET Sojourners Regarding the Host Culture and Host Nationals

When the NNETs in the study were asked to express their thoughts and feelings about the U.S. and the American people, they analyzed the matter from these perspectives: (a) the socioeconomic culture in the U.S., and (b) the sociocultural structure of the U.S.

The NNETs perceived life in the U.S. as being more technologically advanced than the life in their home countries. When they were explaining the differences between the technologies in two countries, Paco stated, “in my country, simply the things do not exist, or if they exist they are still 20 years back in time.” The NNETs also described the life in the U.S. as “easier” than their home countries. All the NNETs believed that the U.S. was a land of freedom and opportunities; it held a future for those who wanted to
work hard. Both Paco and Zeina indicated that the U.S. was not similar to any European countries, or even Canada. It had its own unique characteristics when compared to other advanced English-speaking countries. Likewise, Dawa believed that there was no prejudice against foreigners in the U.S., unlike in Europe. Zeina summarized her colleagues’ feelings about the U.S. in the following words:

There is a freedom, there is opportunity, and there is feasibility. I find it you can really do things. You can find ways; you can talk to people; find funds. . . . It’s very very advanced in many many ways. And then when we come here, this opportunity is offered to us on a silver plate, more like it’s yours, take it. . . . The connotation of American culture is its opportunities, feasibility, freedom, and high technology, everything that goes on. The world is practically here, you just have to find it. You don’t find too much of the history, but that’s okay; it’s part of it.

(I2)

The NNETs also believed that the U.S. introduced them to a life enriched with “a lot of choices,” “variety,” and “accessibility” which also meant a privileged life for some NNETs.

The other adjectives describing the general characteristics of the American people perceived by the NNETs were their being “Christian,” “friendly,” “time-sensitive,” “space-conscious,” “respectful,” “helpful,” “tolerant,” “honest,” “supportive,” “sincere,” “direct,” and “patriotic.”

Both Ming and Zeina associated the American culture with Christianity. Ming believed that “Christianity is the essence of the [American] culture.” Similarly, Zeina thought living in the U.S. made her “define my religion [Catholicism] even more” and
“understand my religion even more.” While living in the U.S., she wanted to be “more religiously aware” and learn more about Catholicism and “the way other people feel” about the Catholic religion. She also made the following positive comments about the U.S. people and the culture:

There is a lot of respect of what you can do; the achievement... That’s evaluating the education that you have had... They look at you as an individual, capable. They wouldn’t take advantage of you. They would put you on a pedestal; admire you; help you get better. Number two, I really value honesty. I also appreciate the fact that people are more helpful... There are different things available to you in different places. It gives you a variety. You go up and down; you have accessibility to things you don’t have in your country. You have a science center; you have a museum; you have musical events. (I2)

When describing the American life, Ming seemed to value and appreciate the friendliness of the American people. On the other hand, he was equally surprised when he realized that they did not display any efforts to make friends with him. He said:

When I am walking on a street, some strangers come by and say “hello” all to me. I like that. In China, we don’t do such a thing. But everyone has his or her own life, and it’s not easy to become close friends. If you want to make a close friend, you need to spend much more time, but here you just cannot afford it. (I1)

For Ming, time was a luxury commodity in his life in the U.S. which was hard to afford. Similarly, Dawa perceived that respect for someone’s personal time is highly valued in the U.S. Therefore, Dawa believed Americans would show serious attention to punctuality. A similar attitude in the U.S. was also displayed towards someone’s personal
space. Dawa said, “[There is] some kind of distance. They [the Americans] do have that
distance and they don’t want anybody to go cross that space; . . . [they] respect other
people’s space.” When Paco summarized the American cultural characteristics in one of
his e-journals (dated 11/3/2001), he mentioned the same issue:

I love the fact that people do not really step on your feet all the time; they give
you your space and respect your intimacy.

American people were also perceived as “direct” people in the sense that they
were precise and focused, or as Paco put it, “They tend to say things straight; they put the
idea up front immediately.” Americans were also considered as a nation who had strong
patriotic feelings for their country. For Zeina, it was unusual when compared to not so
friendly and caring feelings of the Lebanese for their politicians in Lebanon:

The other good thing is their national feelings. I really like that. I really like what
the American loves his country. You will not hear anybody talking bad about the
President. In our country they [the politicians] are like a door mat. Everybody
wipes their feet with him. (I2)

Related to the issue of nationalism, when the participants were asked during the
focus-group interview how they felt about the September 11 events and whether they felt
threatened living in the U.S. by any means, they all stated that they were so sorry for the
Americans who lost their lives in the events. They thought it was an “awful” act, and was
not “fair” to the U.S. and to the humanity. Zeina, being the only person with an Arab
identity in the group, described it as a “turning point” for the Americans and the Arabs
living in the U.S. She explained, “I think we’re seeing a new America from now on.” It
also seemed like she believed the tragic events of September forced the Americans to
analyze themselves again and other cultures living in the U.S.

She explained her thoughts and feelings as follows:

[September 11] had been a very important part of history. The whole learning
process about people moving on as you’re moving on has been great.

Unfortunately, it’s started with a very bad event, but you can see everyone right
now is involved with everyone else. That kind of snotty nose like: “Look at us
Americans; we can do it; we don’t need anybody else”. All of a sudden, everyone
is feeling this humility.

Finally, when describing the American culture, the NNETs listed some
negative characteristics that the host culture possessed. The U.S. culture was found to be
“individualistic,” “isolated,” and lacking “warmth” and “contact.” Dawa said:

Isolation in the society. It [the life]’s more like individualistic in here more than
the society that I come from. Let me tell you even where I work right now. At the
beginning, what I suffered most from was this lack of contact, this lack of warmth
between people. You walk into the office in the morning, nobody cares who you
are. That would have never happened at home. You say “good morning,” nobody
says “good morning” to you. So for someone who doesn’t know this (this
characteristic of the society), would ask to himself “what did I do to that
person?”; “what did I do wrong?” but you did nothing wrong. It’s the way always
it is. (I2)

In addition, the Americans were considered “ignorant” and judgmental people.
They lacked interest, and thus, they had “limited information” about the world and world
events. Dawa thought they were not “open in terms of contact, interaction, and traveling.” He said only few Americans carried a passport which meant for him that they did not “enjoy an international environment” and “to cultivate other cultures.” Paco said:

I can’t stand people naïve concepts of other cultures and behavior; the stereotypes they play with; the lack of interest/knowledge of other cultures. (EJ, 11/3/2001)

Eun-jin perceived that Americans had prejudice towards certain racial group. She thought in the U.S. she would never feel “one of them” because of her color, so she would always “stand out” in the American society. She stated:

No matter how long I stay here or not, I don’t think I can have confidence in myself because I know wherever I go, I will stand out. I guess I can’t be one of them because of my language and because of my color and everything. (I1)

Likewise, Paco argued that he found himself in “a difficult position” in the U.S. when he realized that he had to place himself in a specific racial group. He explained:

This whole problem of race [in the U.S.] is also another thing that I don’t understand very well. Because in Latin America we all have several culture and ethnic backgrounds, so we don’t even care what percentage American blood or white blood we have, and nobody seems to care. . . . [in the U.S.] I’ve been taken by the Afro-Americans . . . as one of them. Then, sometimes I feel rejected from the same group. [They say] You don’t belong us. Same with the Anglo-Saxon group of population in the American society! They sometimes have said my diversity, my being different in a variable way. . . . You are . . . under a spotlight. (I1)
e) Perceptions of NNETs Regarding Other Inter-nationals

The NNETs’ perceptions regarding other students and/or sojourners coming from different countries and cultural backgrounds were different from each others’. While some felt they found a lot of things in common between their culture and other cultures, some felt “pity” for the people of other cultures, and even they felt superiority over them in some cases.

Ming believed international students shared empathy for each other; they all knew the challenges of learning a foreign language (i.e., English) and how a NNS would feel in a L2 setting. Likewise, Dawa thought although each sojourner was coming from a varying cultural and ethnic background, yet they still had a lot in common. They all had similar goals, expectations, or even failures; besides, they all came from less developed and industrialized countries where the human factor in the relationships was still in power. Dawa believed the inter-nationals had a tendency to understand each other for the following reasons:

Maybe because we’re all victims, you know. [Smiling] Victims always try to find out who is the other victim. So, they join together to survive easily. I think this is one reason. I will tell you another reason. Most countries haven't reached this level of industrialization to the point that people’s minds are transformed in a way that it becomes so hard for each individual to recognize the other individual. So I believe this is something that we also have in common. (I2)

Ming also believed the U.S. classroom is an arena where “you meet with people from different backgrounds.” He argued that people from different ethnic backgrounds bring different “ways of thinking” and thinking “patterns” into the classroom. Eun-jin
agreed with Ming, and added that, “it’s very valuable to study in another country with many different background students” because the students could “contribute” to the classroom discussion with their different ideas.

When asked if they had made any international friends in the U.S., Dawa indicated that he had friends from “everywhere”; some came from the U.S, a few from Asia, and Europe. Similarly, Paco pointed out that in the U.S. he had made friends from different parts of the worlds. Some of Paco’s friends were the local American people, but the rest came mostly from Europe. Both Ming and Eun-jin said they had very few international friends. They both stated that they were too busy with the work load at school and the fast pace of life in the U.S.; thus they complained about not having enough time to make new friends. Ming could only socialize with his Chinese friends outside school, or he was involved in activities with his American friends at church when he had free time. Eun-jin indicated that occasionally she had some free time “unexpectedly,” but even then, she was hesitant to ask a friend to go out and do something together because she knew that the friend also had a lot of “important things” to do.

The interviews revealed that some NNETs demonstrated favoritism towards or felt superiority to certain cultural groups. Zeina underlined her familiarity with certain cultural groups (e.g., the Asian and Indian people), their cultural values and so forth. She stated that she was experienced enough to display a “sensitive,” “flexible” and “spongy” attitude when dealing with cross-cultural people. This statement of hers appeared to be contradictory, though, when she was explaining how she placed herself among other international people. Growing up in Lebanon and being familiar with the Western culture through the ties of the Lebanese culture with the French made her feel advantaged in the
class next to the other students with non-western cultural backgrounds. She said she felt “sorry” for her classmate who could not follow jokes and understand the humor because of the culture barrier he had.

She explained:

When I sit next to a Chinese graduate student, during the class, the teacher referred to “Frere Jacques.” When I heard the song, I giggled. The Chinese student didn’t have a clue about what F.J. was. The teacher anticipated everyone knew what F.J. was. So everyone was singing; ‘Are you sleeping?” It wasn’t embedded in his English acquisition while we, as kids, we knew the song. He looked as if he heard something familiar but he couldn’t trace it. At the end of the activity, I felt sorry for him. While we took for the things granted, we understood humor because you’re familiar with the lines but for him it was very hard to understand humor. (I2)

Like Zeina, Dawa and Paco also felt advantaged over certain cultural groups sojourning in the U.S., especially over the Asian sojourners. Dawa claimed that his native-like proficiency and advanced literacy in another European language (i.e., French), made him feel closer to the Western culture and hence automatically to the American culture. He expressed his thoughts on the matter as follows:

Among my Asian friends, I think I’m more advantaged because, first of all, language. I speak French. I have a French background education, and sometimes like alphabet for example. There was at least one thing that I didn’t need to learn. Sometimes even if I don’t know the word, I see the root. I know what it is; either because the root is the same in French or in Spanish or in English. The way they
are written. I can recognize. But if you come from Korea, there is no way. It’s really hard. Sometimes I really pity them, especially for the written expression.

Paco argued that because of the following reasons he had fit into the American society more easily than a Chinese or an Indian would have:

Back home, we have adopted many things that are typically American without even knowing it. So we just take it for granted. When we come here we kind of say: "that's not that different.” That's why the other people probably have shocked more. Actually, you are going to find that students coming from Far Eastern countries, the situation is different. For example, Japan and Korea, for people from Japan and Korea, the shock shouldn't be as severe, but if you probably interview somebody from China, North Korea, India; they should be in great shock. (I1)

Theme 2: NNET’s Cultural Adjustment.

This section provides in detail a descriptive analysis and discussion of the NNETs’ cultural adjustment to the U.S. in the following three main areas: (a) factors, (b) outcomes, and (c) coping strategies.

The factors influencing NNETs’ cultural adjustment were perceived as: (a) personality traits (e.g., the NNETs’ preparedness for the new and unexpected, motivation, determination, maturity, willingness to observe and adaptability); and (b) time (e.g., length of time the NNETs spent with the host nationals in and outside the host culture and/or prior time spent in a L2 setting).
The overall outcomes of the NNETs’ cultural experience in the U.S. were (a) changes and transformation in the self (e.g., split of self; change in inner value system), and (b) cognitive dissonance.

Finally, the challenges and difficulties encountered by the NNETs are discussed, and some coping strategies and survival techniques used by the NNETs during their sojourn in the U.S. are listed at the end of the chapter.

a) Factors in Cultural Adjustment

i) Personality factor in NNET’s cultural adjustment.

It was found that certain common personality characteristics the NNETs shared happened to be a factor in the way they handled cultural adjustment. All the NNET participants were prepared for the unknown, the unexpected, and the novelties the American culture would bring to their lives in the U.S. Dawa believed a person’s preparing himself psychologically to “the ways he’s not used to” is very important; otherwise his life in the host culture would get “even more complicated.”

The following was how Dawa expressed his feelings:

It [cultural adaptation] also depends on how you’re prepared [for] some kind of experience before. . . . There is no such thing as “good” culture or “bad” culture. The word is “different.” That’s why you need to be prepared, but if you are not, you can easily slide through the negative side of life and it makes your life even more complicated, and you end up hating it totally because you didn’t have time or you didn’t have opportunity of analyzing and coming up with conclusions. (FI)
For Ming, the process of getting prepared for the new had even started at home. He said, “I’ve been adapting to this American culture ever since I started to learn this language.” For Ming, having learnt the language helped him “explore the culture.” He claimed that, “as soon as I came here I already had some idea about the life here,” and he added, “I already expected it.” In addition to his learning and teaching the English language, Ming claimed that watching American movies and television, listening to Voice of America on the radio, American books and magazines, and the internet, also helped him get prepared for his future life in the U.S. Nevertheless, he did not think he had been prepared “well enough for my [his] academic field” before he came to the U.S. He expressed his regrets regarding not reading enough articles and books in his field; he believed he “wasted” his time. Eun-jin also claimed that she did not feel a tremendous shock when she encountered some cultural differences in her new life in the U.S. She stated, “I might have been shocked if I didn’t expect that. I’m kind of prepared to have that kind of experience. I think it can happen in any country.”

The other trait the entire group of NNETs shared was their being motivated and determined students and sojourners. When Ming was explaining the factors contributed to his adaptation to the U.S., he stated, “Number two positive factor is I have high expectations, aspiration, motivation,” and he added, “I’ve always wanted a better future.” He seemed to be highly determined and motivated to work hard and to fulfill not only his own but also the expectations of his family, his professors, and his friends. He also underlined the fact that he did not want to waste his time; therefore he said, “I chose it and I’m going to do it well.” Like Ming, Eun-jin also mentioned having high motivation
as one of the “strong points” of her personality, and she thought it was necessary to have an easy adjustment to a new culture.

The fourth shared characteristic among the NNETs was their *mature* nature. Maturity was described as another crucial factor which eased the NNETS’ cultural adjustment process. Paco portrayed his understanding of maturity as follows:

By maturity not only mean psychological maturity or knowing what you’re doing in life, it’s something even more subtle; something more important which is maturity that includes a certain sense of who you are and who you belong to; knowing who you are, and knowing your ties and your connections with a certain culture. (FI)

Like Paco, Zeina also gave a similar description of maturity, yet she used a different expression; a filtration metaphor:

You filter to see what you can accept. And what you don’t accept, you don’t dwell on it….It [filtering] gives me more idea of what it is that belongs to me; what goes into my identity, and what I can assimilate, and what it is that is not needed for me. (FI)

The next feature that the participants believed to play a role in their adjustment to the U.S. culture was *willingness to observe* and *adaptability*. Ming described his willingness to observe and accept the novelties as a flexible attitude he preferred to take in life. He said, “My attitude is not a stubborn attitude. . . . I think the new things [I] adapt fanatically” Likewise, Eun-jin also argued that “I think I am kind of a person that I can easily change myself;” and she added she could “easily adapt to the context; to the culture.” Similarly, Zeina described her personal opinion on the issue like this:
It’s not fair to come to a place and start criticizing everyone and changing everyone for your own needs. It gets you nowhere. . . . Do things their way. . . . Otherwise, you’d better leave [the] room. When you’re in Rome, you do it as the Romans do. (I2)

**ii) Time factor in NNET’s cultural adjustment.**

All the NNETs indicated that there was a correlation between the time spent in the L2 culture and the quality of the cultural adjustment process. Almost all the participants (except Ming) indicated that the longer one spends in the new culture, the easier it gets to adapt to the changing circumstances in this new life. As Dawa described, “Culture is knowing what to do and what not to do; what to say and what not to say, and nobody can know that if you haven’t been living here enough.” On the other hand, Ming was relatively new in the culture and not very familiar with the C2 behaviors and the phases in his adaptation process at the time of the study. Thus, he did not comment on the importance of time in his personal experiences. However, he commented on the fact that he expected his adaptation would be “easier” as more time passed. When asked what he expected from his second quarter in terms of his “adaptational” achievements, he stated, “It will be easier. This was my very first quarter here in America. I have many many first experiences.”

Naturally, time did not pass easily for the NNETs all the time during their sojourn. The NNETs pointed out that there were times when they felt hatred, regret, and disappointment against the host culture and about their decision to come here. However, they indicated that having such negative feelings were also a part of their adjustment. In
fact, this bitter attitude was seen as a sign of healthy adaptation. Paco’s comments on the issue were very honest:

In any situation in life, in my opinion, if you raise up your expectations too high, you’re going to be disappointed. . . . the clue is just to take what is there and make the best of it. I have always told many students in my situation just coming from another country: “This is a first time you see everything and everything you’re going through is a glamorous period. Everything here looks stunning, beautiful. There will be a moment you’ll start hating it. You’ll be very critical of everything they [Americans] do.” I went through that period when I hated everything Americans did. It’s true. I also had experience in working with Americans at home. For me it was great opportunity to see Americans acting in their own environment. To be honest, I hated that. . . . I became extremely critical of American attitudes, particularly “self” concepts, self-centricism about being the American way is better, the best. It’s not what really people say but people do things. But then again I went through another period which I began to go through. . . . [I realized] that’s going to happen anyway, anywhere. (11)

As more time passed in the new culture, the NNETs realized they would find out more about the American culture. As Paco said; “you’re going to adopt all these things that were not yours before. And with time, the longer [time] you spent here, the more you’re going to be taking.” Through this self discovery, the NNETs appeared to realize more about the options their present life would offer. Surprisingly, it was not only the discovery of the American culture they achieved, but also the discovery of the self. In other words, time seemed to allow the NNETs to observe the people in the host culture
better and find out more about their beliefs and values as well as finding out more about their own. The NNETs’ comments pointed out the fact that as they spent more time in the U.S., they had a chance to approach their own native cultural thoughts, beliefs and values in an introspective manner. They were able to evaluate many of the built-in C1 beliefs and values more objectively.

Moreover, the participants questioned the efficiency and the necessity of these beliefs and values in their native cultures. This introspective attitude towards reexamining their cultural norms and values was natural, not forced. Likewise, it was not planned; it happened in time and it happened unconsciously. The reexamination of the built-in cultural behaviors and the comparison of these behaviors to those in the host culture appeared to be a continuous process. As Paco claimed, “the longer I stay here the more I’m realizing that.”

Another factor related to the issue of time was the presence of one’s earlier experience in a L2 setting (i.e., previous visits to the U.S., and/or any other English speaking country), or FL setting where English was used as a foreign language. Time spent in the host culture (or in another L2/FL setting) prior to the recent sojourn played a role and should be considered a factor in the NNET’s cultural adjustment process, or as Zeina indicated, “If you have seen it before, your experience before, the next one is much easier.” Referring to her earlier living experiences in different countries, she said she felt “privileged” in the sense that she was “more equipped to live here than somebody else.”

Finally, prior time spent with the host nationals outside the host culture (e.g., in the NNET’s home culture) had a positive impact on the NNETs’ adaptation process. All of the NNETs had prior work experience with the Americans in their home countries. For
example, Ming felt the “previous experience with the American colleagues back in China helped me getting adapted to my life in the U.S.” He claimed that the experience was beneficial and helpful in terms of the “communication with the Americans.” He added, “I have no problem with understanding them” as far as the level of his English language proficiency was concerned, and also he had no problems understanding “the communication patterns; how they communicate with each other.”

b) Outcomes of Cultural Adjustment

i) Change and transformation in NNETs’ self.

Different patterns of change and transformation emerged related to the issue of the NNETs’ re-examination and re-conceptualization of their identities. The first emerging pattern was based on how the NNETs perceived their changing and (trans)forming identities. They described the transformation their identities went through in different terms and stages. For some of the NNET participants, the phenomenon was described as “splitting into two selves.” For others, it was described as a feeling of being trapped “between two cultures and selves” Finally, some NNETs claimed that living in two cultures led them to create a third identity of their own; a formation of an alternative identity, “a border identity.” In any of these cases, the NNETs felt dilemma in selves.

Dawa stated that he could see his self dividing into two personas. He said, “There are times I say I don’t belong to that culture. Right now, unfortunately, I don’t belong to Burkina Faso either.” He explained that the new persona generated as a result of living in the U.S. for certain time was expected to act and think like “them” (i.e., the Americans). However, such an attempt led to confusion for him.
Eun-jin indicated that she felt trapped between the Korean and the American cultures especially in academic settings. During her masters in the past and in her current doctoral program, Eun-jin was able to observe, compare and contrast the differences between the Korean and American academic culture. What she enjoyed and appreciated most in her American classroom was the student interaction, which was unheard of in the Korean education system. However, when she had to take classes with the other Korean students, instead of the usual enjoyment she would take out of the discussions, she was concerned about a possible peer-pressure that might have been put upon her by her Korean classmates. As a result, she got “messed up”; she chose not to join the discussions or challenge other people’s ideas (as she always loved to do), and she felt uncomfortable and confused. She explained her standing “in-between two cultures” as follows:

[In the U.S.] I need to . . . be involved in a classroom discussion the way it works in the U.S. At the same time I have to think how other Korean students will accept my questions. . . . They are used to always listen, and they aren’t supposed to be against of somebody. I wish they understand why the American classroom was better . . . [even though] we can have different opinions. . . . It’s confusing; sometimes I don’t feel comfortable. When I say something I have this two in my mind; because of these two cultures going on in my class and also outside of class sometimes I messed up these two cultures. (I2)

Paco also admitted that he had changed as a result of living in the U.S. for a couple of varying periods of time. As a result, now he was feeling he was in between two cultures, and furthermore, his transformed identity made him “problematic.” He said:
I realize maybe it has made me problematic in myself, you see, with myself. Like now I feel sometimes that I don't fit anywhere. I'm in between. I say I take the best part of this but there are so many things here that I don't like. In the same way, I become more critical at my own people, at my own society, at my own idiosyncrasy, my own way of doing things. Sometimes I get more angry there [in Colombia] . . . because we have good things and we don't realize and we don't practice [them]. (I2)

Ming commented on the phenomenon of the split image of self as follows:

I think sometimes I split into two self images. One is the one; the previous one; the one belongs to my native culture. And, the new one, the new self derived from the new environment. This new one is growing with caution. . . . There’s a main body of you in the center [drawing a circle in the air with his hands], and whenever you come to a new culture, then you develop a branch; your self image over here. (FI)

Zeina, being a global nomad herself, felt that there were many things to adopt from other cultures. She indicated that she had to change to take these “good things.” During this process, it was not necessary for Zeina to leave her Lebanese self aside; thus, she decided to create a third identity. When asked to describe the change she experienced in her, she explained:

R (researcher): You say you have kept your Lebanese identity but at the same time you said you’ve changed?

Z: Of course. It’s almost like a border: a border identity. (I2)
Among the participants, Ming was the only NNET who did not seem to be experiencing a significant change and transformation in his internal self. It may have been due to the limited time he had spent in the host culture (i.e., 3 months) at the time of the study; either he did not experience any change and transformation or he may not have known how to address the phenomenon. He seemed as if he was not sure what his “self splitting in two” really meant to him. His making use of the tree metaphor with developing branches portrayed more of an expansion and growth. By describing “a tree’s splitting into a body [trunk] and a branch” during its growing process, he wanted to draw attention to the psychological and intellectual growth and expansion he had experienced so far. Thus, it was clear that his breaking up into the “new self” and “the self that belongs to his native culture” was taken as a positive outcome of his cultural experience in the U.S.

In sum, the NNETs felt that after spending a certain amount of time in the U.S., they represented neither their native cultures nor the host culture any longer. They argued they were stuck between two cultures feeling, neither “one of us” nor “one of them.” As a result, they acknowledged that they had to craft this third identity, an in-between persona, in order to provide harmony and establish peace between their confused feelings and actions, and their perplexed perceptions and selves.

The other finding the data revealed was based on how the NNETs perceived and examined the values and belief systems in the host culture. During the process of this re-examination, a lot of comparisons between the C1 and C2 took place before change and transformation took place. Some changes in the self were taken by the NNETs as positive
while the others as negative. At the same time, most of the NNET participants were confused as to how to name the changes, if not positive or negative.

The NNETs considered the changes regarding tolerance, directness (preciseness), efficiency, and perfectionism as being positive. Almost all the participants highlighted how learning to be more tolerant had a positive impact on their personalities and life in the U.S. Zeina stated, “Culturally, I’m much more tolerant than I could ever thought.” Like Zeina, Paco expressed his feelings about being more tolerant:

So, I’ve learnt to become more tolerant. The more I know people from more different walks of life and from different cultures the more I understand that I was wrong. . . . I adapt myself to all those forms maybe because there is so much richness and there is so much to learn from other people than just being what I am and thinking that I’m in the right position. (FI)

Changing to become more precise and direct and “go to the point immediately,” as Paco put it, was considered as another positive change among the NNETs. The other positive change the NNETs experienced in their personalities was related to their becoming more efficient and perfectionist in their professional life. According to Paco, before coming to the U.S. he was “sloppy” in many ways; however, he realized later on how “important” it is to do things “well,” and “present yourself well.”

The NNETs considered the changes in their identities regarding the concepts such as impatience, egocentrism, hypocrisy, and distrust as negative changes. They indicated that norms and values such as those regarding family relations and personal relationships were quite different in the two cultures, yet they clashed most of the time. Moreover, they felt they were forced to get used to these “not likeable” and “negative” changes, and
chose to perform in the “expected” way for quick and easy adaptation. Paco and Dawa made very similar statements regarding the fact that they are becoming less patient towards people and situations:

P: The negative is I have become more impatient; impatient in several senses. Impatient in the sense that I think it’s due to technology and all that, I’m not willing to wait for things to happen. You know like a simple telephone call. I wanted to be “now” and “good,” see what I mean? By the same token, I’m impatient with results. I want to see results; I want to see “good” results, and I want to see them “now.” I have no time to waste.

D: I’m also getting impatient, as everybody was also saying, things that I wouldn’t have done before. . . . Give me the answer, straightforward, right now.

(FI)

The other negative changes the NNETs underwent were related to their becoming more “self-centered” and “hypocritical.” When Paco was justifying why he changed to be self-centered, he said; “Well, I’m alone. I have to survive. I have to make my ego stronger. I have to make my goals stronger. Because I know that if I falter, nothing is going to come [and help me get up]. There is no support.” Dawa pointed out that he turned out to be a “more hypocritical” person in the U.S. Most of the NNETs seemed to indicate that their being self-centered and insincere might have been a result of distrust they developed through time. The following comments of Paco, Dawa, and Eun-jin are given to illustrate their thoughts and feelings on this matter:

P: I’m cautious with everything, even in my relations. I think it twice before I say something. I tend to close myself much more than I used to be. One, for self-
defense, two, maybe due to the many things that are happening around us in the last ten years. . . . Intimating with people is not priority number one for me. I let people drop in my life. I will keep them if I see something [good about them]; if not, [I] let them go. (I1)

D: Don’t tell people what you think. You have to learn how to hide some of your feelings. You don’t automatically voice out what’s going on in your mind. They don’t like it. Although you think it could help them, this is a different culture. (FI)

E: I think I have some distrust that I didn’t have before. I’m kind of leading myself to be safe. That was not me before, compared to living in Korea. I don’t trust people; I don’t open my mind; I have very limited myself. . . . I became careful. Being more careful is good in one hand, but on the other hand, it can limit myself to only certain people. (I1)

Concepts introduced by the host culture and adopted by the NNETs, such as independence, outspokenness, materialism, time-sensitiveness, space-consciousness, individualism, and personal distance, appeared to create confusion when the participants wanted to describe them. These concepts either did not exist in the NNETs’ home cultures, or if they existed, they carried the opposite value. Hence, the participants found it difficult whether to describe these concepts as positive or negative, or neither.

Regarding the issue of independence, Dawa stated, “As a student there was a big change when I came here: learning how to become independent. Because in my system students are not that independent.” Related to the issue of being outspoken, Eun-jin explained:

I don’t necessarily know if they are positive or negative changes but I know that I try to change myself in a positive way. But as I said when I go back to Korea I
don’t know whether my behaviors will be in an acceptable way in my country because I became more outspoken. Sometimes we can challenge our professors, sometimes regardless of their age, but it’s not accepted back in Korea. (I2)

Dawa also mentioned other concept-based changes he experienced as a result of adopting the cultural concepts in the U.S. such as materialism, time-sensitiveness, and space-consciousness. During the interviews, Dawa appeared to be questioning whether these new concepts presented by the host culture were worth adopting. He even admitted that he did not “totally agree” with them. However, he also admitted that he had “no choice” and he felt “it was the right thing to do,” so he adopted the American way. He explained:

My priorities have changed. I think this is part of the culture, again we’re trying to adapt this culture. So it doesn’t mean that you totally agree with that, but you have to do it. For example, one of the priorities in my life is job, money, being materially comfortable. This is something that I don’t like but it has become part of these changes in me; I have no choice you know. Related to that is becoming time-conscious. (FI)

Related to the issues of individualism and personal distance, Paco agreed with Dawa. He criticized the individuals in the U.S. society as being indifferent to each other’s problems. On the other hand, he clarified that he did not approve of what Colombians did, either. He did not like when his people “interfered” and “walked” into other people’s lives. He wanted to find a “middle ground.” He explained:

People look indifferent to other people’s problems; . . . people create certain kind of protecting shields around them. “I don’t want to hear; I don’t want to see; I
don’t want to talk.” At home, it’s totally opposite. People there act under the impression that your life is everybody’s life. We need to find a middle ground. We shouldn’t be like this, but we shouldn’t be like the other one either. (I1)

**ii) Cognitive dissonance.**

During the analysis of the data, the theme of cognitive dissonance emerged in relation to the NNETs’ changing their cultural setting and becoming introduced to a new belief and value system in the new culture. The NNETs knew that they had to adapt to the changing conditions and the new cultural life in the U.S.; on the other hand, the dissonance occurred when they had to choose between the two actions: to change or not to change the real self.

During the focus-group interviewing, when asked which verb, “to adapt” or “to adopt,” described their adjustment better, the NNETs did not want to separate the two from each other. The researcher defined “to adapt” as NNETs’ cultural adaptation (i.e., acculturation); however, “to adopt” implied cultural assimilation. Paco believed that adaptation was a continuous process and adopting “the new things” happen at the same time as adapting to “the new things.” He indicated, “You’re adapting all the time, but in the process of adaptation, every once in a while, you need to do that [to adopt].” The overlapping nature of “adoption” and “adaptation” during the adjustment process was described in similar terms by Dawa:

These two things go together. You can’t adapt if you don’t adopt. That thing [adaptation] is actually selecting, and in this process of selection, you adopt some of the common phrases and some of the pictures that you want to be part of your
experience so that you can survive. The example of white bird [referring to an earlier comment], it’s like that. If you don’t do that, you don’t survive, but there is no way. So I think these two closely related: to adapt and to adopt. (FI)

For them, adoption meant assimilation, or as Zeina called, “dilution.” However, they did not want to be assimilated, or alienated to their original built-in identities. Adaptation, on the other hand, meant a happy and successful sojourn in the U.S. without necessarily giving up on their cultural values and beliefs. As a result, dissonance resulted when they had to choose between these two contradictory beliefs (i.e., acculturation and assimilation) that the words “to adapt” and “to adopt” symbolized.

All participants seemed to tend to add more consonant beliefs because they wanted to outweigh the dissonant belief (i.e., the negative connotations of “to adopt”). For example, for Zeina, adjusting to the culture does not create “major” and “radical” changes in the real “her.” She expressed her feelings as follows:

You sort of adapt, but there is no major radical change in you. You just understand people. In fact, the older you become the more you revert to your own self. I never lose my identity. I know who I am. I am Lebanese. [It is] sort of the person comes and there is only one kind of food offered, if you’re hungry you’re going to eat it, right? It’s that kind of adaptation; not dilution of identity. (FI)

For Zeina, what “dilution of identity” meant was similar to her losing identity, not knowing where she belonged. She described her feelings with an interesting metaphor:

You know like you have a very good cup of orange juice and you add water to it. All of a sudden this juice is not juice. It’s not water. It’s nothing. The more water
you add the less anything it is. And then suddenly, it turns into an orange liquid.

That’s the sense; this kind of identity. (FI)

Similarly, Dawa refused to believe that the changes had an impact on his true internal self. He indicated that they managed to preserve the real self in him. He said he would not want to “bend” himself more for the sake of a better adjustment; otherwise he said he knew he would “crack.” He was “too old” and it was “too late” to erase his real self and get assimilated; his “personality, psyche, and everything” had already developed. He explained:

R (researcher): Dawa, do you think then you’re assimilated?
D: No, into the American culture? No, I don’t think so. And I don’t think I will ever be assimilated. Because Americans will see that this guy [referring himself] is not from us [the Americans]. There are domains where I can’t change.
R: You didn’t really lose the real Dawa in here [pointing to the head], right?
D: No, I didn’t lose it. I’ll never lose it. I think it also depends on the age. Are you coming to the foreign culture at an age when it’s too late? You know probably my kids will be assimilated. Maybe not totally. They came younger. They are more flexible. My personality, my psyche, my everything maybe have already developed. It wasn’t easy to bend. You wouldn’t bend too much; otherwise it would crack. (I2)

For Paco, successful cultural adjustment was similar to an effective “camouflage.” He believed that clinging only onto one’s real self was no different from “standing alone in the midst.” While preserving the real old himself, Paco argued, he was also able to add the new things to his old self. He said:
I was ready to jump to that one over there [pointing at the “to adapt” flashcard], but I think you also need this [pointing at the “to adopt” flashcard] to a certain degree, a certain amount of [adoption]. Why? A new white bird in a flock of black birds would become too evident. So with time, that white bird needs to grow something that camouflages him; makes him blend with his surroundings, with the things around him. Because you cannot stand alone like you’re in the midst of there is not you. You have to take something and add it to make it yours. (FI)

Like Paco and Zeina, Eun-jin also stated that she was able to accept the U.S. culture while “keeping her own culture.” She did not like it when her Korean friends teased her about losing her culture and forgetting her origin. She disagreed with the fact that she was Americanized; she was only trying to adapt herself to the “academic system”:

She [her Korean friend] made fun of me because I messed up a Korean sentence. I said in Korean with English structures. . . . She said I don’t understand how you can mess up Korean like that even though you stayed only 3 years. I don’t feel comfortable by hearing that. I don’t think I’m Americanized. . . . I need to more focus on improving maybe adapt myself to be better and in this academic system. (I2)

As she met more Koreans, Eun-jin realized that there were things that she was forgetting slowly about her own culture. Yet, she recently found out certain things about the popular Korean culture that she had never heard before. She reported:

There are many [Korean] students in our program. . . . They talk about Korea. I don’t know what they are talking because I forgot many of things and also rather
than forgetting, there are new things happening; new kind of entertainers; new songs, and they make fun of me sometimes. [They say,] ‘You are not Korean because you don’t know nothing about Korea.’ (I1)

iii) Coping strategies used during cultural adjustment.

The third emerging pattern in the NNET participants’ cultural adjustment was related to their personal way of dealing with the difficulties and challenges they encountered during their adjustment. Each strategy and method, used consciously or unconsciously, seemed to work well in the case of each individual, and seemed to help them survive in the U.S.

Dawa’s way

Dawa was the NNET in the group who had the longest sojourn in the U.S. After completing his Ph.D. degree in the U.S., he and his family decided to live in the host culture. They had been in the U.S. for seven years. While he considered himself, his wife and their two children “survivors,” he seemed disappointed when he said his oldest son “couldn’t make it” and went back to Burkina Faso. He said the son was happier living with his grand-father “back home.” However, Dawa said that he wanted the son to reconsider his decision, so when he found a permanent job in the U.S. (he was working with alien status in the U.S. at the time of the study and looking for a job which would sponsor him and get him permanent residence), he would try to convince the son to return to the U.S. once again.

Even though Dawa was very happy with his life in the U.S. and wanted to emigrate to the U.S. permanently as a family, he did not feel the same way at the
beginning. He suffered from severe culture shock and isolation. At some point he was not even sure “if I was going to stay here for more than 2 years,” and he thought the best solution was “to go back home.”

Another difficulty Dawa went through was related to his language proficiency. Like Ming, Dawa also thought the English used in the U.S. was so “different” from “the English in the books.” There were times that the problems regarding English as an SL made him feel so frustrated that he wondered if he had “ever taken one day of English” in his life. He described his disappointment with himself and his English in the following incident:

When I came here for the first time, I went to the restaurant one day. I looked at the menu. I wasn’t familiar with the names. All the names you know combo, whatever, so I didn’t know what to order. I said: “Can I have a combo, please?” The lady said: “For here or to go?” and I said: “To eat.” (I1)

For Dawa, any adaptation period to a new culture required a conscious and careful selection of what to keep or to sacrifice. As Paco and Zeina also said, it was important for Dawa to “analyze” and “filter” the potential change in self before it took place. Otherwise, Dawa believed:

It becomes artificial. . . . It’s not you; and others will know that it’s not you; and because they know it’s not you, they don’t like you. They prefer you as the way you are. (I1)

He believed that “in this process of selection, you adopt some of the common phrases and some of the pictures that you want to be part of your experience so that you can survive.” For him, adopting “the common phrases and the pictures” was similar to “the example of
white bird [referring to an earlier statement of Paco]. . . . If you don’t do that, you don’t survive; there is no way.” He thought accepting the host culture and the host nationals was necessary for survival. On the other hand, at the beginning he was reluctant to negotiate with or display willingness to accept the host culture, nor did he believe it was the right thing to do. He explained:

Sometimes due to one’s needs of survival, you have to, maybe not totally, but to some extent, I think some of your cultural values come to adjust to the cultural context where you are. Not because you want it or you believe that this is the right thing to do but because you have no choice. You try to adjust and to adjust, I think, [it] is doing what people do; thinking what people think in that context. (I2)

Another survival experience Dawa wanted to share with the group was regarding the issue of not sharing. Dawa explained the other NNETs why he had to learn to keep his thoughts to himself “although you think it could help them”:

Just don’t tell people what you think. You have to learn how to hide some of your feelings. You don’t automatically voice out what’s going on in your mind. They don’t like it. Although you think it could help them, this is a different culture. . . .

With my students I have a few problems like that. Sometimes I say something. Just because I said something, they react. I see that they are offended, and it wasn’t intentional you know. It was my way of putting it, but I realize I have offended someone. (FI)

Finally, Dawa also made use of certain strategies which helped him to overcome the cross-cultural differences. The first thing he felt he had to internalize was that “there is no such thing as good culture or bad culture; the word is different.” He also wanted not
to set high expectations in the new culture. More importantly, he did not expect anything from people, especially from host nationals. Through such mental preparation, he believed his adaptation process was less shocking and not as complicated as it might have been:

You need to be prepared. . . . Don’t think that people will start talking to you because you are a foreigner. No, you shouldn’t expect that. When you come with that idea that nobody will help you to find out where you want to go, what you want to do, then there is less shock, but if you are not [prepared], you can easily slide through the negative side of life and it makes your life even more complicated, and you end up hating it totally. (FI)

Overall, for Dawa every novelty, difference, accomplishment, and even failure he lived through in the U.S. was nothing but “a great experience.” It was filled with exciting discoveries and learning opportunities. Of course, his sojourn during the course of seven years contained some ups and downs, being part of life itself. Perhaps some would prefer to remember those particular bitter moments and concentrate on them, but not Dawa. What really mattered for him was not to forget how enriching his experience was in the U.S. as a whole.

*Paco’s way*

Paco emphasized that when he came to the U.S. for the first time, he went through some adjustment difficulties and questioned the norms and values of the target culture very harshly. However, during his current sojourn in the U.S., since he was familiar with cross-cultural differences, they did not create the same difficulties or challenges. He
indicated that he learnt how to deal with the problems in the U.S. culture since he had learnt to develop some coping skills.

For Paco, maturity was a necessary quality one needed to possess in handling the changing situations in the altered social context, otherwise, it was inevitable to get “swallowed by the new cultural values”:

The force to withstand the difficulties of the transition have to come from inside, from what you already are, and if you do not find much inside, it’s probably because you are not mature enough, you do not even know the value of what you left behind, or you do not have much to start with. In which [either] case you will end up being swallowed by the new cultural values. (EJ, 1/23/2002)

Further, one of the very important points he needed to pay attention to during his sojourn in a new culture was not to lose his internal identity. The key to solving the problems which might be generated as a result of leaving one’s own culture or comfort zone was the person’s full awareness or self-knowledge. He expressed his thoughts this way:

When I first came, I was in my twenties and so I could see all the foreign students like myself who were coming from different places. And they were just absolutely astounded by the new situation and it became in a matter of weeks they got transformed. I couldn’t recognize them anymore. The way they acted; the attitudes. They were imitating what they had around. Then again it’s something to do with age, but in my own self I was very analytical about it all the time. I knew I would not do that [what the young students did]. It looked ridiculous to me in many ways and I knew that I didn’t want to do that. . . . If you are . . . too
immature and you don’t even know where you are coming from because you haven’t made it internal to you, who you are, where you come from, where you belong to, you can easily fall into. (II)

Paco also pointed out that, unlike Mike, he avoided close contact with his co-nationals, but preferred to find out more about the Americans and share his life with the Americans in order to make his adaptation easier to the U.S. He suggested that if a person could cut the “umbilical cord” between himself and his culture, in fact, he would be able see better “what it is that you have left behind.” He said:

[Remaining in close contact with home culture while trying to adapt to the host culture is not a good strategy] since it is a way of making stronger your connection (umbilical cord) with your home land. At that point in time if I continue to frequently see my co-nationals I would have felt I had never left my culture behind. You need to take a distance from your culture to objectively and critically see what it is that you have left behind as opposed as what you have in front. (EJ, 1/23/2002)

Moreover, he favored a strategy which would “allow you [the sojourner] to take” from the C2 and “add” it to the C1 and “make it yours.” However, it was important to know, “what it is that I’m going to adapt as part of the new you. It cannot be anything. You’re going to adopt all these things that were not yours before.” Therefore, it was extremely essential to use “a very conscious filter” during this analysis process.

Overall, Paco summarized his living and studying experience in the U.S. as a simple course of “give and take.” Perhaps it was “painful” at the beginning until he found
out the rules of “the game.” However, when he took it as a “natural” process, he started to enjoy the game more.

_Eun-jin’s way_

When the present research study started in August 2001, Eun-jin had been living in the U.S. for 3 years. In the researcher’s adjustment scale of three, she fit in the second level which meant she was not an inexperienced sojourner in the new cultural setting, but she was not considered to be totally adjusted and well-experienced in the culture either. Yet, as the study progressed, it became clear to the researcher that Eun-jin was going through a cultural adjustment transition. Furthermore, her demanding course work in the doctoral program and her duties as a graduate assistant at the Faculty and TA Development Center in her institution was giving her a harder time during the course of her adaptation. At the time of the second interview in November 2001, Eun-jin seemed extremely confused and overwhelmed when she was asked to report her latest cultural experiences and personal feelings. She responded “I do not know” and “I am not sure” to many of the questions. In addition, she had not been answering the questions posed for the weekly e-journals. She did not seem to be able to put her finger on the problem or know what to call this unique experience or how to refer to it. Nevertheless, in time she was able to comment on her experiences in better terms. She tried to explain the complexity and the inexplicableness of the experience she had and how the timing of the interview was not right for her:

_Sorry for not being answering your question at the last meeting. I hope you understand why. It is also an interesting observation about my adaptation process in the US. I may talk more now or later, but the moment you asked me was not_
the time I am willing to talk about them. (Personal communication, February 27, 2002)

It appeared that the biggest difficulty Eun-jin experienced in the U.S. turned out to be her inability to deal with her lack of confidence. She felt incapable and uncomfortable because of her being a nonnative speaker of English and a sojourner of color in the U.S. Thus, it was extremely unexpected when she told the researcher at the second interview that she wanted to work in the U.S. as a professor. She made it clear that she wanted to contribute to the life in the U.S as a NNS teacher by bringing in her “unique” experience as a teacher and a learner. For the researcher, this was a significant transformation that occurred in the participant’s case during the course of the study. Such transformation might have also been interpreted as Eun-jin’s accomplishment in gaining back her confidence as an ELT professional.

Among the survival strategies Eun-jin applied during her sojourn in the U.S., one of the very remarkable approaches was that of her determinism and optimism. She indicated that, “whenever I go anywhere they know I will survive there,” and she added, “I try to look at people’s good points rather than the weak points.” She explained:

There are many things happened in the US that is not good experience. Sometimes it nearly hit me. . . . I shouldn’t be down because when I just think ‘Oh, this is America. They treat me badly’, I can have a negative feeling towards them. . . . I don’t want to myself have a negative feeling; that hurts me. (I2)

Like Zeina, Eun-jin also was willing to “understand” and appreciate people and their behaviors rather than “to criticize” them. She knew that in order to survive she had to
accept the culture and negotiate on the differences between her native culture and the host culture. She indicated that:

I get along with people very easily. I try to understand them rather than criticize. .
. . If there is a situation [for example] when people offered me food, I have to eat. I don’t mind whether it’s terrible or whether it’s unique. I’d want to enjoy the experience. If my friends prepared for me, I will want to forget the feeling of being differences, I want to enjoy my friend’s hospitality. (I1)

Eun-jin thought that a sojourner could achieve a successful cultural adjustment by means of accepting and adapting to the culture as it is, without necessarily being “one of them.” Like Dawa, Eun-jin also chose to act like herself among her friends and the host nationals. She successfully managed not to look “artificial,” as Dawa previously worded it:

I think I can be myself, but in the beginning I tried to imitate Americans. I thought I can be one of them but what I observed is I can’t be like them. . . . Americans and my friends seem to value more about myself when I be myself rather than I try to be somebody else. (I2)

Overall, her sojourn experience in the U.S. was difficult for Eun-jin. She never felt like she shared the same ideas with the “main people living in the U.S. forever” (i.e., Americans). She had to deal with the conflicts of opinions which were hurting and frustrating her from time to time; for example, she knew she was an experienced EFL teacher but was not able to perceive herself as a qualified ESL teacher in the U.S. Also, the conflicting combination of feelings of appreciation (as a result getting accepted by the host-nationals in the U.S. academic setting) and guilt (as a result of getting rejected by
her Korean classmates); and the feelings of accomplishment (as a result of adapting to the life in the host culture slowly) and failure (getting alienated from her home culture rapidly) left Eun-jin in between situations. However, she still wanted to call the perceived painful and frustrating experience as “a natural process” of growth.

**Zeina’s way**

For Zeina, being an ESL teacher, a graduate student and a mother of two school-aged boys, it was important to feel a sense of belonging in the new cultural setting. She wanted to know more about the people who belonged to the new society, and find out more about the “mini cultures” which she was living in. She was always eager to meet more people and find out the novelties offered by the host culture, and was ready to accept anything good, useful and different the new culture could offer her and her family. She seemed very tolerant, optimistic, and open-minded in the way she accepted the new culture.

She expressed her feelings in these messages:

> You can find good and bad in every human being, and I exercised the good. I never took anything personally, so I could see beyond the things. Beyond that I see that there are mini cultures to look at. I realized that the first thing I need to do is to identify with a group, with a mini culture. If I found this mini culture, it was very similar to any other mini cultures I had seen previously. . . . I find it you can really do things [in the U.S.]. You can find ways; you can talk to people; find funds. (12)
However, she was cautious at the same time. She always remembered to “filter” these culture-based differences first. Similar to Paco’s “analytical” strategy, Zeina also wanted to “project [her background] over the situation to find things do or do not match”:

You filter it. You filter to see what you can accept. And what you don’t accept, you don’t dwell on it; particularly, if you have family, the family that you want to explain things to. (I2)

Zeina also thought accepting the people, the culture, and the differences in the new setting as they were, without attempting to change them, was a helpful strategy for a sojourner:

It’s not fair to come to a place and start criticizing everyone and changing everyone for your own needs. It gets you nowhere. (FI)

As a graduate student, certain things Zeina accepted seemed to have hurt her at the beginning. There was bitterness and disappointment in the way she expressed her feelings:

As a student, there is a certain humility I had to learn. Do things their way. And actually one of my professors said the American culture . . . defines people’s turfs, and if you’re standing on anybody’s turf, that person is going to be angry.

Overall, the entire experience of getting further education and living in the U.S. was only “the beginning” of Zeina’s “journey.” As a whole, she felt it was a “positive learning experience,” but yet there was a lot “to accomplish” she was looking forward.

Ming’s way

Ming was the NNET in the group who had the shortest sojourn time in the U.S. at the time of the study. He had only been three months when the study was over. Thus, he
had not (yet) encountered as many challenges and complexities when the researcher interviewed him. However, he looked eager to demonstrate a very optimistic and humanistic approach to dealing with the possible cultural challenges, especially regarding individual differences. He said:

I appreciate and I evaluate people from different cultural background. And also I try to see some similarities between human beings. I can say people are people everywhere. Sometimes I find similarities. (I1)

However, Ming did not express any willingness to find out more about the Americans and the American culture. For him his adaptation to the academic culture in the U.S. was more important than his adjustment to the social life. Therefore, when he was explaining his experiences, he used two different terms for the adaptation process: academic adaptation and cultural adaptation. Moreover, he measured his adaptation with academic quarters, not with weeks or months:

The first quarter was important as long as I went through; the whole process, from the beginning of the quarter to the end of the quarter. So I counted the adaptation period in quarters rather than months. The time before the quarter begins is not important. (I2)

It was also interesting to see that his academic adaptation and his cultural adaptation did not occur simultaneously. There was a clear division between his life at school and outside the school. The life outside his school was bound by his Chinese friends and/or the activities arranged by the church he went to. Although Ming had stated earlier that he was an atheist, it was his decision to join a church community in order to “expose myself to the community” and “to meet new people.” He explained:
Cultural adaptation is an important component of that [my adaptation to the U.S.]. For me, it [cultural adaptation] was hosted by the church. . . . You can see that most of my time spent in class and also spent in my leisure time. During class time I make friends with my classmates. In my leisure time I make friends with my Chinese peers, and also with people I met in the church. (I2)

The difficulties Ming had so far in the U.S. culture were those related to the English language and American culture. He was concerned that he couldn’t “create jokes in the class” in English. In addition, he found the human relations in the host culture “too intimate,” and the American life-style “too casual.” He said:

M: Living style. I don’t know how to put it. I mean maybe young people here are pretty casual. They have a casual attitude for the opposite sex.

R (researcher): Opposite sex? In the sense of what? I don’t know in China. How is it in China? What’s the attitude like in China?

M: Well, I think people are intimate here.

R: It’s difficult for you to see it like that? Do you like that?

M: I don’t… I think.

R: What’s it that’s bothering you? What’s disturbing you?

M: Oh, I just think people are a little bit casual?

R: Casual?

M: Casual.

E: You find them (the Americans) too informal, too open maybe?

M: Too open.

E: Oh, you don’t like that?
M: I just say I cannot get used to it.

R: What happened? What do you see around that is disturbing you? Is it something on TV or is [it] people?

M: I see people who just meet each other and at the very first time, they spend a whole night. (I1)

Ming also did not seem to be happy about the fast pace of life in the U.S. and the busy life styles. He did not have any time to spend with his friends, to socialize with them, or to make new friends. He also complained about not having enough time for himself and his needs. He said:

I have no noon naps! No regular dinner time, [no] lunch time. I have to cook here.

In China, I had a cafeteria at school. I used to go and buy my food, but they don’t serve Chinese food at school here. (I1)

However, as he stated earlier, he was not in the U.S. for personal reasons, but for professional betterment. Therefore, for him what was “more important is academic life.” He was highly motivated in his studies and he was determined to keep his life closed to the other alternatives his new context could be offering. He said, “My life here is very simple. I try to keep my life as simple as possible so that I can concentrate on studying, working.” He perceived this was the only way of surviving in the U.S.

Ming believed he had no choice other than accepting this different life. His decision to accept the host culture seemed to him sort of inevitable and predestined. He said, “I take it consciously with efforts and force myself; I have to take it; I have no choice.” Even though he said he wanted to accept the American culture and life, or felt
forced/predestined to accept it, his actions did not seem to go parallel to his words. He stayed out of the American life, and rejected the American value orientations.

Even though Ming was able to develop his own survival strategies and he managed to cope with the difficulties that appeared in his new life, he underlined the fact that he was searching for external support. He sought parental and peer support when he needed. He explained:

I keep a close contact with my native culture which make me comfortable and easier to the [new] life. Anytime when I have a difficulty, I rely on my native culture, and talk to my parents on the telephone, and talk to my Chinese friends.

(11)

Overall, Ming described his cross-cultural experience as “productive” and “fruitful.” For Ming, getting started a new life in the U.S. was a “turning point.” He believed that it would have “a long-term influence” in his life.

Discussion

This last section of the chapter summarizes and discusses the research findings of the study. The researcher examined the phenomenon of identity transformation and cultural adaptation process of five nonnative English teachers (NNETs) in the U.S. The data obtained from the interviews and electronic journals revealed that there were two major themes regarding the issue of transformation and change NNETs had to go through during their sojourn in the U.S.: (a) NNETs’ identity and self, and (b) NNETs’ cultural adjustment. Based on the interpretation of the categories, the researcher developed the following findings: (a) There was a multiple array of perceptions regarding self in
NNETs’ identity (re)construction; (b) NNETs’ perceptions regarding self and value orientations changed over time; (c) NNETs discovered the “hidden” culture in them while exploring C2; (d) NNETs underwent adaptation difficulties and complexities; and (e) NNETs developed “survival skills” to be able to cope with these difficulties and complexities.

**Multidimensional Presentation of Self in Identity Formation**

The findings of the study provided a better understanding of the NNET participants’ perceptions of identity and self. The study confirms that NNETs are not unidimensional beings (Peirce, 1995) in the sense that their perceptions about their professional, linguistic, and sociocultural identity change and are reconstructed. In other words, the NNETs’ possession of the different identities that emerged suggests a position of simultaneously becoming, constructing, or revalidating perceptions of self. Moreover, during their sojourn in a L2 context, their perceptions concerning the host nationals, co-nationals, and inter-nationals also play a role in determining their identities.

As international graduate students, the NNET participants perceived themselves as “multicultural,” “multi-lingual,” and “multi-literal,” “motivated,” “determined,” and “hardworking” students. They pointed out that they each represented a “different” culture, which meant an advantage for them to fit better to the culturally-diverse American society. Their non-American and/or non-Western cultural backgrounds were believed to bring uniqueness to the U.S. culture.

As nonnative English teachers, the NNET participants in the study did not consider their nonnative status as a power differential. Kamhi-Stein (1999), Lee (2000),
Liu (1999), Medgyes (1992; 1994), and Samimy & Brutt-Griffler (1999) examined the same issue in their studies which underlined the NS/NNS dichotomy debate, and concluded that nativeness was not considered by NNS teachers a key element in being an effective ESL/EFL teacher. Likewise, the teachers in the study also appear to be confident teachers although they perceive themselves differently from their native speaking colleagues. In relation to the issue of NS-NNS dichotomy, the NNET participants evaluated themselves positively in terms of their teaching behaviors. The NNETs underlined the fact that they came to the U.S. to get “better” education, and it was advanced training, not nativeness, that would make a teacher a “better” teacher. This perception of the NNETs in the present study stresses the importance of the argument that further training and expertise makes a good teacher not the country of origin or authenticity (Amin, 1997; Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Medgyes, 1992; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999). They stated that although there were times when a NS teacher would address the language learner’s needs better, NNS teachers were more “advantaged” than the NS teachers for the following reasons because they would: a) bring rich teaching experience from a different context (i.e., their past EFL experience); b) emphasize cultural awareness among ESL students as themselves representing non-English/American ethnic backgrounds; c) present a good role model; and d) have an insider’s viewpoint into the matter of English language learning (e.g., empathy).

When describing their native culture (C1) and co-nationals, the NNETs considered themselves as the representatives of their cultures and concentrated particularly on concepts associated with intrapersonal and interpersonal relations and value and belief systems. Both African and Hispanic participants portrayed their cultures
as “spontaneous” in the sense that people did not favor an organized and pre-planned life. Also, time pressures in these cultures “almost did not exist,” and people were “laid back.” In their daily routines, they did not rush; they took their time; and they acted slowly. In all the participants’ cultures, except for the Asian cultures, people were described as interactive, curious, inquisitive, tolerant, and sociable. However, both the Korean and Chinese participants characterized their cultures as “traditional” by nature. Nonetheless, both cultures were affected by the “globalization trend” which forced them to open themselves to other nations in the world. In the Middle-eastern culture people were seen as “non-materialistic,” “hospitable,” “serviable,” and “sincere” individuals. All participants mentioned the value and importance given to the concept of education and an educated person in their cultures. Such an attitude to education in home cultures in a way explained why the participants were so motivated and successful students in their current programs.

When describing the host culture and the host nationals, the NNETs portrayed the U.S. as a hi-tech country. It symbolized the land of freedom and opportunities for them. When they pointed out the differences between the U.S. and other technologically advanced countries (e.g., countries in Europe, Canada), they agreed on the fact that the U.S. culture had distinctive characteristics, one of which was no prejudice against certain ethnic groups in the U.S. culture. However, the issue of racism, particularly against certain skin colors, was brought up by some NNETs as a negative aspect of the U.S. mainstream culture. In addition to the high technology and opportunity, the U.S. culture was favored because it offered “a privileged life” with wide varieties of and easy access to options (e.g., funds, grants, traveling) which were believed to make life “easier” in the
U.S. As far as the academic culture was concerned, the NNETs agreed that the U.S. was the “ideal” place to pursue further education. However, studying in the U.S. was more “challenging” for them than studying in their home countries. The NNETs trusted the vast knowledge of their professors, and they appreciated the “independent,” “free,” “casual,” “relaxed,” “fun,” and interactive atmosphere of the American classroom. The participants valued and respected that Americans were “Christian” “friendly,” “time-sensitive” “space-conscious,” “respectful,” “helpful,” “tolerant,” “supportive,” “honest,” “sincere,” “direct,” and “patriotic”, and stated that these characteristics of the host nationals helped them to get adjusted to the American life. However, the participants criticized the host culture and the host nationals, and indicated that compared to their home cultures, Americans lacked warmth and contact; and were found to be too individualistic, isolated, ignorant, and judgmental. The participants believed that examining both the negative and positive aspects of the American cultural characteristics helped them to make a more effective cross-cultural analysis and determine the most effective adaptation strategies accordingly.

When describing their perceptions about other international students and/or sojourners in the U.S., the NNETs pointed out that they had a lot in common. Among the commonalities the inter-nationals and the NNETs shared were: a) originating from non-American ethnic backgrounds, b) coming from less developed and/or developing countries, c) bringing different “ways of thinking” and thinking “patterns” into American classrooms, and d) having an understanding of each other’s feelings (e.g., empathy towards being a nonnative teacher and speaker of English). It was interesting to see that the NNETs classified certain inter-nationals according to their country of origin. In other
words, the NNETs developed a hierarchical categorization for different culture groups; and according to this, they observed sojourners coming from certain countries differently, or perhaps as being inferior. For example, the African, Middle-Eastern and the Hispanic NNETs felt advantaged over sojourners and students who came from Asian countries and India. The NNETs claimed that their familiarity with European cultures, languages, and the Latin alphabet made them feel that they fit into the American culture more easily than others and shortened their adaptation process to the U.S. This finding underlined that certain NNET participants were associating the American culture with Western culture. On the other hand, the study demonstrates that being exposed to a Western culture previously does not seem to eliminate culture shock.

According to Festinger’s notion of *social comparison* (as cited in Cooper & Stone, 2000), it is typical in normal psychological functioning that in order to evaluate themselves, group members compare themselves with similar others. However, when the NNETs in the study compared themselves with the others in their group (i.e., other international student-teachers like themselves), they tended to see themselves in a positive light by seeing themselves as a member of a prestigious group. This implies that the NNET participants tried to establish positive distinctiveness, and in order to achieve this, they wanted to see their country of origin, their familiarity with Western cultures, and even their alphabet system (i.e., making use of Latin alphabet) superior to similar (but inferior) groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).
Time: A Friend or Foe?

The findings in this study suggest that time acts as a determinant and facilitator in NNETs’ identity formation and cross-cultural adaptation. The study revealed that the more time spent in the C2, the better the NNETs understood and appreciated the C2. The process of close examination of C2 required some cross-cultural comparisons as well as anticipation of acceptance and respect for the behavioral and value differences across cultures. When examining the belief and value orientations (both in C1 and C2), they realized that some of these concepts were “positive” (e.g., tolerance, preciseness, efficiency, perfectionism) and others “negative” (e.g., impatience, egocentrism, hypocrisy, distrust). Also, there were certain concepts the NNETs encountered but could not decide if they had positive or negative effects on their identity change, such as, independence, outspokenness, materialism, time-sensitiveness, space-consciousness, individualism, and personal distance. However, the study implies that acceptance of different values does not indicate sojourners’ possession of these values. The NNET participants went through a change in their personal and professional identities as a result of becoming adapted to new behavior and value orientations in the U.S., but these values could not be defined as intrinsic to their identities. In other words, the NNETs found American cultural values worthy of understanding and respect, but not necessarily of agreement.

Also, time allowed the NNETs to observe the host culture more closely as well as their own. As more time was spent in the U.S., the NNETs became more aware of how their own culture had shaped their thinking and perception; they evaluated their built-in values and beliefs more objectively. Moreover, they realized how their ways of
accomplishing tasks, solving problems, and thinking, which may have worked well all their lives, were ineffective in the new culture. This finding supports Hall’s (1976) argument in which he points out that those who experience cross-cultural interaction end up becoming more conscious of their “hidden culture.” He argues that knowledge of internal and hidden culture gives a framework for analyzing and interpreting behaviors of both others and ourselves.

The study also suggests that time previously spent in a L2, FL, or even in L1 setting (with host nationals) has a positive impact on easing the NNETs’ adjustment. Earlier travel and/or sojourn experiences facilitated cross-cultural understanding and adaptation; as a result NNETs felt more “equipped” to live in the U.S. Time spent with the host nationals in C1 before their departure made the adjustment process easier as well since it allowed the NNETs to develop a certain familiarity and comfort with them, and were able to find out more about the host culture.

However, the NNETs stated contradictory views regarding their identity formation and cultural adaptation. The researcher noticed a cognitive dissonance that arose within the NNETs’ cognitions. According to Festinger (as cited in Cooper & Stone, 2000), this cognition was “knowledge” about the environment, about other people, and about the individual’s own attitudes and behaviors. Cooper & Stone (2000) claimed that “when two cognitions share an inconsistent relation, dissonance is present, creating an uncomfortable drive state that needs to be reduced” (p. 227). In the study, there was no doubt that during their sojourn in the U.S., the NNETs were aware of the changes they were going through in time; however, they claimed that adjusting to the U.S. culture did not create major changes in their internal selves. While acknowledging the changes in
their identities and personalities, they rejected the idea of being assimilated or Americanized. This relates to Bennett’s (1993) three-stage-ethnorelativism which begins with “the acceptance of cultural difference as inevitable and enjoyable,” through the sojourner’s adaptation to cultural differences “with intercultural communication skills,” and ends with the stage of integration “in which ethnorelativism may be synthesized into a coherent and workable new identity” (p. 47). While the NNETs were engaged in the development of new cultural values, they must have feared the negative psychological consequence of their intercultural experience: feeling of alienation from their own culture, (Adler, 1975). As Adler argues, the need to change internally (i.e., reorganize behavior and value orientations and personality characteristics) in order to adapt to new cultural representations, in most cases, mean sojourners loosing their culture.

In-betweenness: A Positive Marginality

The present study revealed that migrating to a L2 setting (i.e., the U.S.) in order to pursue further education allowed the NNET participants to observe consciously or unconsciously, this transformation and change in their identity and self. They underlined the fact that they did not lose their internal real identity; however, they simply explained the process as preserving the “old” while adding something “new” to it. Bennett (1993) explains this aspect of identity construction as an “additive process” which promotes maintenance of one’s original worldview and cultural identity so that “new ways of being are added to one’s repertoire of cultural alternatives” (p. 52). Furthermore, some of the NNETs described this change in their identities as a “split of self;” and others as “growing a third identity.” According to Seelye & Wasilewski (1996), this effort of
switching back and forth between the two cultures may make it difficult for them to “fit in” or “stand out from the crowd.” As a matter of fact, most NNETs were aware of being members of the two cultures and living “in between” the two societies. This concept of an “in-between-space” situation is explored in Everett Stonequist’s early work on marginality (as cited in Bennett, 1993, p. 112) in which he describes this conflict with the “looking glass theory” of personality. He explains that the person feels as if he were placed between two looking glasses, each representing a different image of himself, and the two clashing images compete for ascendancy. This otherness and in-betweenness also leads to building of “blended,” “blurred” identities (Ochs, 1993), or, as described by NNETs, as a “border identity.”

Therefore, the researcher suggests that NNETs’ cultural adjustment may be a process which is likely to result in a cultural marginality. The term marginality in this context does not carry any negative connotations; rather it refers to a cultural lifestyle at the edges of where two or more cultures meet. It also refers to the intrapersonal response given by the NNETs not due to the external interaction with a single different culture (i.e., the U.S. culture), but rather to the conflicts between the two cultural voices competing for attention within themselves. Similarly, in this study, “marginality” does not imply that NNETs experience a personality disorder or maladjustment. Therefore, as any person may experience these inner conflicts, the culture shock, isolation, low self-esteem, frustration, and anger NNETs felt should be considered normal.
Understanding and Coping with Cross-cultural Difficulties

According to Weaver (1993) the severity of cross-cultural adaptation appears to be much greater when the adjustment involves a completely different culture. On the other hand, in the study, the way the NNETs anticipated the difficulties in their adjustment process and the certain personality traits they shared were found to be important factors in the handling of their adjustment. The NNETs were “prepared” for the unknown and the unexpected when (or even before) they came to the U.S. They were “motivated” and “determined” graduate students; they were aware of their goals and they did not want to “lose face” in the U.S. It was also necessary for the NNETs to have reached a certain degree of “maturity” in order to accomplish their goals in the U.S. Maturity meant not the calendar age, but rather the person’s ability to recognize who he was, where he belonged, and what he wanted to do both in C1 and C2. Finally, The NNETs’ “willingness to observe” a new culture and “adaptability” to a new setting also played a role in their cultural adjustment. This finding suggests that anticipation of a stressful and demanding cultural experience and psychological makeup of the sojourner, rather than cross-cultural adjustment skills, be of primary importance (Brislin, 1981).

No single coping strategy, adjustment skill, or survival technique worked for every NNET in the study since there were so many variables involved (e.g., age, gender, country of origin, religion, etc.). Moreover, what might have worked for one NNET in a specific environment might have not worked for the other NNETs in different environments. Therefore, the study emphasizes that it is necessary for NNETs to develop individual coping strategies which allow them to find their own ways of dealing with and overcoming the difficulties and complexities of their cross-cultural adaptation. However,
it was interesting to see that most of the challenges and complexities experienced by each NNET appeared to be similar to the others’. Thus, there were some commonalities among the coping strategies and the survival techniques each NNETs suggested.

Dawa claimed that he suffered most from culture shock and isolation in the U.S. He also experienced some complexities regarding his language proficiency and ability which resulted in breakdowns in personal satisfaction and intercultural communication. To function effectively in a culture other than his own, Dawa believed in the necessity of his willingness to accept changes and blending into the host culture through a careful selection of value orientations. While doing that, it was important for him to be able to keep his real self. Due to cross-cultural differences in thinking patterns, Dawa pointed out that he learnt to “keep his thoughts to himself” in the U.S. in order not to be misunderstood. He did not have high expectations from the host culture or the host nationals. He was quite self-sufficient on the contrary. Finally, rather than calling the host culture good or bad, Dawa saw the similarities and differences between the home culture and the host culture. It helped him to be more “prepared,” and his adjustment experience “less shocking” and less “complicated.” Overall, Dawa’s cross-cultural experience was “enriching” in the sense that such a “great” experience allowed him to meet new people and cultures, learn from them, and in view of that, expanding his knowledge about the world.

Paco suffered from culture shock at the beginning stages of his adaptation during his first sojourn in the U.S. He did not call it “culture shock,” whereas, the symptoms he experienced appeared to the researcher that he suffered from the second stage of culture shock (i.e., crisis) at the time. According to Oberg (1960), during the “crisis” stage of
culture shock the sojourner hates everything. Likewise, there were times for Paco when he hated “everything in the U.S.” and all Americans. Also, he was confused and disoriented, and he felt isolated and lonely. Luckily, he developed certain coping skills which facilitated cross-cultural understanding, communication, and adaptation. He indicated that he displayed “mature” and “analytical” tactics when handling the changing situations in his life. At this point, it was necessary to have attained self-knowledge and a certain level of maturity (i.e., knowing who you are, where you come from, where you belong to). Otherwise, he thought it would be very easy to “fall” and fail. During his adaptation, he had to go through a careful analysis process; he used “conscious filters” when deciding what to adopt and how to adapt to the cross-cultural differences and unfamiliar value orientations. He was also observant of and curious about the host culture for an easier adaptation. Also, he wanted to observe the host culture objectively and critically in order to value his home culture better, thus, he avoided close contact with his home culture and co-nationals. For him, it was necessary to know the expectations of the society. It was important for Paco not to lose his cultural identity and real self; losing both meant becoming assimilated. He insisted that it was a “game” with “different” rules; thus, he had to “turn off” himself and learn the new rules. Overall, Paco perceived the pain and the complexities of his intercultural experience as “natural” and procedural, yet he found the outcome quite rewarding. He claimed that he “survived.”

It seemed that Eun-jin’s adaptation problems were based on personal factors. During her sojourn, she suffered from lack of self-confidence. Braine (1999) argues that confusion over identity for NNETs may lead to lowered self-confidence and to “an acute sense of one’s marginalized, unstable status in the ELT profession” (p. xviii). Similar to
Braine’s description of low self esteem, Eun-jin also felt incapable and uncomfortable as a nonnative English speaker and a woman of color in the U.S. However, towards the end of the study, Eun-jin seemed to gain her confidence back when she stated that she wanted to stay in the U.S. and teach English. During her sojourn, her optimism, determination, and motivation appeared to help her. She also argued that over the course of her stay, she developed a better understanding of and appreciation for the host nationals. She convinced herself to accept the host culture and the differences between the host culture and her native-culture, not to criticize them or make herself feel “negative” towards them. Eun-jin did not believe it was necessary to be like an American for a happier life in the U.S; she thought she would be “valued” more if she managed to stay Korean. Overall, Eun-jin’s sojourn experience in the U.S. was “difficult,” “frustrating,” and “hurting.” Nevertheless, she perceived the hardships of the process “natural” and “expected.” Out of this cross-cultural experience, she achieved both personal and professional “growth.”

As an effective survival strategy, Zeina emphasized the importance of building one’s sense of belonging to a new setting. To achieve this, she went on a quest for “mini cultures.” Through detecting the mini cultures in the U.S., she was able to point the similarities and familiarities with the cultures she lived in and the cultures in the U.S. In addition to her attempts to build cultural familiarities around her, she also demonstrated a willingness to accept the unfamiliar and the unknown. However, she had to “project over the situation” and to “filter” in order to find out the “things” that “do or do not match” in her built-in self. It was useless to “dwell” on the “things” that did not match or try to change them. It was equally useless to try to change people in the new setting, especially, to accommodate her own needs. Therefore, knowing to accept and knowing how to filter
what to expect were two helpful tactics Zeina made use of. In the U.S. academic setting, Zeina displayed a similar “ready-to-accept” attitude. She was careful about not to cross over the other person’s “turf” in order to keep peace and harmony. Overall, Zeina perceived her inter-cultural experience in the U.S. as a “positive learning experience.” She did not consider herself to have “accomplished” a lot yet; this was only the beginning for her.

In spite of his short sojourn in the U.S., Ming ran into adaptation problems similar to those of the others, such as the difficulties originating from the target language and cross-cultural differences. For example, he was worried that he could never make a joke in English in his classes in the U.S. It was also a difficult process to get used to the “intimate” and “casual” characteristics of the Americans. However, he demonstrated an optimistic and humanistic approach to the difficulties he encountered. His motto was “people are people everywhere,” so he wanted to concentrate on the similarities between cultures rather than on the differences. It was interesting, on the other hand, to hear Ming say that he never experienced culture shock in the U.S. According to Weaver (1993) those who claim they have never experienced any form of culture shock are either fairly unaware of their feelings or have ever really cross-culturally adjusted. It was hard for the researcher to decide which case Ming’s situation would apply to. It was more likely that due to his short sojourn in the U.S., Ming was not aware of his feelings at the time of the interview sessions. It also appeared that Ming preferred to try to adjust to American academic culture only and rejected the larger culture entirely. He kept his motivation level up in his studies, but he did not seem to put much personal effort into finding out more about American culture outside his classroom. He preferred to make friends with
his Chinese fellows instead. When needed, he asked for the support of his family or relied on his Chinese peers’ help. Overall, Ming perceived his sojourn experience in the U.S. as “fruitful,” and “productive.”
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this chapter, a summary of the study is presented, along with the discussion of conclusions based on the analysis of the data. Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research conclude the chapter.

Summary

The present study focused on nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNET) who migrated to the United States for the purpose of advanced education. The purpose of the study was to better understand and describe NNETs’ perceptions of who they were and who they became as a result of their sojourn and/or pursuing further education in a L2 educational and cultural setting (i.e., the U.S.). In other words, the study aimed to examine the process of transformation and change in NNETs’ perceptions regarding their identity and self. Although the initial focus of the study was to discuss the teachers’ transformation and change in their perceptions about self and their professional, linguistic, and cultural identities, this transformation could not be fully understood without reference to their cultural adjustment to the L2 context. Therefore, this focus was explored further in the second objective, which described the cultural adjustment of NNETs.

Five NNETs in graduate TESOL programs participated in in-depth interviews and electronic discussions through journal entries. The first individual interview was used to generate new interview questions and provide direction for the subsequent ones. This inquiry format gave the researcher the freedom to ask additional questions and helped to
set a conversational tone. The information that the interviews and the e-journals conveyed was made systematically comparable and an objective coding scheme was applied to the data. The codes and categories the researcher created were not preestablished and imposed on the data; they were developed out of the interpretative analysis of the data.

The literature review revealed that the transformation of NNETs’ identity as a result of changing context (i.e., a shift from EFL to ESL context) has been relatively unexplored. Much of the research that existed focused on professional, linguistic, and cultural identities of NNETs in the TESOL profession. However, very little literature specifically dealt with NNETs’ identity transformation. Similarly, much of the research in cross-cultural studies focused on sociocultural adaptation and identity, but none on the NNETs’ adaptation in a L2 context and the influence of the new context on their identity. Thus, the researcher chose to review three areas that would provide a foundation for discussing issues pertinent to the identity change and transformation of NNETs. Three strands of concentration were the focus of the literature review. First, there was the presentation of discussions which centered around the perceived dichotomies between NET and NNET. This strand provided insight into the problems such as the ownership of English and power struggle among the TESOL professionals. Following this description was the second strand of concentration, the significance of social identification in the formation of a professional identity. The purpose of this section was to emphasize the group membership in the process of establishing a self-identification of as teachers, students, or sojourners, which included such concepts as social identity theories. Finally,
the relevant literature regarding the process of cultural adjustment that included concepts such as the social distance and different models of the acculturation theory was presented.

In addition to a review of the literature, the researcher also explored the social identity theory with an emphasis on the social-constructivist notion and the notion underlying the fluid and multiple nature of the identity. The exploration of notions in the related identity theory was important to the study for it identified how NNETs’ identities changed over time, how the L2 context affected the formation and (re)construction of their identities, how their present experiences had an impact on their identity transformation and change, and how they felt about these changes.

The two specific categories that emerged from the data were: 1) NNETs’ identity and self, and 2) NNETs’ cultural adjustment. These categories represented the commonalities of the NNETS’ perceptions and experiences. Based on the interpretation of the categories, the researcher developed the following findings: 1) There was a multiple array of perceptions regarding self in NNETs’ identity (re)construction; 2) NNETs’ perceptions regarding self and value orientations changed over time; 3) NNETs discovered the “hidden” culture in themselves while exploring C2; 4) NNETs underwent adaptation difficulties and complexities; and 5) NNETs developed “survival skills” to be able to cope with these difficulties and complexities.

Conclusions

Question 1: To what extent does L2 (second language) culture influence the built-in L1 (native language) self and identity of a NNET in the course of his advanced education in the United States?
As a result of living and/or studying in the U.S., NNETs’ self-perceptions as international graduate students, nonnative English-speaking teachers, and sojourners, and their perceptions regarding native culture and co-nationals, host culture and host nationals, and other inter-nationals, are reconstructed and revalidated. The influence of the English language and the American culture appear to have a positive impact on the self-identification of NNETs. NNETs perceive themselves as multicultural, multilingual, motivated, determined and hardworking graduate students. They indicate that their representing a different culture made them fit better into the culturally-diverse American classroom. As nonnative-speakers of English, they perceive they have certain advantages, rather than disadvantages, in the TESOL profession. They feel that it is further education and better training, not the nativeness, that act as keys to better teaching in the profession. They believe that their nonnative linguistic and cultural backgrounds bring empathy and variety to the language classrooms.

Another related conclusion relates to a need to understand the dynamics of cross-cultural communication and adaptation in NNETs’ identity transformation. During their sojourn in the U.S., NNETs employ numerous cross-cultural analyses in an attempt to analyze and interpret the behavior and customs both of others (i.e., the host nationals) and of themselves. They perceive more differences, rather than similarities, between their home culture and the host culture, particularly in terms of academic life; social and personal relationships; intra and inter-personal relations; family and friendship; and concept of time. As a result, their identities are negotiated, confirmed, and modified the new images with additional present experiences.
The final conclusion related to the first research question refers to NNETs’ self-identification and comparison of in-group (the group which they identify with) memberships. NNETs tend to categorize themselves as one of other culturally different sojourners in the group, or treat other sojourners as being similar to themselves in some relevant way. In addition to thinking of themselves as group members, it is also possible for NNETs to think of themselves as unique individuals and choose dimensions to maximize the positivity of their self-concept accordingly. For example, the group of NNETs in the study highlighted the commonalities between themselves and culturally different others in the program; however, at the same time they defined themselves as more advantaged than the rest. The African, Colombian, and the Lebanese NNETs perceived themselves to be of high status in cultural adjustment compared to the Korean and Chinese NNETs in the group. They reflected positively on themselves by choosing dimensions such as familiarity with Western cultures and the Latin alphabet, and the cultural distance between the home and host cultures.

Question 2: As a result of further education and/or living in the United States, do NNETs see any “change” and “transformation” in their self and identity at the personal and professional level (i.e., as a teacher, student, and sojourner)?

The major conclusion related to this second research question refers to the NNETs experiencing change and transformation in the self and value orientations. Adapting to the new values hosted by the U.S. culture results in certain changes in the NNETs’ personal and professional self, sometimes even creating dilemma, confusion, and
pressure within the self (i.e., inner self). These changes in the self may result in splitting
into two selves, experiencing in-betweenness, and developing a third identity.

The NNETs find it necessary to define their identity in pluralistic terms; they see
themselves existing within a collection of various cultural and personal frames of
reference. The goal of this new definition of identity appears be associated with their
adaptation and integration. In the NNETs’ case, the term adaptation excludes the
connotations of assimilation which denigrates their native cultures and yields
minimization. In their adaptation, NNETs choose to maintain their original worldview
and construct alternative cultural frames, and in this way increase “intercultural
sensitivity” (Bennett 1993). They develop a new approach to cultural difference. They
become more understanding, flexible, and respectful of American values, but are not
necessarily in agreement all the time. For example, in the study certain value orientations
(e.g., tolerance, directness, efficiency, perfectionism) in the U.S. culture were found
worthy of adopting. There were concepts such as independence, materialism, time-
sensitiveness, space-consciousness, individualism, and personal distance which were
perceived to create a change in NNETs’ self; however, these changes were found to be
difficult to specify as worthy of adopting or not.

Another related conclusion refers to a change in NNETs’ identity and self as a result
of becoming more conscious of “hidden” (Hall, 1976) culture and expanding self-
awareness. As a result of living in a culturally different environment, NNETs approach
their own native cultural thoughts, beliefs and values in an introspective manner. They
become aware of how their built-in culture has shaped their thinking and perception; they
become more conscious of their internal culture and, in turn, transcend it.
Overall, the perceived changes are seen as natural and rewarding, and as an inevitable consequence of inner growth.

Question 3: What are the difficulties and complexities (e.g., linguistic, sociocultural, psychological, etc.), if any, that NNETs encounter during their adaptation to the L2 (i.e., the US) culture?

The major conclusion related to this third question refers to NNETs’ pinpointing difficulties and complexities in their adaptations to the American social culture. These complexities do indeed appear to be psychological, sociocultural, and linguistic. They suffer from cultural differences, and in relation to this, culture shock, cultural isolation, low self-esteem as a result of loss of status and power, and breakdown of communication due to the language barrier. For example, some NNETs in the study felt that their knowledge of L2 was not adequate; they argued that the English language used in “real context” was different from the one in the books they had been teaching for years. Due to the cultural differences and the distance between the native culture and the American culture, NNETs experience difficulties in establishing social and academic interactions. They feel they lack procedural knowledge about academic expectations at graduate level, or in broader terms, about the American school system, and thus, from time to time they feel disconnected from the American professional community. The student-professor relationship, teacher-student roles, teaching-learning techniques (e.g., research-based learning versus memorization method), teaching materials and equipment, classroom interaction, academic skills (e.g., critical thinking), and intellectual values are perceived
to be different. Overall, the difficulties are described as painful and sometimes lead to anger, frustration, chaos, and regret.

Another conclusion related to NNETs’ cross-cultural adaptation is the presence of factors which determine the severity of the cross-cultural experience, such as, sojourn time, anticipation, and personality. The study confirms that there is a correlation between the time NNETs have spent in the C2 and the quality of the adjustment process they have undergone. That is, NNETs who have had a longer sojourn in the U.S. appear to have adjusted better to their life in the U.S. Time helps them to gain awareness of both their native culture and of host culture. In time, NNETs develop their own coping strategies and “survival” techniques in an attempt to reduce or eliminate the difficulties they experience in their daily lives. Also, if NNETs have spent time with the host nationals previously in their own home cultures and/or have had a previous sojourn experience in another L2 or FL context, they seem to feel more advantaged during the process of adaptation. Earlier contact with L2 or FL helps NNETs anticipate the stress of cross-cultural adaptation, facilitate the development of coping strategies, give them confidence to interact effectively with host nationals, and help them understand the process of cultural adjustment better.

Certain personality traits, in addition to sojourn time and anticipation, might even be of more importance in NNETs’ cultural adjustment to the U.S. Willingness to observe and accept the novelties and differences, motivation, determination, and maturity appear to be essential personal characteristics that NNETs should posses.

To conclude, there may be various reactions to cross-cultural experiences. However, the NNETs in the study seemed to understand the dynamics of cross-cultural
communication and adaptation. They preferred to develop coping mechanisms as an action, not a reaction. They focused on skills, strategies, or methods to increase effectiveness. Among these strategies, employing cross-cultural analysis; focusing on the cultural similarities, rather than the differences; respecting value differences between cultures; blending into the new culture by accepting the differences; avoiding close contact with home culture in order to observe the host culture objectively; and, adopting additional cultural frames of references and worldviews by maintaining the internal self were found to be helpful, allowing the NNETs to find their own ways of dealing with and overcoming the difficulties of their cross-cultural adaptation.

**Limitations**

Despite the theoretical justifications and the conclusions reported here, this study may be subjected to certain limitations and criticism. First of all, the English teachers who participated in this study were studying in Research I state universities located in the Midwestern region of the U.S. However, in future research dealing with a similar topic (i.e., NNETs’ identity), it may be advantageous to conduct a study among NNS teachers attending smaller state or private and/or teaching (not research) universities in the U.S. Similarly, the process of cultural adjustment of these teachers may differ according to the geographical location of their residence. Within the U.S., even the culture of the East is different from the West, therefore it may be useful to find out to what extent the geographical location and local cultures influence identity transformation.

In relation to the generalizability of the research conclusions, alternative approaches might include the prediction of sojourner-host relations based on variables
such as the length of residence, willingness and opportunity for integration and psychological support in the host culture. The pros and cons of the relationship amongst such variables require clarification in future research.

The last limitation is the length of time each teacher has been in the ELT profession. There were vast differences in the experience of novice and experienced teachers (i.e., between 4-30 years). The longer periods of time in ELT are assumed to affect the teachers’ perceptions and ultimately their sense of self.

Recommendations

When NNET students in teacher education programs in the U.S. begin to test their flexibility, openness, tolerance, and other qualities, they may come to view themselves differently and not necessarily in such previously naïve and positive terms. An opportunity to study in the U.S. offers them not only a quality and prestigious education, but also a new social milieu in which they examine their behaviors, perceptions, values, and thought patterns. They may learn things about themselves they would not otherwise know, and in this way they may achieve personal growth. Yet, it may be an “ego-shattering” (Weaver, 1993) experience. Whether this experience becomes positive or negative, or if it ends up with growth or destruction, it is important to realize that it is a “learning experience,” as Zeina phrases, with some involvement of pain which can be handled and overcome. Thus, educators in teacher education programs should be sensitive to this “life transition” (Bennett, 1993) their international students experience; as mentors and role models, they should be aware of the educational and psychological needs of their students during this transitional phase of professional and personal (re)construction.
It is possible that there might be still some people in academic environments who falsely believe that successful English language teaching depends on nativeness. This study confirmed once again that there is a need for a stronger emphasis in ELT professionalism on the teacher’s knowledge, skills, and expertise, not on his/her accent or nation of origin. Therefore, there may be a need in teacher education programs to continue to address the issue in order to end this pseudopower struggle between native and nonnative English professionals. Such labeling within the same profession should be considered a barrier, as it brings nothing but separation and discomfort. Hence, teacher educators in TEFL/TESL Programs should open classes to critical discussions of the NS-NNS dichotomy and the strengths and weaknesses of both NET and NNETs as language teachers. Such an attitude would make NNS students/teachers feel valued, accepted, and integrated, and contribute to increase their self-esteem.

In addition, there is a need to put an emphasis on cultural pluralism, cultural diversity, and interpersonal relations in present education programs for incoming students. Cultural awareness and understanding should be the key words in ELT professionals’ sociocultural identities, their self-image, and their beliefs about teaching EFL/ESL and culture, issues which, according to Richards (as cited in Duff & Uchida, 1997), have until recently been neglected in ELT professionalism. There should be classes or orientation sessions in teacher education programs dealing with the issues of cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication. In these classes the importance of “difference” should be emphasized. That is, the reality we experience is constructed according to variable cultural patterns and these differences play crucial roles in our attempts to understand and communicate cross-culturally. Such cross-cultural
analysis will provide a framework or system for understanding the interrelationships of
the various facets of cultures and the process of cross-cultural interaction. While
emphasizing the idea of cultural differences, it may be also effective to stress cross-
cultural similarities. The recognition of patterns of similarities will enable the students in
culturally diverse classrooms to find common ground and establish rapport.

In order for NNS student-teachers to project a positive self-image and feelings
toward the host country and culture, present teacher education programs should also find
ways to raise these student-teachers’ awareness of different ways in which they will be an
asset in the classroom. It is very important to remember NNETs’ main objective in
pursuing further training in the U.S.: to profit from their educational (and teaching)
experience overseas. Doing this successfully may require some support that is currently
not being made available.

From this research study, it can be seen that future studies need to expand the
examination of the process of identity transformation. In an attempt to do this, it might be
useful to concentrate on the effects of different variables which might play an important
role in the process of transformation in NNETs’ perceptions regarding their identity and
self such as their age, gender, and marital status; cultural distance between their home
culture and host culture; and the quality of interaction between sojourners and host-
nationals.

The researcher in the present study believes that cultural adaptation difficulties
concern any potential sojourners who plan to change a social context. Thus, it would be
interesting to study the sojourn experiences and adaptation process of native English-
speaking teachers overseas, in EFL contexts. The experiences of these teachers should be
made comparable to the nonnative English-speaking professionals who sojourn in ESL contexts. Such comparisons might help to see the phenomena from a different perspective. As a result of discovering similarities and differences between the cross-cultural experiences of two groups, additional research areas might be created. For example, while the nonnative teacher’s dominance over the English language will eliminate certain identity and adaptation problems such as communication breakdown due to limited proficiency in English, such dominance, particularly in the local classroom and institutional atmosphere, might create additional problems concerning power issues on the side of the native speaker teacher during his adaptation to a new context.
References


Institute of International Education. (n.d.). *Open Doors: 2001 International student*


Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Appendix B: Demographic Data Sheet

Appendix C: Data Codes

Appendix D: Informed Consent
Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself. Where are you from? How long have you been in the States?
2. Is this your first living experience in a foreign country? (if no, go to question 3)
3. How would you compare the life in the U.S. to the previous experiences of yours in other foreign countries?
4. Tell me about your education background?
5. How long have you been teaching English/in English?
6. What courses have you taught up to now (in your home country and the U.S.)?
7. Why do the students/learners in your native country learn English?
8. How much English do you hear in the society back home?
9. Tell me about a traditional language classroom in your country. (e.g., the roles of a teacher and a student, materials/aids used, etc.)
10. How would you compare the two working experiences (in terms of your teaching techniques in both contexts)?
11. Can you compare the US education system to the schooling system in your country? (e.g., differences you experience in higher education in the States)
12. What are the difficulties you encounter while teaching English/in English (in the U.S.)?
13. Do you see any advantages/disadvantages being an EFL teacher but teaching ESL in the United States?
14. Do you think teachers’ attempt of continuing their education in the US (after having studied outside the US) will result in some changes in the future in the way they teach English?
15. Name a few of the similarities and differences between your home culture and the U.S. culture.
16. How did you feel when you first got here? How did this change (if any)?
17. Which word describes your cultural adjustment better: to adapt or to adopt?
18. What do you think about the stages you went through during your adaptation to the U.S. culture?
19. What cultural issues have you encountered upon your arrival? How many of these issues do you think are “manageable” for a sojourner?
20. Do you think you have experienced culture shock here? How about educational shock?
21. Did you suffer from any other difficulties, like culture shock, during your adaptation?
22. Identity is related to one’s roles he or she takes upon, such as your roles as a student, as a teacher in both societies, and so on. Now, have you experienced times that you are in-between roles? Why do you think that happens/happened?
23. Do you think you have fitted in the US culture easily? (if yes, go to the questions 24, 25 & 26; if no, why not?)
24. What makes you think that?
25. What are the “things” you have as part of your culture, identity, etc. that help/helped you during the process of your adaptation to this new culture?
26. How did your personality help you in “surviving” in the U.S.?
27. Do you think you have changed as a result of coming to the U.S.? Do you think you are NOT the same X (the name) any more?
28. Name a few of the positive AND negative life style changes you experienced as a result of living in this culture.
29. Name a few of the positive AND negative changes in self values/cultural values you experienced as a result of living in this culture.
30. Do you see yourself in the U.S. as a foreigner who has survived?
31. Tell me about your personal accomplishments and/or failures?
32. Do you recommend other EFL teachers to come and study in the United States and experience teaching in an ESL context?
33. With which group of people do you associate yourself more: Americans or other international students/sojourners?
34. When you’re making friends, do you have any preference among specific nationalities?
35. How do you make friends and socialize in this country? Is it similar to what you would do back home?
36. How do Americans act in this culture?
37. Are there any people helping you on your adjustment to living and studying in the U.S.?
38. How different are the expectations of the American academic culture?
39. Do you think it would be helpful to have help during the international students’ adaptation period?
Appendix B: Demographic Data Sheet

SURVEY QUESTIONS:

INFORMANT’S NAME:_________________________________________

1. Country of origin:

2. Status of English in the home country (i.e., FL, SL):

3. Gender:

4. Age (circle the right answer): 20-24 25-29 30-34 35+

5. Degree of graduate study in the U.S. (i.e., M.Ed., Ed.D., Ph.D.):

6. Reasons for further education in TESOL:

7. Number of years completed in the U.S.:

8. Prior teaching experience (indicate years, levels):

9. Prior experience in L2 setting (i.e., traveling, studying, working)

10. Reasons you feel “you fit in the U.S. society”:

11. Reasons you feel “you stand out from the crowd”:

12. Cross-cultural difficulties experienced in the U.S. so far:
Appendix C: Data Codes

1. educational background
2. ways of learning English (home)
3. previous living experience in L2/FL
4. graduate student needs
5. factors influencing cultural adaptation (comparing C1 to C2)
6. factors influencing cultural adaptation (observation of host-nationals at home)
7. factors influencing cultural adaptation (culture shock)
8. factors influencing cultural adaptation (reverse culture shock)
9. factors influencing cultural adaptation (alienation to C1)
10. factors influencing cultural adaptation (coping strategies)
11. factors influencing cultural adaptation (in-betweenness)
12. perceptions about co-nationals
13. perceptions about host-nation
14. perceptions about host-nationals
15. perceptions about host-culture
16. perceptions about inter-nationals
17. self-perception (teacher)
18. self-perception (student)
19. self-perception (comparing self with other inter-nationals)
20. self-perception (NS versus NNS)
21. teacher change (personal)
22. teacher change (professional)
23. factors influencing teaching (T-S relationship)
24. factors influencing teaching (T roles)
25. factors influencing teaching (influence of C1)
26. work experience-home
27. work experience-US
28. work experience (courses taught)
29. work experience (teaching home versus U.S.)
30. reasons for ELT at home (status of English)
31. reasons for ELT at home (education system)
INFORMED CONSENT

Title of Project: The Influence of Context in English Language Teacher Education and Teacher Identity Development

Investigator: Ebru D. Duffield

I, _____________________________ , agree to participate in the project named above. (print your name here)

I understand that the data collection in this research project will be used in presentation and publications.

I am aware that the purpose of this study is to investigate how teacher identity is influenced by teacher education context (i.e., TESL or TEFL), and how advanced teacher training in a second language and culture (i.e., L2 and C2) influences teachers’ approaches and philosophies. I am informed that this is an eight to twelve week long study, and during this time there will be two sets of individual interviews and one focus group interview. Should I live outside the Cincinnati area, I understand that I will need to commute to the University of Cincinnati, and therefore, the transportation expenses (i.e., gas and parking) will be reimbursed by the investigator. I am also informed that the individual interviews might take between 45 minutes to an hour, and the focus-group interview should not take more than two hours. I am aware that the interviews (both face-to-face and focus group interviews) may be audiotaped. The investigator might also make use of artifacts (i.e., electronic diaries) as part of the data. There might be a need to make use of an electronic focus group following the first set of individual interviews, and I
I understand that I might be asked to participate in the discussions through sending reflective messages (i.e., electronic diaries) to the listserv specifically designed for the group by the investigator. I understand that ONLY the participants in the study can subscribe to the listserv, and it cannot be viewed by others. I also realize that the electronic focus group activity may include a series of mutual exchange of reflective messages and commentaries among the study group.

I am also aware that my name will not be used in the transcriptions of the interviews, or in the results of the surveys. After the study is complete, the audiotapes and written data will be stored away in a locked drawer until no longer needed and then all data will be destroyed. I am also aware that tapes of voices maybe used in the future, but no names will be connected to the voices, or I cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to me. I understand that if I have any concerns or questions I can contact the researcher Ebru D. Duffield at (513) 573-6058, or Dr. Mary S. Benedetti at (513) 556-3590 or Dr. Margaret Miller at (513) 556-2875. I also understand that strict confidentiality will be respected and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty, embarrassment or difficulty.

I, the undersigned, have understood the above explanation and given consent to my voluntary participation in this project “The Influence of Context in English Language Teacher Education and Teacher Identity Development”.

________________________                                              _________________
Signature of Participant                                                             Date

________________________                                              _________________
Signature of Investigator             Date