

L2 Motivational Self, Social Identity, and Swearing – Perspectives from Korean EFL Speakers

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Abstract

For more than a decade the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005) has been the framework of choice for many researchers examining motivation in EFL contexts. Although this framework has been used to study motivation in a range of different settings, it appears little has been published on the relationship between L2 social identity (real or imagined future social identities) and the three components which constitute the L2 Motivational Self System.

Exploring the topic of swearing and taboo language as a means of expressing elements of an individual's various L2 social identities, this study uses a semi-structured interview approach to elicit data from ten Korean users of English in order to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between social identity, taboo language, and motivation.

Results reveal that the relationship between these elements is dynamic; with factors such as current and previous learning contexts, current domains of use, and future 'imagined' domains of use all having a bearing on not only one's ability to employ swearing and taboo language for identity projection, but also on the level of importance an individual places on being able to use swearing and taboo language to construct and display L2 social identities. Results also revealed that a lack of knowledge related to both linguistic and pragmatic functions of English swearing and taboo language prevented some participants from using this linguistic style to express elements of their L2 social identities. This linguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural knowledge deficit was predominantly due to the Korean EFL learning context.

This research highlights the importance of the learning context, domains and opportunities for use, and the role of the ideal L2 self for those wishing to construct and display various social identities via swearing and taboo language.

Key words: swearing, social identity, motivational self system, taboo language, EFL context

Statement of Candidate

I, Joshua Simon Wedlock, confirm that this thesis, entitled “L2 Motivational Self, Social Identity, and Swearing – Perspectives from Korean EFL Speakers” has not been previously submitted, partial or otherwise, as part of the requirements for a degree at any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I further confirm that this thesis has been written by me, is an original piece of research, and that any assistance I have received while undertaking this project has been acknowledged.

I also certify that all literature and sources that have been referenced within are indicated in the ‘reference’ section of this thesis and that prior to commencing this research, Ethics Committee approval had been obtained (ref: 5201700486).

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20 April, 2018

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1 Introduction

As the language of international business, science, information, technology, and diplomacy, it is easy to understand why English is currently being studied by an estimated one billion people worldwide (British Council, 2013; Beare, 2018). Although there are a myriad reasons as to why an individual, or even an entire country (e.g., South Korea), pursues English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL), a large number do so in the hope of living, working, or studying in an English-speaking country, while others simply want to be able to communicate in English for business and/or personal purposes.

Independent of one's reason/s for studying English, two things remain constant. First, reaching the levels of proficiency (both linguistic and pragmatic) required to communicate effectively with other English speakers, regardless of whether these English speakers come from the 'inner circle', the 'expanding circle', or the 'outer circle' countries (Kachru, 1990), often requires years of study, and as such, sustained motivation. Secondly, second language learning has been widely argued to involve the negotiation and accommodation of a second-language identity (Brown, 1986; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Kramsch, 2006).

Regarding motivation, and in direct response to the shortcomings of the dominant motivational framework at the time (i.e., Gardner's (1985) *socio-educational model*), Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), studied the concept of motivation and language learning in an EFL setting (i.e., a setting where there is an absence of an English-speaking community to integrate with), and concluded that the socio-educational model of motivation was not applicable in an EFL context. As a result of their large-scale study into motivation and language learning in an EFL context, the *L2 Motivational Self System* was born (Dörnyei, 2005).

One of the key constituents of the L2 Motivational System is the concept of the 'ideal L2 self' and the assertion that "if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the '*ideal*

L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29, original italics).

Considering that visualisation and mental imagery is key to developing a powerful ideal L2 self (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Dörnyei, 2009), and bearing in mind that learning a new language requires “the adoption of new social and cultural behaviours and ways of being” (Williams, 1994, p. 77), it is curious that the literature on L2 social identity and the role it could potentially play in the formation of a more vivid image of one’s ideal L2 self is limited, especially in light of the recent explosion of interest in the topic of identity and its relationship to second language learning (e.g., Ricento, 2005; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Alsagoff, 2012; Block, 2013).

In Applied Linguistics, the four broad areas of identity-related studies that researchers seem to be predominantly focused on include “bi/multilingualism, language in society, second language learning and language teacher development” (Block, 2013, p. 14). Although these studies have contributed to our understanding of the various ways identity interacts with language learning, there is still a gap in the literature concerning taboo language, L2 social identity, and the L2 Motivational Self System. Because of this gap in the current literature, this study aims to further enhance our understanding of one’s L2 social identity and motivation for language learning by exploring the thoughts, opinions, and recollections of ten English-speaking Native-Korean adults in relation to one specific aspect of language learning, the identity-appropriate use of taboo language.

1.1 Research Questions

Based on the assumption that language is one of the major tools we have at our disposal for displaying our social identities (Joseph, 2004; Norton, 2014), and taking into consideration the goals of a large number of Korean EFL students (i.e., those wishing to live

in an English-speaking environment), the contexts where they may be using and engaging with English, and the assertion that various contexts give rise to different social identities (e.g., depending on the situation the same person could assume the roles of mother, professor, daughter, church leader, and the life of the party) (Joseph, 2004; Jenkins, 2008), this study aims to explore the following questions:

- What are the thoughts and attitudes of Korean EFL learners/users towards the use of swearing and taboo language for expressing elements of one's various English-speaking social identities?
- What is the relationship between the Korean EFL context and the development of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge in relation to the use of taboo language and the expression of social identity?
- How is English swearing and taboo language employed by native Korean English-speakers to display elements of their various social identities?
- In which future domains and contexts might Korean English-speakers benefit from having a greater command and understanding of how swearing and taboo language is used in English to project elements of one's various social identities?

These questions have been chosen in a quest to a) ascertain if second language learners are adequately equipped to display various parts of their social identities via the use of swearing and taboo language (henceforth referred to as SATL) in English, b) to gather a range of opinions and/or recollections on the topic of SATL and social identity from Korean users of English and c) to explore the relationship between the notion of social identity and the three elements composing Dörnyei's L2 motivational framework.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 The South Korean Context. A perennial topic of national interest, as evident by the constant flow of newspaper articles discussing the subject (Geddes, 2016), English education in Korea is considered so important that there are even those who suggest it is more important than the study of Korean (Cho, 2014).

The reasons most often cited in the literature to explain the ‘English fever’ in Korea appear to be more instrumental than integrative (Truitt, 1995), and include gaining access to white-collar jobs, improving one’s social status, gaining admission to top universities, and/or to study or work abroad (Park, 2011; Cho, 2014).

In order to enhance their English proficiency in the hopes of realising the above stated goals, the Korean people go to great lengths. From spending more on English education than any other EFL country, to attending ‘English cram schools’ in an attempt to improve their English proficiency and/or English test scores (e.g., TOEIC, IELTS, TOEFL), the Korean people strive to become fluent in English in the hopes of capitalising on the benefits fluency is believed to bestow (Kim, 2012).

For many in Korea, English education starts early, often before primary school, and continues through university and into adulthood. In an attempt to get ahead and give their children better opportunities, it is not uncommon for Korean families to send their children abroad to study English (Kim, 2016; Park, 2009). In terms of numbers, in 2010 the Korean Ministry of Education stated that “as of 2008, approximately 40,000 primary and secondary school students studied abroad” (cited in Kim, 2016, p. 76). In 2011 it was noted that “more than 62% of Korean students studying abroad went to English speaking countries, such as the United States, England, and Canada, in order to study English” (Kim, 2012, p. 30).

On top of this, each year thousands of young Korean adults live in English-speaking countries for extended periods to either improve their English, study at a tertiary level, or get

vocational training (Park, 2006). Of course, there are also those who are required to live abroad for professional or personal reasons, as well as those who go abroad for shorter periods for the purpose of business and/or leisure.

1.2.2 Identity. Although currently a key concept in range of academic disciplines (Benson *et al.*, 2013; Norton & Toohey, 2011), the notion of ‘identity’ was all but absent in the literature on second language learning until the mid-1990s (Norton and Toohey, 2011; Block, 2013). According to Norton and Toohey (2011), interest in identity and language learning has exploded in recent years, with the notion of ‘identity’ featuring “in most encyclopaedias and handbooks of language learning and teaching” (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 413). In relation to applied linguistics, research has been conducted in several areas, including “identity and pragmatics [...], identity and sociolinguistics [...]; and identity and discourse [...].” (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 413).

A somewhat vague and contested notion (Joseph, 2004; Jenkins, 2014), the way identity is represented in the literature largely depends on which of the various theoretical frameworks and terminologies authors subscribe to (Ricento, 2005; Benson *et al.*, 2013). From a poststructuralist perspective “identity is considered to be fluid, multiple, diverse, dynamic, varied, shifting, subject to change and contradictory. It is regarded to be socially organised, reorganised, constructed, co-constructed, and continually reconstructed through language and discourse. It is unstable, flexible, ongoing, negotiated, and multiple. It is indeed a collection of roles or subject positions and a mixture of individual agency and social influences” (Kouhpaenejad & Gholaminejad, 2014, p. 2014). For this paper, and in line with the movement in applied linguistics towards post-structuralism as the “the approach of choice among those who seek to explore links between identity and L2 learning” (Block, 2007, p. 864), a broadly post-structuralist stance has been taken.

1.2.3 Pragmatics. If it is true that people display various social identities depending on context and situation, then the importance of “pragmatic competence (the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context)” (Thomas, 1983, p. 92) can hardly be overstated, especially when considering the role language plays in helping people display their social identities.

Dependent on both linguistic knowledge and an understanding of sociocultural norms and expectations (Hymes, 1972), pragmatics can be defined as “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (Crystal, 1997, p. 301). Often delineated into pragmalinguistics (i.e., the correct use of linguistics forms for designated functions), and sociopragmatics (i.e., an understanding of the interlocutors' expected social norms, obligations, rights, social relationships, and context of communication) (Leech, 1983, Thomas, 1983; Kasper, 1992), having an understanding of pragmatics, especially sociopragmatics, is of paramount importance to those second language users who not only wish to display their various social identities, but also to project accurate images of themselves (Dewaele, 2007).

Inspired by Thomas, and her assertion that “[i]t is not the responsibility of the language teacher *qua* linguist to enforce Anglo-Saxon standards of behaviour, linguistic or otherwise. Rather, it is the teacher’s job to equip the student to express her/himself in exactly the way s/he chooses to do so – rudely, tactfully, or in an elaborately polite manner” (Thomas, 1983, p. 96), this study examines the pragmatic functions of SATL as indicators of social identity, and in turn, the connection between social identity and L2 motivation.

1.3 Scope of Study

Maintaining a broadly ‘post-structuralist’ stance, a qualitative, semi-structured interview approach has been employed to obtain responses to a range of open-ended questions about the participants’ experiences and thoughts on the various social identities and language choices they make in both their L1 (Korean) and their L2 (English). With the aim of exploring the role language plays in the construction and performance of the participants’ social identities and the potential implications this has for language learning motivation, this study adopts a qualitative approach to research, and as such, is informed by the epistemological and ontological assumptions that are congruent with this paradigm.

Targeted at understanding the social world through “an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants” (Bryman, 2012, p. 380), an emic ‘insider’ perspective, which often requires interaction “in the field, face to face with real people” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 9) was favoured over an etic ‘outsider’ perspective. Furthermore, since “[o]ntological assumptions are concerned with what constitutes reality” (Scotland, 2012, p. 9), this paper takes the ontological perspective that reality is socially constructed and best viewed as the “outcomes of the interactions between individuals” (Bryman, 2012, p. 380).

1.4 Structure of Thesis

Excluding this introductory chapter, this thesis is divided into four chapters:

Chapter Two: Literature Review explores the current gaps in our knowledge and provides further context for this study by reviewing and critically evaluating the literature in three main areas:

1. The L2 Motivational Self System,
2. Social Identity and Language Learning, and
3. The Pragmatics of Taboo Language in everyday use and the teaching and learning of swearing in EFL contexts.

Chapter Three: Methodology outlines and justifies the research design, methodology and research process. Furthermore, it will highlight any ethical and methodological issues and elucidate the study's scope and limitations.

Chapter Four: Findings reports on the major themes that emerged from the interview data regarding the participants' experiences and/or opinions about their future L2 self, social identity, and the use of SATL in English. Dörnyei's L2 Motivation Self System will be utilised as the framework for analysis.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion draws together insights from the previous chapters and illustrates how the findings answer the research questions. The second section presents a discussion on the potential implications of this study. Finally, suggestions for future research will be made, before concluding the study.

2 Literature Review

The following chapter will provide a general overview of three of the major themes that inform this research. The first section will begin by outlining the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005) before presenting and critically evaluating a selection of pertinent research findings related to second language learning and identity as examined through this lens. The second section will examine the notion of identity and the various ways it has been represented in the literature. This section will not only draw from research in the fields of linguistics and second language acquisition, but also from other social sciences. The third and final section of this chapter will be dedicated to discussing the notions of SATL in order to define the concepts and highlight how the various pragmatic functions of SATL affords the user a tool to display elements of their social identity in a host of different situations. In addition, a range of articles and research papers pertaining to SATL in a second language will be discussed and critically evaluated.

The purpose of this review is not only to discuss and evaluate prior work on the L2 Motivational Self System, the notion of social identity, and the universal phenomena of SATL, but also to draw attention to the gap that currently exists in the literature in relation to social identity and language choice and the roles they could potentially play in the creation of a more vivid ‘ideal L2 self’ image as espoused by Dörnyei in his L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005/2009).

2.1 L2 Motivational Self System

Initially conceptualised by Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), before being further expanded upon by Dörnyei (2005), the L2 Motivational Self System was developed in an attempt to address the shortcomings of Gardner's classical concept of "integrativeness" (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1959), which posited that one of the main motivating factors for people to learn a language was the desire for people to "communicate with members of the [target language] community and sometimes even become like them" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 22).

According to Dörnyei (2009) and Csizér & Dörnyei (2005), Gardner's framework was not able to adequately explain the motivations of language learners in contexts where there was little chance of integrating into a target community. This led Dörnyei to assert that in EFL contexts, "where no salient English-spoken community is present for integration" (Zhan & Wan, 2016, p.41), "the 'integrative' metaphor does not have any obvious meaning" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 24), and as such, a new theoretical framework was needed to account for this.

Redefining L2 motivation "as the desire to achieve one's ideal language self by reducing the discrepancy between one's actual and ideal selves" (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005, p. 30), and based on the psychological theory of self-discrepancy (e.g., Markus & Nurius, 1986; Higgins, 1987), this new framework, known as the L2 Motivational Self System (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2009), "draws upon theories of "possible selves" and "imagined communities" and applies them specifically to the learning of a second/foreign language" (Roger, 2010, p. 4).

According to Dörnyei (2009), this model of L2 motivation is composed of three interconnected components:

1. Ideal L2 Self, which is the L2-specific facet of one's 'ideal self': if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the 'ideal L2 self' is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves. Traditional integrative and internalised instrumental motives would typically belong to this component.
2. Ought-to L2 Self, which concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes. This dimension corresponds to Higgins's ought self and thus to the more extrinsic (i.e., less internalised) types of instrumental motives.
3. L2 Learning Experience, which concerns situated, 'executive' motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g., the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success). This component is conceptualised at a different level from the two self-guides and future research will hopefully elaborate on the self-aspects of this bottom-up process."

(Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29)

Stemming from Dörnyei and Csizér's (2002) seminal research into the motivational behaviours and attitudes of 8,593 Hungarian middle school students studying five target languages (English, German, French, Italian and Russian), the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005) has provided the theoretical basis for a range of studies examining motivation and language learning for more than a decade (e.g., Lamb, 2012; Lyons, 2014; Magid, 2014; Csizér & Kormas, 2014). The focus of this section will be on providing an overview of the available studies addressing the concept of identity and its relationship to

motivation, or on studies discussing the formation of a more vivid image of one's ideal L2 self.

Using the L2 Motivational Self System as the framework for his article, Ryan (2006) discussed the “the effects of globalisation on learners’ sense of identity and how this impacts on the motivation to learn the unquestioned language of globalisation, English.” (Ryan, 2006, p. 23). It was argued that in an EFL context it is the desire to become a member of an ‘imagined global community’ that provides the main basis for motivation. This argument, as pointed out by the author, “rest[s] on the premise that a great number of people—especially young people—around the world feel some sense of a global identity” (Ryan, 2006, p. 42).

Although the idea of a ‘global identity’ or having a ‘global outlook’ has previously proven to be powerful motivation tool for young learners in various contexts (Arnett, 2002; Yashima, 2002/2009; Yashima *et al.*, 2004; Lamb, 2004), Ryan was the first author to write about Dörnyei’s motivational framework and the notion of global identity in the Japanese EFL context.

Using both semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to gather data, Ryan (2008) built on from his 2006 paper by employing Dörnyei’s framework in an effort “to empirically test theoretical proposals suggesting that the concept of an ideal L2 self may represent a more effective base for understanding L2 motivation, and secondly to explore the possibilities suggested by this approach within the context of the Japanese English learning context” (Ryan, 2008, p. ii).

Drawing from a range of sources, including Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), Gardner (1985), Yashima (2002), and Neuliep and McCroskey (1997), Ryan reconceptualised the concept of a ‘global identity’ into one of a ‘cosmopolitan outlook’ (as measured by six attitudinal variables; cultural interest, attitudes towards L2 community, international contact, travel, international empathy, interest in foreign languages) (Ryan, 2008, pp. 205-206), and

concluded that although the data revealed a “very close relationship between cosmopolitan attitudes and both the ideal L2 self and effort [to learn]. The initial impression created by this finding is that it confounds a basic assumption of L2 self theory, that the relationship between cosmopolitan attitudes and effort should be absorbed by the individuals’ ideal L2 self beliefs” (Ryan, 2008, p. 221).

Hypothesizing, Ryan suggested that this finding helps explain “the apparent contradiction between learners who appear intent on making great efforts to learn the language but who fail to execute those intentions... [and argued that] ... cosmopolitan attitudes, informed by a vaguely conceived L2 community, encourage intentions to learn, but these intentions are not necessarily executed; it may be a function of the vagueness of the learners’ visions of the English-speaking world that leads to this situation” (Ryan, 2008, p. 221).

In a further study conducted in the Japanese context, Yashima (2009) explored relationships between international posture, the ideal L2 self, and a willingness to communicate. Suggesting that “the efforts to create people with L2 competency inevitably involve the issue of social identity and the development of an L2 self” (Yashima, 2009, p. 144), Yashima collected data from 191 questionnaires completed by Japanese high school students (156 girls and 31 boys, four unreported), and concluded that “those who show a higher level of international posture and frequency of communication tend to endorse the vision of ideal selves more strongly” (Yashima, 2009, p.157).

Although the findings of the two studies mentioned above (i.e., Yashima, 2009; Ryan, 2008) highlight the compatibility of the L2 Motivational Self System to EFL contexts and the importance of having a clear image of one’s ideal L2 self, neither study a) allowed for the exploration of the participants’ personal visions of their future ideal L2 selves, or b) explicitly addressed the issue of identity, global or otherwise, during the data collection process (see

Yashima, 2009, pp.162 – 163; Ryan, 2008, pp. 289 – 299).

Researching global identity, the L2 self, and the study of English, Roger (2010) interviewed seven advanced level Korean users of English in an attempt to gain insight into the ways that the ‘ideal second language self’ impacts motivation for learning English as a global language.

Findings related to the participants’ “perspectives on the cultural associations that English holds, the degree to which a ‘global identity’ is a part of their own self-understandings, and whether or not they visualise elements of an ‘ideal self’ in order to sustain their own language learning motivation” (Roger, 2010, p. 1), were inconclusive, with several participants suggesting that the notion of a ‘global identity’ only exists in one’s imagination, others being unsure, and only one participant clearly stating that the idea of being a global citizen resonated with them.

Exploring the connection between personal identity and language learning, Roger asked participants if “English (or any other second or foreign language that you speak) is in some way part of your identity, or do you regard it simply as a skill that you have?” (Roger, 2010, p.10). Interestingly, although six out of seven participants reported that English was part of their identity, the way in which English impacted identity was not uniform (i.e., English could be part of a participant’s ‘personal identity’, ‘Korean identity’, or ‘Western’ identity).

In relation to future L2 selves, Roger noted that there seemed to be limited evidence that the participants possessed robust mental images of their second language selves. He further pointed out that when “participants did volunteer ways of imagining themselves, these imaginings sometimes overlapped with career goals (such as being a good teacher, professor or novelist) and it was again unclear to what extent (if at all) the participants invoked actual imagery in relation to these goals” (Roger, 2010, p. 16).

Another researcher who achieved similar findings in relation to the ideal L2 self was Kim (2009). In Kim's study, involving four adult South Korean students studying English in Canada, linking sociocultural theory, activity theory, motivation, and the L2 self, it was found that three out of the four participants appeared to lack a clearly defined ideal L2 self, with only one participant having a clear image of their ideal L2 self.

Regarding the sole participant who maintained a consistent image of their future English-speaking self, Kim's study highlighted how one's ought-to self can potentially become part of one's ideal L2 self if significant levels of importance or meaning are placed on the task of learning English (Kim, 2009, p. 146). A similar finding was also reported by Teimouri (2016) in his study on motivation in the Iranian EFL context.

Taking a somewhat different approach to the study of the L2 Motivational Self System, Teimouri (2016) had 524 adolescent Iranian EFL students complete questionnaires examining "L2 learners' emotional experiences in relation to their L2 future self-guides" (Teimouri, 2016, p. 12). Results suggested that "the inclusion of learners' emotions into the L2 motivational self system as mediating factors has great potential to broaden our understanding of learners' motivational behaviours throughout the course of L2 goal-pursuit" (Teimouri, 2016, p. 24).

Although Teimouri's research did not directly discuss identity, it did highlight how having a more nuanced picture of learners' L2 selves can facilitate the understanding of an individual's motivation more easily, and the idea that ought-to selves can be internalised, thus becoming part of the ideal L2 self (Teimouri, 2016).

In the Korean context, where many EFL students are more motivated by their ought-to L2 selves (e.g., *need to pass an exam, need to keep my family happy, don't want to fail*), and often cite instrumental reasons (e.g., getting into university, securing employment) as the main reasons for studying English (Park, 2009; Park, 2011), the findings of Kim (2009) and

Teimouri (2016) highlight the importance of the ought-to self in certain contexts.

In another study, Takahashi (2013) attempted “to gain a rich understanding of the development of ideal L2 selves” (Takahashi, 2013, p. 3) by interviewing six non-English major university students in a Japan. The study found that those who possessed a more clearly defined image of their ideal L2 self also believed they had more opportunities to use English in their lives –similar results were also found by Yashima (2009).

Regarding the concept of identity and the relationship to one’s ideal L2 self, Takahashi’s study found that “[s]ome of the interviewees’ ideal L2 selves seemed to focus more on various goals than on identity, such as “to *do* something” rather than “to *become* someone”” (Takahashi, 2013, p. 7 – italics in the original). According to Takahashi, this might have been because some of those being interviewed did not possess vivid images of themselves as English users, and as such, did not elaborate “on their identity which has an English-related component” (Takahashi, 2013, p. 7).

These findings, which echo those of Roger (2010), suggest that one of the drawbacks of the motivational self-system revolves around the articulation of one’s ideal L2 self and the difficulty that seems to exist in differentiating between *who one wants to be* in a second language and *what one wants to do* in a second language.

In a separate study examining ideal L2 self-guide formation, Dörnyei & Chan (2013) used a questionnaire to collect data from one hundred seventy-two Year 8 Chinese students (ages 13–15) in order to study “the role images and senses play in shaping the motivation to learn an L2 through promoting a more vivid mental representation of one’s self in future states” (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013, p. 440).

The authors asserted that the results of their study are “consistent with past investigations of L2 motivation in identifying significant positive associations between desired language self-guides (particularly the ideal L2 self) and the learners’ L2-related

learning effort and achievement” (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013, p. 457). They also posited that by taking a more multisensory approach (i.e., an approach that includes both visual and auditory components) to the creation of future ideal selves, enhanced levels of motivation can be achieved (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013, p. 437).

As the above studies have shown, although the L2 Motivational Self System has the potential to be an effective tool for measuring and describing motivation in EFL contexts, the lack of evidence of a clear image of one’s ideal L2 self seems to be a reoccurring theme (e.g., Ryan, 2008; Kim, 2009; Roger, 2010; Yashima, 2009; Takahashi, 2013), and as such, points to the need for further consideration and research into the ways a more vivid ideal L2 self-image could be realised.

In addition, although there are copious amounts of literature on identity and second language motivation and learning (e.g., Block, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Murray *et al.*, 2011; Lamb, 2011; Norton, 2013), it is research into the future/ideal L2 self and social identity in a second language which is proving to be somewhat elusive in the literature.

Assuming Dörnyei & Ushioda (2009) are correct in their assertion that “L2 motivation is currently in the process of being radically reconceptualised and re-theorised in the context of contemporary notions of self and identity” (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009, p. 1), it seems curious that the notion of L2 social identity, and all it entails, has not been more extensively studied in conjunction with Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self construct.

Furthermore, considering that a person’s language and way of speaking (e.g., accent, word choice, fluency) convey elements of their identity (e.g., Australian, educated, from the country, second language speaker), and Dörnyei’s postulation “that a vivid conception of an ideal L2 self can act as a powerful motivator by providing a clear image for the learner to strive for” (Lyons, 2016, p. 33), it seems somewhat remiss not to consider the way language is used as a tool for displaying various social identities when endeavouring to develop robust

images of one's ideal future L2 self.

That being said, the following section will review a sample of the relevant literature on language and identity, with the major focus being on the notion of social identity. After all, language is more than just a way to achieve instrumental goals; it is a way of expressing where we come from, who we are, and who we want to be (see Mendoza-Denton, 2002).

2.2 Identity Construction and Language Learning

The highly contested notion of identity (Fearon, 1999; Mendoza-Denton, 2002; Joseph, 2004; Jenkins, 2008), which seems to be “bound up with everything from political asylum to credit card fraud, shopping to sex” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 28), is based on two opposing, but complementary concepts - sameness and difference (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Jenkins, 2008); the former allowing the individual to imagine themselves as members of a group, and the later creating a social distance between the *us* and the *them* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). However, as simple as this explanation may seem, even taken together, “these concepts are inadequate to capture the power relations in which identities are enmeshed. For sameness and difference are not objective states, but phenomenological processes that emerge from social interaction” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 369; Jenkins, 2008), and as an extension, give rise to the notion of social identity (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2013; Syed, 2001; Jenkins, 2008).

Commonly defined “as a person's sense of self derived from perceived membership in social groups” (Chen & Li, 2009, p. 431), the fluid, multidimensional, and contradictory (Norton Peirce, 1995; Block, 2007; Paltridge, 2015) notion of social identity “encompasses participant roles, positions, relationships, reputations, and other dimensions of social personae, which are conventionally linked to epistemic and affective stances” (Ochs, 1996, p. 424). Influenced by context, occasion, and expected behavioural norms (Hogg & Reid, 2006:

Bucholtz & Hall, 2010; Bucholtz, 2011; Paltridge, 2015), social identity is neither fixed nor unitary, instead it is “something people are continually constructing and reconstructing in their encounters with each other in the world” (Cameron, 2001, p. 17 – cited in Paltridge, 2015; Bucholtz & Hall, 2010). According to Paltridge (2015), this ongoing negotiation process results in individuals having “a multiplicity of identities” (Paltridge, 2015, p. 17) that operate in different social domains and contexts at various times (Syed, 2001; Fuller, 2007; Joseph, 2004; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Paltridge, 2015).

In relation to language and its impact on identity, Norton (1997, 2013) argues that language not only *shapes* one’s sense of identity, but is also *shaped by* one’s sense of identity. This point is clearly illustrated by Johnstone and Bean (1997) in their ethnographic case study involving ten “educated, mobile, middle-class” (p. 224) Texan women which aimed to “find out how each woman’s identity (or identities), as a Texan and as a public speaker or writer, is reflected in the way she speaks or writes” (Johnstone & Bean, 1997, p. 227).

According to the authors, each of the women involved in the study selectively combined aspects of various speech models in an effort to reflect their own sense “of personal identity, and also display her acceptance or rejection of qualities seen as shared by all Texans” (Johnstone & Bean, 1997, p. 227). It was through the acceptance and/or rejection of ‘marked’ features of the way Texans speak, and the desire to display their own individual identities through personal linguistic choices, that seem to reaffirm Norton’s (1997) assertion that language plays a prominent role in the projection of identity.

With regards to language learning, it is commonly acknowledged that there is a close link between second language learning and identity reconstruction (Norton, 2013; Edwards, 2009; Benson *et al.*, 2013), with scholars such as Veltkamp *et al.* (2013) arguing that just as “we carry different *personas*, or social masks, we might also adopt new selves through new languages” (Veltkamp, *et al.*, 2013, p. 3).

In their study involving sixty-eight (40 native-German speakers studying Spanish and 28 native-Spanish speakers studying German) late bilinguals (those who learned a second language after adolescence) exploring personality and cultural frame shifts between different languages (German and Spanish), Veltkamp *et al.* (2013) found that “[r]egardless of individuals’ first language, both groups scored higher on Extraversion and Neuroticism when Spanish was the test language [while] Agreeability [was] higher when German was used as the test language” (Veltkamp, *et al.*, 2013, p. 2). This, according to the authors, provides evidence that aside from “the acquisition of linguistic skills, learning a second language seems to provide individuals with a new range of perceiving and displaying their own personality” (Veltkamp, *et al.*, 2013, p. 2).

Taking a poststructuralist perspective, Benson *et al.*, (2013) researched identity and English learning from the viewpoint of Hong Kong students studying in various locations abroad. Adopting a multifaceted approach which acknowledged six different dimensions of identity (Table 2.1), the authors argued that “an inclusive view of identity calls for attention to identity in all of its facets” (Benson *et al.*, 2013, p. 23).

Table 2.1 Facets of Identity		
Facet 1	Embodied identity	The self as a mobile point of perception located in a particular body
Facet 2	Reflexive identity	The self’s view of the self, incorporating self-concept and attributes and capacities
Facet 3	Projected identity	The self as it is semiotically represented to others in interaction
Facet 4	Recognized identity	The self as it is preconceived and recognized by others in the course of interaction
Facet 5	Imagined identity	The self’s view of its future possibilities
Facet 6	Identity categories and resources	The self as it is represented (by self or others) using established social categories and semiotic resources

(Table adapted from Benson *et al.*, 2013, p. 19)

In an attempt to reflect the ways in which the 48 participants (who were either

secondary school students or university students) involved in the study interpreted and constructed their experiences and identities using English while abroad, the authors collected data by way of pre-departure interviews, written accounts of the experiences and feelings participants had while away, and re-entry interviews.

Allowing for in-depth qualitative analysis, the narrative approach employed by the authors, and as espoused by scholars such as Ricento (2005) and Pavlenko & Lantolf (2000), not only allowed the authors to highlight and discuss developments related to second language identity in three main areas: “sociopragmatic competence, linguistic self-concept, and second language-mediated competence’ (Benson *et al.*, 2013, p. 12), but also to uncover commonalities and differences that resulted in “different second language outcomes for different students” (Benson *et al.*, 2013, p. 12).

The findings of this study suggest that second language identity construction is not uniform - with context, length of time studying abroad, and personal reasons for studying English all having an impact on second language identity construction and negotiation. Furthermore, it was found that at different times, and in different contexts, participants framed their identities as either language *learners* or language *users*. According to the authors, it was only when one viewed themselves as a language *user* could they truly start to display identities of their own choosing (also see Benson *et al.*, 2012).

Highlighting how enhanced language competence is related to one’s ability to express their desired identities, the above findings demonstrate how language and social identity are inextricably intertwined (see Benson *et al.*, 2012; Norton & Toohey, 2011). This being the case, it is clear to see why the authors noted that study abroad students may face challenges in displaying elements of their various L2 social identities due to the fact that these new identities must be “projected through a second language and other, culturally variable, semiotic modes” (Benson *et al.*, 2013, p. 21), and as such, require a sufficient level of English

to allow them to articulate their various identities.

In EFL contexts, such as Korea, empirical research into L2 identity construction is limited (Vasilopoulos, 2015). Nevertheless, there is a small, but growing, body of research examining social identity and English language learning in EFL settings.

For example, in back-to-back studies utilising the same data sets, Gao *et al.* (2005,2007) examined self-identity changes related to the study of English (Gao *et al.*, 2005) and English learning motivation types and self-identity in the Chinese EFL context (Gao *et al.*, 2007).

Based on the assumption that “[l]anguage is not only an instrument for communication, [but] is related to a set of behavioural norms and cultural values, which construct one’s self-identity” (Gao *et al.*, 2005, p.39), the authors elicited data from 2,278 undergraduates from 30 universities spread throughout the People’s Republic of China. Using a Likert-scale questionnaire containing 24 statements exploring motivation types and self-identity changes in English language learners, Gao *et al.* (2005) concluded that the greatest changes to identity revolved around one’s self-confidence (i.e., self-confidence improved as perceptions of competence in English improved).

In relation to the above study, two things are worth noting. First, although factors such as age (those who began learning English later reported higher self-confidence changes), university major (those majoring in English reported more changes to their self-confidence than did those studying other majors), and sex (female students scored higher on self-confidence) all had a bearing on the results, the changes to one’s self-identity appear to be largely derived from “self-esteem needs” (Gao *et al.*, 2005, p. 50). Second, since the above study limited the exploration of self-identity to changes in self-confidence and cultural identity changes, other possible changes to self-identity were not explored.

Results from a follow-up study into motivation types and identity change (Gao *et al.*,

2007) indicated that those who showed interest in the target language and culture were more likely to experience *productive* (i.e., target language and native language positively impact each other) and *additive* (i.e., the co-existence of two languages and sets of cultural practices reserved for specific contexts) changes in self-identity. It was also found that, “*individual development* motivation and *self-confidence* change were interrelated, largely independent of cultural motivations and self-identity changes...[indicating] the importance of relatively long-term instrumental motivation and the function of English learning in fulfilling one’s self-esteem needs” (Gao *et al.*, 2007, p. 148 – original italics). Finally, results from this study confirmed earlier findings suggesting that one’s gender, university major, and age at the commencement of English study “had significant effects on certain types of self-identity change” (Gao *et al.*, 2005, p.39; Gao *et al.*, 2007).

The findings, especially those related to instrumental motivation (i.e., the ought-to self) and the role education plays “in social stratification and increased opportunities of upward social mobility” (Gao, *et al.*, 2007, p. 148), mirror those reported in the Korean EFL context (e.g., Park, 2009; Park, 2011; Kim 2011; Kim, 2016). Furthermore, although the researchers did not explicitly utilise Dörnyei’s (2005) L2 motivational self-system as the theoretical framework for their studies, the results seem to affirm that in certain contexts the “Ought-to L2 self has an effect on effort and persistence in language learning” (Kormos *et al.*, 2011, p. 513; Taguchi *et al.*, 2009; Hwang *et al.*, 2015), which in turn, can impact self-confidence (Gao *et al.*, 2005; Gao *et al.*, 2007).

In a study conducted in the Korean EFL context, and involving 10 young Korean adults who had previously lived outside of Korea for more than 4 years and were considered bilingual (Korean-English), Vasilopoulos (2015) researched L2 identity to explore how “English shapes self and social identity through actual use of English in day-to-day interaction” (Vasilopoulos, 2015, p. 61).

Collecting data via open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the findings show that aside from the lack of opportunity to use English on a day-to-day basis in Korea, participants strategically used (or chose not to use) English in an attempt to either blend in (i.e., to seem more Korean by not flaunting one's English ability) or stand out from the local population (e.g., using English to assert authority as a part-time English teacher, to get better service when traveling, or to demonstrate a multicultural identity). This selective use (or non-use) of English clearly shows how "[b]ilinguals and multilinguals possess a range of diverse identities that can be switched on and off in strategic ways so that they may fit in and be socially accepted and, conversely, to set themselves apart from the group" (Vasilopoulos, 2015, p. 62).

Findings also suggested that one's "natural" L2 identity and opportunity for L2 self-expression occurred mainly in private or professional settings (e.g., socialising with friends who had also lived abroad and were fluent in English), or for professional purposes, "where their employment required them to demonstrate their L2 fluency accompanying L2 identity" (Vasilopoulos, 2015, p. 72).

As the above section has shown, the notion of social identity is a context-dependent, dynamic and multifaceted construct often negotiated and projected through the use of language and one's (often strategic) choice of linguistic forms and styles.

Important to scholars in a range of fields, the notion of social identity has appeared in the literature since at least 1974 (Tajfel, 1974). However, in spite of the vast array of literature on the subject, the way taboo language is used to project elements of one's various social identities in a second language is still proving elusive to find.

This being true, the following section will review and discuss a range of studies related to the pragmatic functions of SATL, especially in relation the way SATL is employed in displaying elements of one's various social identities. Bearing in mind the limited research

into the expression of social identity using SATL in one's L2, the following section will largely draw from research involving native English-speakers.

2.3 Swearing and Taboo Language

A form of linguistic expression considered a staple in many English-speaking speech communities (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008; Jay, 2009; Horan, 2013), swearing is a lexically rich, grammatically complex, and pragmatically versatile style of language used by the majority of native English speakers (Holster, 2005; Mohr, 2013; Dewaele, 2017). Having “ubiquitous social, legal and political implications, which have touched each and every person at some time” (Van Lancker & Cummings, 1999, p.83), the notions of SATL have been defined in a variety of ways.

Montagu (1967) defines swear words as “all words possessing or capable of being given an emotional weight” (Montagu, 1967, p. 100), while Crystal (1995) uses the term swearing “as a general label for all kinds of ‘foul-mouthed’ language, whatever its purpose” (Crystal, 1995, p. 173 – cited in Holster, 2005). Beers Fägersten (2012) suggests that “swearing refers to the use of words which have the potential to be offensive, inappropriate, objectionable, or unacceptable in any given social context” (Beers Fägersten, 2012, p.3), whereas Jay (2009) uses the “terms *taboo words* and *swear words* interchangeably to describe the lexicon of offensive emotional language” (Jay, 2009, p. 153 – original italics).

Serving both personal and interpersonal functions, the use of SATL is a form of culturally specific, context dependent language practice (Hughes, 2006; Johnson & Lewis, 2010; Beers-Fägersten, 2012; Gati, 2015; Beers Fägersten & Stapleton, 2017) which is not only impacted by one's personal attitudes towards language and topics considered taboo (Jay, 1992; Stapleton, 2010), but also “affected by perceptions of familiarity, solidarity, and mutuality” (Goddard, 2015, p.189; Stapleton, 2010) between transmitter and receiver

(Holmes and Stubbe, 2003; Daly *et al.*, 2004; Jay, 2008; Allan & Burridge, 2006; Dewaele, 2015).

Having a wide array of socio-pragmatic functions, including indicating in-group membership, expressing emotion, showing solidarity, and social bonding (Dewaele, 2010b; Jay & Janschewitz, 2008; Stapleton, 2010; Vingerhoets *et al.*, 2013; Beers Fägersten & Stapleton, 2017), the use of SATL is routinely used for “constructing and displaying identity” (Stapleton, 2010, p. 289) in a range of various contexts (Dewaele, 2007; Čekuolytė, 2015; Beers Fägersten & Stapleton, 2017).

Providing an exemplar of the above claim, Daly *et al.*, (2004) recorded thirty-five hours of authentic workplace interactions in their quest to explore how the word *fuck* was used between team members (male $n = 16$, female $n = 4$) working on a factory floor in New Zealand. Results indicated that SATL was often used to signify in-group membership and show solidarity (i.e., to display one’s identity as a blue-collar factory worker). Similarly, in her small-scale study investigating the use of SATL in the Australian trade environment, McLeod (2011) recorded ten 25-minute conversations between five male ‘tradies’ and concluded that in the context of her investigation tradespeople “insult and swear at each other as a means of building and maintaining rapport amongst co-workers, [and as a way of] differentiating themselves from the rest of society” (McLeod, 2011, p. 10).

In the British context, Baruch & Jenkins (2007) researched the use of SATL between members of a male packing team employed by a mail order company and reported that SATL was not only used to indicate one’s membership to a particular group, but also as a means of delineating boundaries between various groups. The authors further noted that one’s style of speech was highly related to context, with different domains dictating the use of different speech modes (Baruch & Jenkins, 2007).

Corroborating the above findings, Wilson (2011) explored “the way in which

leadership is enacted and group identity forged through communicative practice in a New Zealand rugby team” (Wilson, 2011. p. iii). Employing an ethnographic approach, Wilson collected thirty-two hours of authentic interactions between adult players and coaches over the course of his yearlong study. Findings revealed that the communicative norms associated with rugby all but required players and coaches to swear as “a way of embodying the stereotype of hyper-masculinity that exists within the imagined community of rugby players” (Wilson, 2011, p. 77) and as a means of engendering team solidarity.

Researching the use of swearing on the campus of a large American university, Beers Fägersten (2000) used authentic recordings, questionnaires ($n = 60$), and ethnographic interviews ($n = 11$) to investigate relationships between swearing and social context. After performing an in-depth analysis, Beers Fägersten concluded that conversational swearing in the context of her study was primarily used to affirm in-group membership and establish boundaries between groups (Beers-Fägersten, 2000).

The author also noted that although swearing was frequent and widespread in the university speech community, the social norms and rules governing the use/misuse of swearing were not universal, with variables, such as the relationship between interlocutors, context, location, gender, age and race, all impacting the ways (i.e., ‘appropriateness’) in which swearing was used (for more on ‘appropriateness’ see Dewaele, 2008; Hymes, 1972.).

In a later study, but this time investigating the use of English swearing and the creation of an online identity, Beers Fägersten (2017) analysed three self-recorded videos uploaded to YouTube by prominent Swedish YouTuber (i.e., a person who makes and shares video content on YouTube), PewDiePie. In this research, Beers Fägersten discussed the globalisation of English and the way the use of English swearwords helped contribute to PewDiePie’s success on YouTube by allowing him to reduce the social distance between himself and his target audience, create the illusion of intimacy, and display his identity as

both a gamer and as a peer.

In relation to SATL, identity, and gender construction, Stapleton (2003) observed the linguistic practice of using SATL among a group of thirty Irish ‘drinking’ friends aged 22 to 30. Adopting a ‘communities of practice’ framework, and positioning herself as a participant-observer, Stapleton conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants over a two-week period to explore how swearing is used by members of this particular ‘community’. The findings revealed that although both males and females swore frequently in the pub-based environment, there were “subtle, but persistent gender differences in terms of identity negotiation and presentation” (Stapleton, 2010, p. 300).

According to Stapleton, in the mixed-group setting, SATL functioned as both a marker of group identity (i.e., a member of the drinking group) and as a tool for displaying and negotiating group affiliation. This observation led the author to assert that as a result of the “ongoing (re)definition of ‘bad language’ as a resource for identity construction” (Stapleton, 2003, p. 22), the female members of the group were able to construct and display their identities as ‘drinking women’ in this specific sociocultural context.

Not exclusively limited to adults, the use of SATL as a means of shaping and expressing various social identities has also been reported in the youth. Corpus-based research conducted by Stenström (2006), which compared the use of taboo words by middle/upper class teenage girls in London and Madrid, highlighted the prevalence of SATL as markers of group identity amongst teenagers in both contexts (Stenström, 2006).

As the above studies have shown, SATL play a specialised and important role in the shaping and negotiation of social identities in a range of various contexts. Far from being on the fringes of society, the studies cited above demonstrate that the use of swearing to negotiate and construct social identities, signify in-group membership, and display solidarity is a reality in many English-speaking contexts. However, in spite of this, the relationship

between social identity and taboo language for English language learners is underrepresented in the literature; with only a select few researchers addressing the subject.

In their seminal research on the perceived offensiveness of English swear words and the likelihood that these words would be used in a range of different hypothetical situations, Jay and Janschewitz (2008) administered Likert scale questionnaires to 53 non-native English-speaking and 68 native English-speaking students attending the University of California in Los Angeles with the aim of developing “a cognitive psychological framework to explain how swearing varies as a function of communication context” (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008, p. 267).

Manipulating the variables of gender, English experience (native or non-native English-speaker), context (dorm room, Dean’s office, parking lot), speaker status (student, Dean, janitor), and the degree of ‘tabooness’ of the word, each participant involved in the study was required to rate the offensiveness and likelihood of the 81 different hypothetical scenarios. Even though this study did not explicitly address the notion of social identity, results confirmed that the “appropriateness of swearing is highly contextually variable, dependent on speaker-listener relationship, social-physical context, and particular word used” (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008, p. 267).

Investigating emotion-laden English words (i.e., SATL) as used by multilinguals, Dewaele (2016) collected data from 1159 native English-speakers and 1165 non-native English-speakers to gain insight into the understanding, perception and self-reported use of 30 negative emotion-laden words extracted from the British National Corpus.

An analysis of the data revealed that non-native English speakers not only overestimated the offensiveness of the words, but also “were significantly less sure about the exact meaning of most words” (Dewaele, 2016, p. 112) compared to Native-English speakers. Dewaele claims that variations amongst non-native English speakers “was linked to having

(or not) lived in English-speaking environments, to context of acquisition and to self-perceived level of proficiency in English” (Dewaele, 2016, p. 112).

As noted by Dewaele (2016, 2012, 2004a), and Finn (2017), failing to understand the pragmatic functions of swearing places a second language user at a disadvantage and could result in unwanted negative side effects. In addition, since swearing is often used in social situations as a means of displaying or constructing various social identities, an inability to correctly use SATL could potentially hinder second-language users from projecting accurate representations of themselves (Dewaele, 2007).

This short overview has presented research not only underlining the prevalence of SATL in English, but also highlighting the role SATL plays in helping people construct and display various social identities in a range of different contexts. Although research into identity construction via the use of SATL by second language users is limited, interest in the broad subject area of SATL in second language education is piquing the interest of a number of scholars, with recent literature covering a range of topics, including in-class teaching (e.g., Mercury, 1995; Horan, 2013; Liyanage *et al.*, 2015; Gua *et al.*, 2016; Finn, 2017), pragmatics, (e.g., Dewaele, 2007, 2017), teacher attitudes (e.g., Holster; 2005), and perceived emotional force of taboo language (e.g., Pavlenko, 2008; Dewaele, 2016).

2.4 Conclusion

Providing an overview of the three themes that inform this research – the L2 Motivational Self System, Social Identity, and Swearing and Taboo Language – this review highlighted the current gap that exists in the literature regarding the use of taboo language as a tool for constructing and displaying social identities for second language learners/users. Considering the sensitive nature of the topic, and the fact that research eliciting the opinions of the English-learners/users themselves is all but non-existent in the literature, this study will

begin by addressing the following central question: **What are the thoughts and attitudes of Korean EFL learners/users towards the use of SATL for expressing elements of one's various English-speaking social identities?**

Examining the literature related to the Korean EFL context and the L2 Motivational Self System, it becomes clear that research into the way Korean students develop pragmatic awareness of SATL has been neglected in the literature. Therefore, this study will ask: **What is the relationship between the Korean EFL context and the development of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge in relation to the use of taboo language and the expression of social identity?**

The literature also revealed a dearth of research into the way social identity is expressed by Korean EFL speakers, especially as it relates to the use of SATL. Consequently, this study will ask: **How is English SATL employed by native Korean English-speakers to display elements of their various social identities?**

Finally, since the L2 Motivation Self System is currently the framework of choice for many of those researching English learning in EFL contexts, the gap in the literature that currently exists between one's ideal English-speaking self and the use of SATL to display one's social identities should be addressed. As such, this study will also pose the following question: **In which future domains and contexts might Korean English-speakers benefit from having a greater command and understanding of how SATL is used in English to project elements of one's various social identities?**

3 Methodology

The following chapter has three main goals. First, to describe and rationalise the research paradigm, methodology, and data collection and analysis procedure employed in this study. Second, to provide an overview of the research process. Third, to outline the issues and limitations of the study, especially those related to research design and methodology.

3.1 Research Paradigm

Comprising ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods (Scotland, 2012; Cohen *et al.*, 2007), “the research paradigm inherently reflects the researchers’ beliefs and views of the world he [sic] lives in” (Ong, 2016, p.116). According to Cohen *et al.* (2007), this is because “ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these, in turn, give rise to methodological considerations; and these, in turn, give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection” (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.5).

With this in mind, the exploratory qualitative research presented in this paper is framed in a predominantly interpretive paradigm (Gephart, 1999; Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Mack, 2010; Scotland, 2012), and the belief that realities are socially constructed “through human interactions and actions” (Zheng, 2017, p.143; Ong, 2016).

3.2 Methodology

Having long been used in the social sciences (Flick, 2014), and drawing its strength from “its potential to explore a topic in depth” (Cleary *et al.*, 2014, p. 473), “qualitative research is inquiry aimed at describing and clarifying human experience as it appears in people's lives” (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 137).

Often juxtaposed with the quantitative approach to research, in what many once

referred to as the ‘paradigm wars’ (Riazi, 2016), the major differences between the two approaches have been succinctly outlined by Stake (1995):

- (1) the distinction between explanation and understanding as the purpose of inquiry;
 - (2) the distinction between a personal and impersonal role for the researcher; and (3)
 - a distinction between knowledge discovered and knowledge constructed. (p. 37)
- (cited in Jackson et al., 2007, p.22)

With the goal of this research being “to elicit participants’ views of their lives, as portrayed in their stories, and so to gain access to their experiences, feelings and social worlds” (Fossey *et al.*, 2002, p. 727), a qualitative approach to research has been taken to ensure this goal can be reached.

3.3 Overview of the Research Process

It has been stated that conducting qualitative research presents the researcher/s with numerous options and opportunities that need to be considered and reflected upon throughout the entire research process (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Flick, 2014; Flick *et al.*, 2004; Hennink *et al.*, 2010).

With a host of established qualitative methodologies available to help guide the research process (Caelli *et al.*, 2003; Dörnyei, 2007; Hennink *et al.*, 2010; Flick, 2014), researchers should bear in mind the assertion that “quality quantitative research can be done using all of the different methods as long as the user is true to the method” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 326).

That being said, the following section will provide an overview and justification for the approaches employed in this study to select participants, gather samples, and analyse data.

3.3.1 The Participants. Ten participants (50:50 ratio of males to females) aged from 27 - 40 ($M = 31.5$, $SD = 4.25$) volunteered to be interviewed after seeing a poster displayed in a private English language institute located in an affluent business district of Seoul, South Korea. The institute from which the participants were recruited predominately focuses on professionals learning English for business purposes, and as such, provides one-to-one classes or small group classes to help expedite the learning process.

For a participant to be eligible for this study they had to:

- be over the age of 20;
- demonstrate an understanding of the key concepts to be discussed in the interview (e.g., swearing, social identity, future self) during the pre-interview briefing;
- have a level of English sufficient to express their opinions and ideas on the topics to be discussed during the interview;
- be a native Korean whose first language is Korean;

These criteria were established to ensure the participants not only possessed the emotional maturity required to answer the potentially sensitive interview questions, but also to ensure that the participants had adequate linguistic capabilities to provide their opinions and insights on the topics under discussion in enough detail to allow for analysis.

3.3.2 Convenience Sampling. Although it has been argued that convenience sampling can be problematic (Bryman, 2012; Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012; Riazi, 2016) and runs the risk of being biased (Mackey & Gass, 2005), the decision to use convenience sampling was made in an attempt to mitigate the unique challenges interviewing participants who speak English as a second language present (Marschan-Piekkari & Reis, 2004). Furthermore, as the goal of this research was to “generate theoretical insights rather than to generalise empirically” (Becker *et al.*, 2012, p. 288), the use of convenience sampling did not appear to pose any threat to the validity of the conclusions.

3.3.3 Interviews. Interviews are one of the most commonly used forms of data collection employed in qualitative research (Legard *et al.*, 2003; Mann, 2010), and although debate still surrounds the exact number of interview formats researchers have at their disposal (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Hopf, 2004), interviewing as a mode of data collection has the potential to “provide in-depth information pertaining to participants’ experiences and viewpoints of a particular topic” (Turner III, 2010, p. 754).

According to Turner III, “there are various forms of interview design that can be developed to obtain thick, rich data utilizing a qualitative investigational perspective” (Turner III, 2010, p. 754; Cohen *et al.*, 2007). These designs generally fall into one of three main formats: (a) informal conversational interview, (b) general interview guide approach, and (c) standardized open-ended interview (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; Johnson & Turner, 2003; Turner III, 2010).

For the purpose of this research, which required Korean-speaking participants to provide responses in English, a semi-structured, general interview guide approach was selected due to the freedom it allows the interviewer to not only ask follow-up questions and reword questions if needed, but also pose questions “in any sequence or order” (Johnson & Turner, 2003, p.306), thus helping to generate richer data while at the same time helping to

mitigate any problems the participants may encounter in relation to comprehension during the interview process.

3.3.4 Defining Key Concepts. Prior to starting each interview, the concepts of swearing, taboo language, social identity, self, and future self were defined for the participants (see **Appendix B**). The decision to define these key concepts prior to the interview's commencing was made for three key reasons. First, since not all concepts are defined in the same way by all cultures or all people, defining the concepts was deemed necessary to ensure the participants clearly understood what was being explored in the research (Hennink *et al.*, 2010). Second, by defining the key concepts, the participants were afforded the opportunity to clarify and double-check their understandings of the topics prior to the interview, while at the same time allowing me the opportunity to assess whether the participants' English proficiency did not preclude them from the study (note: no volunteers were excluded from the study). Third, the act of defining and clarifying concepts can help guide the data collection process, especially as it relates to the operationalisation of the research questions, establishing which topics to focus on during the interview, and developing the actual questions to be included on the interview guide itself (Hennink *et al.*, 2010).

3.3.5 Interview Guide. The interview guide (**Appendix A**) comprised a total of 28 questions divided into 5 discrete sections. Aside from Section 1, which contained a range of closed-ended ($n = 7$) and open-ended ($n = 1$) questions, and focused on establishing rapport with the participant (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), the interview guide contained predominantly open-ended questions ($n = 20$), and explored the following topics and concepts: (1) general information about the participant, (2) social identity when using Korean, (3) swearing and social identity in Korean, (4) reasons for learning English, social identity when using English, and future English-speaking self, and (5) swearing and social identity in English (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed before being analysed using the qualitative analysis software NVivo 11 Pro.

3.3.6 Transcription. At the conclusion of each interview the audio recording was transcribed in preparation for further data analysis. However, far from being a rudimentary affair, the transcription process needed to be carefully considered prior to commencing transcription to ensure the chosen style matched the objectives of the research (Davidson, 2009; Lapadat, 2000; Oliver *et al.*, 2005).

As Davidson asserts, “because it is impossible to record all features of talk and interaction from recordings, all transcripts are selective in one way or another” (Davidson, 2009, p.38), with the varying transcription practices being more amenable to different research paradigms, methodologies, and objectives (Oliver *et al.*, 2005; Cohen *et al.*, 2007)

For Oliver *et al.* (2005), “transcription practices can be thought of in terms of a continuum with two dominant modes: naturalism, in which every utterance is transcribed in as much detail as possible, and denaturalism, in which idiosyncratic elements of speech (e.g., stutters, pauses, nonverbals, involuntary vocalisations) are removed” (Oliver *et al.*, 2005, p. 1273; Bucholtz, 2000).

In a denaturalised approach to transcription, the view is that “within speech are meanings and perceptions that construct our reality” (Oliver *et al.*, 2005, p. 1273), and since the focus of this research is more concerned with *what* the participants said during the interviews rather than *how* they said it (Bucholtz, 2000; Jackson *et al.*, 2007), the decision to use a denaturalised approach to transcription was made.

Once all of the data had been transcribed, the analysis component of the research began. This process involved coding, memo-writing, and making connections within the data (Saldana, 2015; Maxwell, 2008; Riazi, 2016).

3.4 Data

In general, analysing qualitative data can be broken down into three interconnected parts: noticing, collecting, and thinking (Seidel, 1998).

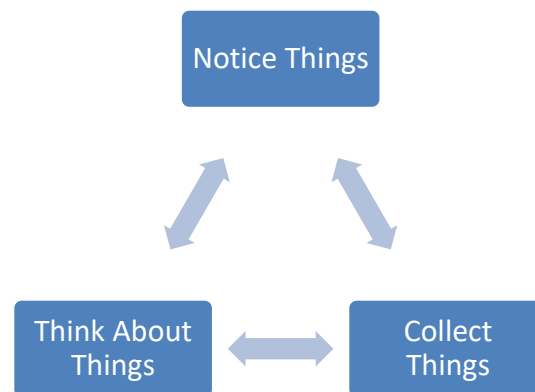


Figure 1 Qualitative Research Process (Adapted from Seidel, 1998, p. 2)

Far from being a linear affair, qualitative data analysis is iterative and progressive, recursive (i.e., one section can lead you back to a previous section), and holographic (i.e., each stage in the process encompasses all of the other stages in the process) (Seidel, 1998).

3.4.1 Data Collection. Data was collected through one round of semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with ten volunteer participants ($N = 10$). The duration of the interviews ranged from nineteen minutes to forty-four minutes ($M = 27.7$, $SD = 7.01$), and although more participants could have been included in the study, Cleary *et al.* (2014) argue that “it is important that qualitative researchers justify their sample size on the grounds of quality data” (2014, p. 473) and not on numbers alone. They further argue that sample size “is dependent on ‘redundancy’ of information or ‘saturation’” (Cleary *et al.*, 2014, p.473). For this study, saturation, defined as the point where “‘all questions have been thoroughly explored in detail [and] no new concepts or themes emerge in subsequent interviews’” (Trotter 2012, p. 399, cited in Cleary *et al.*, 2014), was reached rather quickly in the data gathering process.

Organised “around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315), a semi-structured interview approach was used in this study as it allowed for an in-depth exploration of the participants’ experiences and opinions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Polkinghorne, 2005; Turner III, 2010).

3.4.2 Ethical Issues. The protocol to ensure this study was conducted in an ethical manner was as follows: (1) Ethics approval was granted prior to data collection (see **Appendix D**); (2) informed consent was required, and granted, by all participants; (3) participants were self-nominated, thus removing the risk of coercion; (4) anonymity of participants was ensured by de-identifying all quotes contained within this thesis and using pseudonyms; and (5) all participants were emailed a copy of their own transcripts to double-check that they accurately reflected what the participant had said and to afford them the opportunity to veto or clarify any aspect of the transcript.

3.5 Data Analysis

Coding: Coding is a cyclical process that involves the labelling and linking of salient data found in the text in preparation for further analysis (Saldana, 2015). Using NVivo's 'nodes' to separate data into distinct repositories of information, the first round of open-coding process involved the categorisation of ideas and concepts contained within the interview transcripts. The second round of coding entailed deeper exploration of what each code represented, searching for patterns, themes, and key features evident in the data, and analysing and reflecting upon the relationships between codes (Saldana, 2015). Part of the ongoing iterative process, axial coding was the final stage, allowing me to revisit themes in relation to the research questions and ensure data analysis was focused on significant categories and relationships (Riazi, 2016).

Memos: Since the coding process often triggers new thoughts, questions, and interpretations of the data, writing 'memos' is vitally important during this process (Saldana, 2015; Flick, 2014). Memos were recorded using NVivo's 'memo' function and linked to 'nodes' as a way of not only recording and storing ideas, but also as a way of connecting the ideas to the code. Furthermore, memos are also considered important for the role they play in facilitating brainstorming and reflection (Saldana, 2015; Flick, 2014).

3.6 Methodological Issues

3.6.1 The Researcher. In qualitative research the major instrument of data collection and analysis is the researcher themselves, and as such, it is important to acknowledge “any personal and professional information relevant to the phenomenon under study” (Shenton, 2004, p. 69) to help ensure research validity (for a more in-depth review see Mann, 2010). In terms of this study, it should be noted that I am an English-speaking Australian who has been working as an EFL teacher in South Korea for the past five years. I have completed a double Master’s Degree in Applied Linguistics & TESOL. Furthermore, I believe in empowering adult EFL students to make linguistic choices most suitable for representing the identity/identities they are trying to project in any given socio-cultural context.

3.6.2 Interview Style. Although “one-shot interviews are most often not sufficient to produce the full and rich descriptions necessary for worthwhile findings” (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 142), the decision to only conduct one round of interviews was made after considering the goals of this exploratory study.

The second issue related to the interview style used in this research (i.e., the general interview guide approach) revolves around “the lack of consistency in the way research questions are posed” (Turner III, p. 755). To address this issue, care was taken to ensure each question on the interview guide was posed in the same way and in the same order as it was listed unless the participant: (a) had provided a response to the question while answering a previous question, (b) asked for the question to be rephrased, or (c) could not understand the exact meaning or intention of a question. (**Note:** as the interviews were semi-structured, follow-up questions were not uniform, and were based on participant responses).

3.6.3 Transcription. As the participants in this study were non-native English speakers, vocabulary and grammar mistakes were common. To mitigate this issue and to make coding and data analysis possible, certain words and grammatical mistakes were corrected during the transcription process on the provision that the meaning was clearly evident (e.g., English is challengeable → English is challenging). Being fully aware that this approach to transcription leaves room for the misrepresentation of data, prudence was shown to ensure the transcriptions were a true representation of what was actually said (or intended) during the interview.

In addition, on a limited number of occasions certain words and phrases were inaudible in the recordings. This has been reflected in the transcriptions and denoted as – [inaudible].

3.7 Limitations of the Data

While interviewing may be one of the most commonly used forms of data collection in qualitative research, it does present its own set of challenges to those researchers endeavouring to make generalisations and “claim that what is the case in one place or time, will be so elsewhere or in another time” (Payne & Williams, 2005, p.296). For Maxwell (1992), making generalisations based on interviews is problematic because “the researcher usually is in the presence of the person interviewed only briefly, and must necessarily draw inferences from what happened during that brief period to the rest of the informant’s life, including his or her actions and perspectives. ...interviews may miss other aspects of the person’s perspectives that were not expressed in the interview, and can easily lead to false inferences about his or her actions outside the interview situation” (Maxwell, 1992, p.294).

With this caveat in mind, this thesis has tried to eschew making generalisations that are removed from the current context and study.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has outlined and provided justification for the research paradigm and methodology used in this study. Consistent with the ontology and epistemology and of the qualitative approach, this study relied on semi-structured interviews to elicit data from the participants. The cyclical process of data analysis allowed me to explore the recollections, opinions, and reported behaviours of the participants in more detail. The following chapter will present the major findings.

4 Findings

Utilising the Dörnyei's L2 Motivational System as the framework for this research, Chapter 4 presents the main findings uncovered during the data collection and analysis process. Focusing on the participants' experiences and perceptions of their various social identities, and the use of SATL to display these identities, this chapter begins by providing an overview of the research participants before exploring the relationships between linguistic and pragmatic knowledge and the way participants choose to display various social identities via the use of SATL. The third section reports on language use in various domains and sociocultural contexts, with a particular focus on the Korean EFL context. Findings regarding the motivations for the continued pursuit of English in the Korean EFL context are presented in the fourth section, while the final section presents findings related to the way social identity is constructed and projected in both Korean and English and discusses the reported mismatches between the two. Illustrative extracts from participant interviews will be used throughout this chapter to elucidate the findings.

4.1 The Participants: Demographic data and experience of overseas contexts.

Classified as young professionals, the university-educated native Korean-speaking participants involved in this study all completed their primary and secondary education in South Korea, and as such, had similar experiences learning English in a highly competitive, test-focused environment (for an overview see Seth, 2002).

- Hiya is a 33-year-old clinical researcher who lived in Australia for 18 months to study English and nursing. She currently studies English for her work, for travel, and possibly to live in Canada in the future.

- Ozi, a clinical researcher with experience living in Australia (nine months – three of which studying English), is currently studying for professional reasons and to be able to enjoy English media.
- Jug is a 34-year-old self-employed male who previously lived in the United Kingdom. Although living in the UK for 1 year, he only studied at a language school for the first six months of his stay. Currently Jug tries to maintain his English for business purposes, travel, to attend English-language church services while he is abroad, and to possibly live in an English-speaking country.
- Jak, a 35-year-old small business owner, lived in the United States of America for 5 years to attend university (three years) and also to work (two years). He studies English for business, travel, and because he enjoys the confidence speaking in English provides him.
- Jun is a 26-year-old male with no experience living or studying in an English-speaking country. As a recent university graduate, Jun is currently seeking a position as an engineer. His main goals for studying English are for work, to enjoy English media, and to realise his dream of living in an English-speaking country.
- Mika is 29-year-old clinical researcher currently studying English to improve her fluency for professional reasons and to make international friends. Her only experience living in an English-speaking country was when she studied in the United States of America for 6 weeks during university.
- OJ is a 33-year-old veterinarian who has never lived in an English-speaking country. He currently works with one South African veterinarian and is studying English in the hopes of going abroad to study something related to his career.
- Pat is a 29-year-old pilot. He was recently studying English to pass a TOEIC test, but now studies to learn culture and to be able to converse with English-speaking

pilots and crew. Pat has never lived in an English-speaking country.

- Sage, a 40-year-old female, works as a customer service manager. She has lived in Japan and England and considers herself trilingual (Korean, Japanese, and English). Sage has always dreamed of speaking multiple languages and continues to study for enjoyment and to maintain her current level.
- Summer is a 31-year-old female Pilates instructor living with her Canadian boyfriend. Having many English-speaking friends, Summer has the opportunity to use English on a daily basis.

4.2 Linguistic and Pragmatic Competence

In the present study, participants reported various levels of linguistic ability and confidence in relation to using SATL in English; ranging from those who could comfortably use SATL as a means of displaying their chosen social identity [Example 1], to those who reported limited competence in using this style of language [Example 2].

Example 1

Int: What about when you were in America?

Jak: America? Yeah, I do. Yeah, like after work, and then, when I'm hanging out with my friends, yeah, then definitely there's a lot of F-words going and coming out, yeah.

Int: Do you remember why you used swearing?

Jak: I don't know because-- I don't know, my friends use them, so I naturally followed to speak the same, yeah [laughter]. And then, I don't think speaking-- swearing makes people look cooler, but I don't know, just, when hanging out with friends, then to swearing is just a natural thing, natural thing.

Example 2

Int: Any other reasons why you think you don't use English swearing?

OJ: Do not make people misunderstand me and prejudice. Because, the thing is, when I use a taboo language or a swear language, I saw this language in the movies, sitcoms, and dramas, but, actually, I don't know the exact meaning and precise meaning and nuance of the words or the origin of the words. So sometimes I think it might make me in trouble, with the people's relationship.

While Example 1 shows that Jak employed the use of SATL to construct a social identity and display his in-group membership status, Example 2 clearly relates to the limited pragmatic knowledge OJ possesses in relation to the use of SATL, largely as a result of his limited exposure to and use of this style of language in the Korean EFL context.

The above examples are typical in the data which supports the conclusion that those who have either lived in an English-speaking country for an extended period of time [Example 1], or have had more interaction with native English-speaking people in various contexts, tend to be more able to utilise SATL to display various social identities compared to those who have not [Example 2].

Further evidence of this was provided by Summer [Example 3]. Although having never lived abroad, Summer is comfortable expressing herself and certain elements of her English-speaking social identity using SATL. This, according to her, is most likely because she interacts in English on a daily basis with her native English-speaking partner and/or native English-speaking friends.

Example 3

Int: Do you think you use taboo language or swear more in English or Korean?

Summer: It used to be Korean more. But percentage is moving from Korean to English these days.

Int: Do you think this is because of your Canadian boyfriend or do you think it's because-- I mean do you have any ideas of why maybe?

Summer: Yeah. Actually, I prefer this-- taboo language is from my boyfriend so I get used to it these days, so yes. When I get used to it, I use just to use it, right? Unconsciously.

While the above example shows a change in usage pattern as the participant became more familiar with SATL in English, the following extract [Example 4] provides a contrasting example of limited pragmatic development in relation to using SATL as a way of expressing one's English-speaking social identity by a participant who has had limited interaction in English-speaking contexts.

Example 4

Jun: I live in Korea so there are not so many opportunity for me to use English or talk with but I go to institute for English conversation. So I use English with teacher at there. And I play an online game with my smartphone and it is from foreign countries. And I have—I'm a guild member, and all of them are foreign member who are use text message with them...

Int: Keeping in mind the people and places where you currently use English, so that's your English teachers and other students in the class, do you ever swear or use taboo language in English.

Jun: I think I almost-- no. I almost don't use swearing or taboo language in English but I sometimes use some swearing or taboo language like 'shit' because when I have to explain something bad, I think using that word is quite easier to understand the feeling of me. So I think that's the reason I sometimes use some words like 'shit'.

In the above example, it is clear that Jun has not only had limited opportunities to learn the pragmatic functions of SATL, but has also had limited opportunities to express a range of English-speaking social identities in the Korean EFL context. These two factors contribute to Jun's inability to use SATL for anything other than the expression of negative emotions.

Although the data revealed a positive relationship between living in an English-speaking society [Example 1], or having ample opportunity to interact in English in various

contexts [Example 3], and one's knowledge of the pragmatics of SATL in English, there was an exception in the case of Jug.

Jug, a participant who had previously lived in the United Kingdom for 1 year, noted [Example 5] that he didn't learn about SATL in English, either in school or from society (i.e., socialisation and interaction), and as such, does not often use taboo language in English.

Example 5

Jug: To be honest with you, I didn't learn the swear words in English. So probably I don't know so much about them in English. So in Korean, it's more comfortable because I learned about it.

Int: Learned?

Jug: Yeah, learned in society. So that's the reason, probably main reason is I don't know how to say in English.

Aside from highlighting the fact that living in an English-speaking country is not a guarantee of an enhanced understanding of the pragmatic functions of taboo language, this finding could possibly indicate that Jug never found himself in situations requiring the use of swearing as a means of expressing social identity during his time in England.

As a devout Christian, with a stated aim of learning English so he can attend church services during his overseas travels, it is possible to infer that at least one of his social circles involved people from his church – a speech community not commonly associated with the use of taboo language to express social identity and/or group membership.

Secondly, as an international student studying English, one of Jug's main opportunities to interact and socialise in English was at his school. Bearing in mind that English language students routinely report less pragmatic competence than their native English-speaking peers, and that language schools don't typically cover the topic of taboo language and its pragmatic functions, it can be concluded that in this particular speech

community Jug was not afforded the opportunity to develop the ability to use taboo language to any great extent.

4.3 Domains of Use and Socio-Cultural Context

Taking into account the “recent language socialisation research that suggests that social and linguistic environments affect L2 learners’ language use and development and, concomitantly, the semiotic resources they have available for the construction of desired social identities” (Thorne *et al.*, 2009, p. 804), it is of paramount importance to consider the socio-cultural contexts and language use domains which may have a bearing on the participants’ ability to use language to express their chosen social identities.

In relation to the use of English in the Korean EFL context, analysis revealed that the domains of use were limited to two main areas - professional settings and academic settings (i.e., English language institutes). However, although these two domains were the most prevalent in the data, with every participant citing at least one of these domains, and seven out of ten participants mentioning both domains, individual participants also mentioned selected social domains and extraneous areas where they interact in English (e.g., online gaming, travel, or meeting English-speaking friends).

4.3.1 Professional Domain. Upon deeper exploration of the data related to the use of English in professional domains, it became apparent that the use of English by the participants was restricted to written interactions (i.e., email and instant messaging), conference calls (i.e., interacting with several native and non-native English speakers on the phone at the same time), and the occasional face-face to face interaction.

Highlighting this common theme, the following extracts [Example 6, Example 7, and Example 8] illustrate how English is used by the majority of the participants in their respective professional environments.

Example 6

Int: Currently where do you use English and who with?

Hiya: My project group is consistent with the abroad team so I have a teleconference biweekly so that usually I'm using the English during the teleconference. I'm usually using email. It's English to write down the email.

Int: Okay. So you're [tele]conferences, how often?

Hiya: Biweekly. Two weeks. Every two weeks.

Int: Okay. 20 minutes? 1 hour? How long is it?

Hiya: 1 hour but I have three projects so almost one week. Every week I have a teleconference.

Example 7

Jug: In my business situation, I used to do trade. So it was European partners. So I use English, like, emailing, or have a phone call or conference call. Nowadays, every Wednesday, we have a conference call, so, I use English. And I email them.

Example 8

Ozi: I work at an international company so mostly I work with international colleagues so in email and twice a week I do a telephone conference.

Int: How long would the conference be?

Ozi: 30 minutes to 1 hour in English.

As the above extracts indicate, the use of English in professional settings is limited in scope and frequency, with most participants reporting an infrequent use of spoken English in their various professional domains.

In terms of face-to-face interactions, the participants involved in this study reported having very limited opportunities to interact in English, with only three participants explicitly mentioning any form of professional face-to-face English interaction.

When participants did mention face-to-face interactions, they also either explicitly stated that these interactions were not common [Example 9] or they were predominantly limited to work-related topics [Example 10].

Example 9

Jak: When I meet foreigners, then, but I don't really get a chance to meet foreigners in Korea, but-- So I'm using English when I'm working sometimes because there are foreign buyers from France, China, and Taiwan. And so I use English, but it's not quite a lot.

Example 10

OJ: I'm working with a foreign co-worker who is a farrier. He manages horses' hooves sometimes. Cut and treat the horses' hooves. And he's from South Africa so I use English every time with him because I'm an interpreter and every time I help him to live in Korea. So he texts me, he call, phoned me, and sometimes I ask about question about how to treat horse. Yep.

While the above examples relate to different professional environments, it is interesting to note that opportunities to utilise English in these domains is limited to presenting a professional identity confined to the workplace setting, with social events related to this domain (e.g., office functions, after work drinks).

4.3.2 Academic Domain. Looking at academic settings (i.e., English language institutes) the following extracts (Examples 11 and 12) provide further proof of the limited opportunities and domains of use accessible in the Korean EFL context.

Example 11

Int: Okay, okay. What about in your other areas? Do you have English-speaking friends? Do you do an English class where you're using it?

Hiya: Only English class.

Example 12

Jun: Oh actually I live in Korea so there are not so many opportunity for me to use English or talk with but I go to institute for English conversation. So I use English with teacher at there.

These quotes highlight the very real problem facing those wanting to construct and display a range of social identities or interact in English in the Korean EFL contexts – a lack of opportunity.

4.3.3 Social and Extraneous Domains. Aside from professional and academic domains, participants mentioned a range of peripheral areas in which they use English. These domains, which are represented in the following examples [Example 13, Example 14, and Example 15], include both online and face-to-face domains.

Example 13

Ozi: ...Also when I travel abroad I use English.

Example 14

Summer: I use English when I am with my friends, and when I am with my boyfriend because my boyfriend is West. Canadian

Example 15

Jun: I play an online game with my smartphone and it is from foreign countries. And I have—I'm a guild member, and all of them are foreign member who are use text message with them.

Collectively, Ozi, Summer, and Jun captured the only three extraneous domains of use mentioned by the participants, further highlighting the lack of opportunities available for Korean users of English project various social identities.

4.4 The Continued Pursuit of English and Motivation

Considering the limited opportunities afforded to the participants of this study to interact in English, it is interesting to note that the majority ($n = 8$) reported that they still continue to study it. Various reasons for this continued pursuit were mentioned.

4.4.1 Ought-to Self and Ideal L2 Self. The following extracts [Example 16, Example 17, and Example 18] represent the omnipresent theme captured in the data related to the continued pursuit of English – the importance of the ought-to self.

Example 16

Hiya: Actually, my company is based on America, so to be a promotion; I have to speak English well. I have to communicate with the headquarters.

Example 17

Jun: I am an engineer so I applied for a company and I waiting for the final interview and if I could be the employee of the company then I could, in the future, if I had the chance to go abroad for work, then English is a must because I have to live there for several years then I have to communicate with foreigners. So English is must, so.

Example 18

OJ: I have planned of going to abroad and study and for my career. And I'm working as a veterinarian and my company now wants to be internationalised. So actually, many workers in the same field, the same industry, come to visit it and so which I have many opportunity or chance to communicate with them in English. So that's why I want—yeah

The above examples represent the three most frequently cited reasons for the continued pursuit of English, regardless of the limited role it plays in the lives of most participants. These reasons are as follows: first, for the perceived opportunities English could provide professionally and academically; second, to travel; third, to allow individual participants to realise their goals of living, working, or studying abroad.

Although highlighting the importance placed on instrumental motivations (e.g., to get a promotion, to study or work abroad, etc.), which is often linked to the notion of the ought-to self, for the continued study of English, the above motivations also reflect elements of the participants' ideal L2 selves.

For example, OJ [Example 18] states that *he* has “planned of going to abroad [to]

study and for [his] career”, reflecting his own desire to use English in his future. At the same time he alluded to the requirement to study imposed on him by his company (i.e., ought-to-self) by noting that he is “working as a veterinarian and [his] company now wants to be internationalised”.

4.4.2 Ideal Self and Dynamic Motivation. Interestingly, while the majority of participants displayed some evidence of an ideal L2 self, a few possessed more defined images of their ideal L2 selves: Sage [Example 19] always dreamed of being multilingual; Jak [Example 20] stated he needed English to run his business, but also mentioned travel and that studying English (speaking English) makes him feel more confident (so he continues to study); Pat [Example 21] is currently studying to enhance his cultural knowledge.

Example 19

Sage: It was my dream. When I was-- since I was young. I wanted to speak several languages.

Example 20

Jak: Yeah. To another country. So English definitely helps. And then another thing is, I don't know why, but speaking English makes me feel more brave or something.

Example 21

Pat: Recently, I have started learning English to understand the Western culture, such as drama and such as their news and their communities.

Upon further analysis, these extracts, when viewed in context of the participants' entire interviews, reveal the intricate and dynamic relationship that exists between motivation and the study of English. For example, while Sage has maintained her goal to learn several languages since she was in school, Jak initially learned English to pursue his goal of living and studying in the USA [Example 22], whereas Pat, until recently, was studying English to pass a high-stakes test [Example 23] in order to realise his goal of becoming a pilot (note: all

pilots in Korea are required to prove their English proficiency by submitting the results of a high-stakes exam such as TOEIC or TOEFL to their employer).

Example 22

Jak: I actually studied TOEFL to accept in the school, and then-- yeah. And that's it.

Example 23

Pat: I got 950 scores of TOEIC... 2015.

Not limited to the above three participants, the dynamic nature of motivation was a prominent theme across the board, with only one participant (Sage) maintaining a consistent purpose for studying English as a result of a robust mental image of her future ideal L2 self.

Other peripheral motivations linked to the ideal L2 self mentioned by the participants included accessing English media, talking to English speaking friends, and for personal enjoyment.

4.5 SATL and Social Identity: The Korean-speaking/English-speaking Mismatch

Another finding evident in the data was the mismatch in social identities when expressing elements of one's various social identities via the use of SATL in different languages.

4.5.1 The Use of SATL in Korean. The ever-present nature of utilising SATL to display elements of one's various social identities in Korean is neatly summed up in the following extract [Example 24].

Example 24

Jug: I think every single person in Korea, they use swear words. bad language to friends. But it's not bad meaning. It's kind of our language.

Jug's assertion, which captures both the ubiquity of SATL ("every single person in Korea") and a range of pragmatic functions related to SATL ("But it's not bad meaning. It's kind of our language"), was routinely reflected in the data, with eight out of ten participants readily stating they used SATL around people they felt close to (i.e., friends or peer groups); with only one participant actively trying to refrain from swearing in any language (Sage).

The data revealed that the use of Korean SATL in South Korea serves several pragmatic functions, however bonding [Example 25] and displaying in-group membership [Example 26] were the most frequently cited uses.

Example 25

Int: When you're using taboo language with your friends it seems, for what purposes? Is it to make a joke, to express happiness, anger, to make friends, to make a mood?

Hiya: Just to express how we close, because it's kind of "darling" or "honey".

Example 26

Jun: I usually use taboo language or swearing when I'm with my friends. When I hang out with them to the PC room and we play some games and very competitive. We inevitably use swearing and taboo language in there, and I think that's the most place that we use.

Aside from the functions of bonding and displaying in-group membership, other reasons for using SATL included, expressing frustration or anger, to make jokes, and/or to break the ice in certain situations.

Furthermore, in addition to the sheer prevalence of SATL reported by the participants, the data also reflected a relationship between SATL, age, and the expression of identity [Example 27 and Example 28].

Example 27

Mika: Yes. I had swearing a lot when I was teenager.

Example 28

Hiya: When I was young, I'm a big taboo languages user, and not now.

Whether or not this is indicative of the Korean culture on the whole is impossible to tell from such a small data set; however, it does seem to match what is reported in the literature regarding the relationship between age, the use of SATL, and social identity (e.g., McEnery, 2004).

Extrapolating further, Mika mentions that she used SATL a lot when she was a teenager, but not so much now. Interestingly, when Mika did represent herself as a user of SATL in Korean it was generally limited to situations involving close friends from her school years or when she was alone.

In a similar vein, Hiya also stated [Example 29] that she tries to refrain from swearing in professional settings, or around family, and only uses SATL around friends she has known since high school.

Example 29

Int: So looking at each group individually, you ever swear around your family?

Hiya: No, just with high school friends.

Together, the above examples further represent a common thread found within the data – the use of SATL in Korean to affirm in-group membership and to build and/or confirm bonds between people. Furthermore, it appears that elements of language (i.e., SATL) which contributed to the formation of friendships and acted as markers of social belonging during one's school years is also utilised in adulthood as a way of maintaining these ties and displaying friendship.

4.5.2 The Use of SATL in English. Juxtaposing the use of SATL in Korean with that in English, it becomes clear that there is a mismatch between the ways participants display their various social identities in various languages.

For example, although Jug reported that he frequently used SATL around his Korean-

speaking friends, he noted that in English this was not the case [Example 30].

Example 30 (Discussing Jug's time living in London)

Int: So you said you usually use it [English swearing] to yourself. But when you're with-- did you have English speaking friends?

Jug: Yeah.

Int: Did you ever swear around them?

Jug: No.

When pressed as to why he never used SATL around his English-speaking friends during his time living in the United Kingdom Jug articulated that he had not formed the 'habit' of using taboo language [Example 31].

Example 31

Jug: As I said, it's kind of a habit. So I don't have those kind of habits in English. But in Korean, I have a habit to say.

The 'habit' Jug was referring to arguably relates to the way certain linguistic practices (i.e., the use of SATL) often become more liberal in certain contexts and/or with certain people.

Far from being an isolated case, several other participants displayed a mismatch between their Korean-speaking and English-speaking identities. In the case of OJ, the use of SATL in Korean [Example 32] served many pragmatic functions, whereas in English [Example 33] OJ displays a lack of ability, and as a result, a lack of confidence in using SATL.

Example 32 (Using taboo language in Korean)

OJ: Break the ice or make people comfortable or I want to show people on the same side...

Example 33 (Using taboo language in English)

OJ: Yeah. I have used swear or taboo language in English, but it's hard to remember because I didn't try to use it many times and, actually, I didn't know exact nuance of swear or taboo language so, in most cases, I don't want to use these languages.

Although the mismatch between identities was evident in the data, there were also incidents where mismatches were not as pronounced between the two languages, with Jak being a prime example.

Having lived in the United States for five years Jak had the opportunity to negotiate and construct a range of social identities in different contexts (e.g., university, work, socialising). As a result of this, he developed the ability to utilise SATL in various sociocultural contexts as a way of expressing elements of his social identities [Example 34].

Example 34

Jak: America? Yeah, I do. Yeah, like after work, and then, when I'm hanging out with my friends, yeah, then definitely there's a lot of F-words going and coming out, yeah.

This example, which is representative of the data suggesting a link between experience with English (i.e., time living in an English-speaking country or extended periods of exposure to the language) and the development of pragmatic competence in relation to the use of SATL, seems to be congruent with Jak's Korean-speaking social identity in similar contexts [Example 35].

Example 35

Jak: Yes, I do. When I'm with my friends, my guys, then yeah. Taboo thing and swearing, yeah, always comes out.

While not all participants displayed the same mismatches in the way they displayed their various social identities, noticeable differences between one's Korean-speaking identities and one's English-speaking identities in relation to the use of SATL was a common

theme throughout the data, with those with less experience interacting in English showing larger discrepancies.

4.5.3 Attitudes towards English Taboo Language. The final theme to emerge from the data related to the participants' positive attitudes towards SATL in English.

Employing a direct approach, participants were asked to give their opinions on whether or not they thought that having a deeper understanding of how SATL is used in English would help (or hinder) them in expressing elements of their English identity.

Although the majority of participants believed a deeper understanding of SATL in English would help them express themselves and their identities ($n = 6$), two participants believed that learning about taboo language was not necessary, one believed that it was important but it was not part of their identity, and one was undecided.

Interestingly, when participants were asked whether or not they thought they would ever need to use or understand English SATL in the future, the overwhelming majority said yes ($n = 9$). However, this should not be taken to mean that each of these participants desire to use SATL in their English-speaking futures, as two participants [Example 36 and Example 37] explicitly noted that even if they do not use SATL themselves, it is still important to understand it.

Example 36

OJ: Even If I will not use taboo language or swearing in English but in a relationship, I think some of my-- might use these languages. So to have more friendly conversation and friendly relationship, I should understand the language meaning and it's necessary.

Example 37

Jug: Because even if I don't speak it, if I understand why people speak or say the taboo language in the situations because I can understand more because it reflects the conscience, I think. So when I think in Korea, if I understand it, then I can understand and I can act

something. But if I don't understand English in swear word, I can smile if there is a bad situation. So that's not good. So understanding is important. So I think yes, it helps.

In addition, there also seems to be a positive relationship between those who wish to live in an English-speaking environment and the level of importance placed on being able to understand and use SATL in English [Example 38, Example 39, and Example 40].

Example 38

Hiya: So if I want to be a part of their Canadian society then I think I have to use the taboo languages.

Example 39

Jun: One of my goal is working abroad so I must learn taboo language and swearing because I have to work with foreigners then I have to English or cultural mistakes to them. So I think that's the reason that I must learn taboo language or swearing. So I have to avoid them to use them. But if I have the chance to make some foreign friends then I can use them, make a better relationship with them.

Example 40

Summer: And I can understand the situation more. So it is better for me to understand other people. And it will help for me to react their emotion and their expressions. So it will really work I think for the communication and conversation.

Remembering that the ideal self is concerned with bridging the gap between the person we are and the person we would like to become, the above extracts indicate both an understanding of the roles SATL play in certain sociocultural contexts, and a desire on the behalf of the participants to be able to participate in (or at least understand) these contexts utilising the appropriate linguistic forms and functions.

Additional to the above data concerning those wishing to live in an English-speaking country, one participant clearly indicated he envisioned himself using SATL for social reasons [Example 41], even though he made no mention of living in an English-speaking

society in the future.

Example 41

Pat: In the future, I may be able to speak with them [friends] more freely and I could express my feeling to them. Maybe with using more swearing and making fun of them and to feel more closer to them.

This example shows a clear understanding of how SATL may be used as a tool for bonding and rapport building between friends, and indicates a future ideal English-speaking self capable of joking and building rapport via the use of SATL.

Taken as a whole, the above data [Examples 36 - 41] clearly indicates that the participants involved in this study possess an overall positive interest in learning about SATL and its various pragmatic functions in English; regardless of whether or not they themselves would (or do) use this style of language.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has presented four key findings related to SATL, social identity, and the motivational self system. The first finding reported on the range of comfort and confidence participants showed in using SATL in English. The samples showed that the differences reported between participants were linked to experience with English, learning contexts, and social environments. Secondly, the data suggested that although there were only two major English-speaking domains reported in the Korean EFL context (i.e., the professional domain and the academic domain), the majority of participants still reported that they continue to study English for various reasons (e.g., to live abroad, to travel, for professional reasons). When comparing one's Korean-speaking social identities with one's English-speaking social identities, the data revealed a mismatch in the way SATL was used between the respective languages, with SATL being acutely more prominent when the participants speak in Korean.

Finally, the data clearly showed that the participants in this study believed an understanding of SATL in English is important, regardless of whether or not they themselves use (or would use) such language.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

In the previous chapter I presented the major findings uncovered during the analysis phase of the research. From these findings, four main themes emerged: First, both the learning context (i.e., the Korean EFL context) and experience with English had a bearing on one's confidence and competence in using SATL in English. Second, one's opportunity to use English in the Korean EFL context is predominantly limited to one of two domains – professional or academic. Third, the continued pursuit of English by the majority of participants ($n = 8$) is linked to both the ought-to self and the ideal L2 self. Fourth, the majority of participants ($n = 9$) believed that learning about SATL would be advantageous, especially to those with ambitions to live in an English-speaking environment. This chapter will begin by discussing these themes in relation to the research questions before moving on to present possible implications of this study. This paper will conclude with suggestions for future research and closing comments.

5.1 Answering the Research Questions

Beginning with the overarching goal of gaining further insight into the thoughts, recollections, and opinions of adult Korean English-users regarding the use of SATL in English, the first research question asks: **What are the thoughts and attitudes of Korean EFL learners/users towards the use of SATL for expressing elements of one's various English-speaking social identities?** This open-ended question helped inform the data collection process employed in this study. Addressing the relationship between the learning context and the development of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge of SATL, the second question asks: **What is the relationship between the Korean EFL context and the development of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge in relation to the use of taboo SATL**

and the expression of social identity? The third question, which evolved during the literature review phase, relates to the expression of social identity by Korean users of English, and asks: **How is English SATL employed by native Korean English-speakers to display elements of their various social identities?** The final question emerged while I was exploring the relationship between Dörnyei's Motivational Self System and the use of SATL to display one's social identity – a relationship that has yet to be explored in the literature. Thus, the final question is: **In which future domains and contexts might Korean English-speakers benefit from having a greater command and understanding of how SATL is used in English to project elements of one's various social identities?**

5.1.1 What are the thoughts and attitudes of Korean EFL learners/users towards the use of SATL for expressing elements of one's various English-speaking social identities?

In order to answer this question, responses to the six questions posed in Section 5 of the interview guide (**Appendix A**) were analysed.

Although not all participants reported using SATL in English, seven out of ten stated that they believed that a deeper understanding of this style of language would facilitate the construction and expression of various English-speaking social identities, regardless of whether they would personally choose to employ this linguistic style. Similarly, in relation to whether or not the participants envisioned a future where they may need to use or understand SATL in English, nine out of ten participants suggested that they do envision futures requiring either the use or understanding of English SATL. Again, however, this does not equate to all of the participants desiring to use SATL to express elements of their English-speaking social identities, with attitudes towards the use of SATL impacted by visions of one's ideal L2 self.

Using Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System framework to analyse the relationship between one's attitudes towards the use of SATL and the ideal L2 self on a deeper and more

nuanced level, it became apparent that there was a link between the participants' ideal L2 self-images and the attitudes and thoughts they held towards the use of SATL for expressing elements of various English-speaking social identities.

Keeping in mind that one's ideal L2 self is generally represented in the literature as "an ideal image of the kind of L2 user one aspires to be in the future" (Papi, 2010, p.468), participants in this study indicated that an understanding of English SATL could not only help them display various "imagined" English-speaking social identities, but also help them avoid "projecting" identities in ways not congruent with who they desire to be, thus helping to prevent misunderstandings and the imputing of unwanted or inaccurate identities (i.e., "recognized identities") onto the participant (for more on "imagined identity", "projected identity" and "recognized identity" see Benson *et al.*, 2013).

In relation to one's projected identity, Dewaele (2007) notes that while linguistic competence in a second language is important, it is pragmatic competence which allows the language users to project more accurate images of themselves. This point, if applied to the current study, was reflected in the data by a number of participants who stated they thought understanding SATL (both linguistic and pragmatic functions) would help them to make jokes (i.e., projecting one's social identity as a humorous person) or to make friends (i.e., projecting one's social identity as a friend or part of a group) etc.

Combined, the data highlighted that the participants in this study believe that SATL is an important feature of language, especially in relation to understanding, constructing, and projecting various social identities. In addition, one's ideal L2 self-image seemed to affect the ways in which participants thought about the use of SATL, with those possessing clear ideal L2 self-images involving living in English-speaking environments expressing more positive views towards the use of SATL to express themselves and their various ideal L2 self social identities. Conversely, those who did not foresee changes in the way they would use English,

although still aware of the role SATL plays in identity construction and display, were less inclined to see SATL as a helpful tool for expressing their own, personal social identities in English.

5.1.2 What is the relationship between the Korean EFL context and the development of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge in relation to the use of SATL and the expression of social identity?

To answer this question, three factors had to be accounted for: one's experience with English and time living in an English-speaking society, the learning context, and domains and opportunities of use.

1. Experience with English

The data clearly indicates that those with experience living in an English-speaking country have greater levels of linguistic and pragmatic competence in relation to the use of SATL for the expression of social identity in comparison to those who have not lived in an English-speaking country (or environment).

This finding is in line with a host of research that suggests that study/live-abroad situations result in enhanced language development, often as a result of the opportunities afforded to interact with native speakers (e.g., Kinginger & Belz, 2005; Schauer, 2006; Hernández, 2010; Benson *et al.*, 2013).

In relation to pragmatic development and SATL, the findings reported above are not unusual, with scholars such as Dewaele (2005) noting that the “type of contact or acquisition context has a significant effect on aspects of sociopragmatic competence” (Dewaele, 2005, p. 489), while Jay & Janschewitz (2008) suggest that there is link between English experience and the development of pragmatic knowledge allowing non-native speakers to know “where, when, and with whom swearing is appropriate” (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008, p. 267).

For this study, although the data reflected a relationship between living in an English-speaking environment and increased linguistic and pragmatic competence in using SATL, it

should be noted that not all participants who studied abroad displayed the same levels of development. These discrepancies can potentially be explained by the fact that “[l]iving in the target community alone might not facilitate pragmatic learning if learners do not actively seek opportunities for practice” (Taguchi, 2008, p. 40), which was indeed the case for two of the participants. Furthermore, since the “acquisition and use of pragmatic competence partly depends on the kinds of identities [the participants] want to project and the responses they receive to them” (Benson *et al.*, 2012, p. 183), personal choice also plays a role in whether or not certain linguistic practices (e.g., the use of SATL) are used for identity projection.

2. Learning Context (Primary and Secondary Education)

Having all completed their primary and secondary educations in Korea, the participants of this study reported learning English in teacher-centred environments, where grammar was the focus and passing high-stakes tests was the main goal (see Park, 2009; Seth, 2002).

Highlighting a lack of opportunities for authentic interaction and limited access to the target language community in the Korean EFL context, the data suggested that the ought-to self was the major motivating factor for the participants involved in this study, especially prior to adulthood.

Within the Korean EFL context, where English has both practical and symbolic value (Park & Abelmann, 2004), and test scores are not only a source of family pride, but also a national obsession (Park, 2009; Seth, 2002), the ought-to self is evident in the need to meet social and family expectations, and as the impetus to access more prestigious professional and educational opportunities (Park, 2011; Cho, 2014).

In relation to this study, and considering the importance of the learning environment in Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System framework, it is apparent that the Korean EFL classroom context does not facilitate the development of either the linguistic or pragmatic

competence or confidence to display various social identities utilising SATL in English.

3. Domains and Opportunities

Echoing previous studies citing limited opportunities to use English in EFL contexts (e.g., Takahashi, 2013; Chang & Goswami, 2011; Poonpon, 2017), participants in this study stated that their use of English was generally restricted to two specific domains – academic (i.e., English language institutes) and professional (i.e., white-collar environments).

According to the data, neither of these domains provided sufficient opportunities to develop the linguistic or pragmatic skills required to display elements of one's social identities via the use of SATL. This finding can most likely be explained by the fact that the academic and professional domains the participants of this study operate in generally require the use of a more formal register of English, thus limiting their exposure to SATL.

Regarding the participants' current academic domains, it should be noted that these private language institutions are not as restricted in their teaching practices and areas of focus as the education context (i.e., primary and secondary schools) mentioned in the previous section, with several participants stating they feel comfortable using SATL in front of their native English-speaking teachers (this was not true for native-Korean English teachers). However, this finding should not be taken to mean that these institutes provide enough instruction or opportunity for interaction to facilitate the development of the skills required to use SATL to display one's social identities, as the data clearly showed this was not the case.

In addition, the data revealed that eight out of ten participants continued to learn English, with one's ideal L2 self (e.g., to live abroad, to get a promotion for personal satisfaction, to travel) presenting as arguably the prime motivator for the continued pursuit of English fluency.

Venturing beyond the classroom, the data suggested that although there were a range of secondary areas in which English was used by the participants (e.g., traveling, speaking to

English-speaking friends), the major domain of use was in professional, white-collar environments.

Bearing in mind the importance of out-of-class interactions and activities for language learning (Richards, 2015), the findings of this study suggest that as a result of the limited domains and opportunities of use (i.e., infrequent use limited to professional settings), the participants of this study were not afforded opportunities to develop the linguistic, pragmatic, or sociocultural knowledge required to use SATL to display various social identities.

Taken together, and in relation to the use of SATL to display social identity, the findings relating to the participants involved in this study appear to corroborate those of Dewaele (2005), and the assertion that “if one’s contact with a TL [target language] has been limited to the classroom the resulting communicative competence will be more limited compared to those users who have experienced and used the TL in wider variety of situations” (Dewaele, 2005, p. 489).

5.1.3 How is English swearing and taboo language employed by native Korean English-speakers to display elements of their various social identities? To answer this question, it was important to consider not only the domains of use that the participants currently find themselves, but also the domains of use that the participants have previously used English to display various social identities.

As mentioned above, the domains of use currently available to the participants of this study largely revolved around professional and academic domains, both requiring the display of social identities (i.e., one’s professional identity and one’s identity as a student) utilising more formal registers of English. These domains, although being the most prominent, are not the only domains where the participants utilise, or have utilised, English to display various social identities.

In relation to the use of SATL to construct and display social identity, the data

revealed that although SATL was not a conspicuous part of the participants' language use, there were an array of areas where participants employed this style of language as the conduit to express elements of their various social identities. These areas included both online and offline (i.e., in person) domains.

1. Offline

Using SATL to construct and display social identity, especially in relation to displaying in-group membership and maintaining close friendships, was almost exclusively limited to those participants with experience living in an English-speaking country, with three out of the five participants who had previously lived abroad expressing they use (or have used) SATL during interactions with people they feel close to (i.e., English-speaking friends).

In terms of those who have not lived in an English-speaking environment, SATL is used, albeit scarcely, for expressing anger or frustration (usually when alone, and therefore not linked to the notion of social identity), rapport building (e.g., using SATL for rapport building with English-speaking colleagues), or to display one's identity as a competent user of English (e.g., swearing to vent one's frustration in the company of native English-speakers or teachers).

2. Online

Moving to online domains, there was limited evidence of the construction and display of social identity using SATL; however, one participant did state they had made forays into the use of SATL on English-language websites to express their anger, thus constructing and displaying an online social identity.

At first gloss, it appears that this display of SATL is limited to the expression of emotion, as stated by the participant, and not connected to one's social identity. However, upon deeper analysis, it becomes clear that the participant in question was constructing and displaying an online social identity as both a global citizen (by choosing to engage in debate

on an English website) and as a competent and confident English-user not afraid to express their opinions in a direct and strong way (by using SATL).

3. Applying the L2 Motivational Self System

Applying the L2 Motivational Self framework to these findings, it can be concluded that due to the limited domains in which English is used in the Korean EFL context (i.e., the learning context), the use of SATL by Korean EFL learners to display social identity is uncommon. However, this finding is slightly misleading, for it suggests that opportunities to construct and display social identities are almost exclusively confined to the physical context (i.e., the Korean EFL context), and does truly reflect the opportunities to use English as a means of constructing and displaying identities online (with only one participant displaying any form of online social identity).

As discussed by a range of scholars (e.g., Lam, 2000; Thorne *et al.*, 2009; Wu, 2011; Sun and Chang; 2012), and as was the case for the participant of this study, the use of technology and the internet to facilitate interaction with English-speakers can help students maintain motivation by allowing them to use English to participate in the global community as a bona fide English-user (Lam, 2000). In addition, online technologies also afforded the participant of this study an opportunity to construct and project a social identity more in line with his ideal L2 self, thus helping to bridge the gap between one's current L2 self and one's future ideal L2 self (for more on online identity construction for English language learners see Koutsogiannis & Mitsikopoulou, 2004; Thorne *et al.*, 2009).

In relation to the role of the ideal L2 self, the data, although inconclusive, suggests a relationship between learning context, the ideal L2 self, and the way SATL is used to project various social identities in person - with more experienced English-users reporting a greater tendency to use SATL for the expression of social identity in face-to-face interactions. This finding possibly reflects the desire for those with more experience using English to do so in a

more ‘natural’ way – a desire arguably linked to both the ideal L2 self and previous learning contexts (i.e., studying English in an English-speaking country).

Finally, the use of SATL by those with less English experience was also arguably linked to one’s ideal L2 self. This assertion is made on the grounds that since SATL is not commonly taught in EFL/ESL classes (Mercury, 1995; Holster, 2005; Liyanage *et al.*, 2015; Guo *et al.*, 2016), and due to the fact that the participants were clearly aware of the functions of this style of language (as ascertained via a review of the participants use of SATL in Korean), the use of SATL in English was therefore highly likely to be a conscious decision made in an attempt to project social identities, or parts thereof, congruent with the participant’s own ideal L2 self-image (i.e., an ideal L2 self that speaks English confidently, competently, and naturally).

5.1.4 In which future domains and contexts might Korean English-speakers benefit from having a greater command and understanding of how SATL is used in English to project elements of one’s various social identities?

To answer this question, participants provided summaries of the various areas they envisioned using English in the future. Comparing these responses against the literature discussing the use of SATL for the display of social identity, the participants’ use of SATL in Korean, and any evidence of SATL being used to display social identity in English, the following conclusions were drawn.

To begin with, the domains and contexts in which the participants of this study might benefit from having a greater command and understanding of how SATL is used in English to project elements of one’s various social identities is not uniform, with the data reflecting two distinct groups of participants – those who envisioned living in an English-speaking country ($n = 5$) and those who pictured themselves remaining in Korea ($n = 5$).

1. Future Ideal L2 Self (English-speaking context)

With five participants continuing their pursuit of English in the hopes of realising their goals of living in an English-speaking country, the domains and contexts of use will be different to those reported in the Korean EFL context.

Based on the available data, the participants who envisioned themselves living, working, or studying in an English-speaking environment indicated they imagined themselves using English in a range of different domains, and with a range of different people. The domains and people mentioned included the workplace or educational setting, in the neighbourhood (with their neighbours), with English-speaking friends (and to make English-speaking friends), in daily life (e.g., going shopping, paying bills), and to engage in hobbies and other social events.

Taking into account the ways SATL is used to construct and project social identity in a range of contexts, and considering that not only did all of the participants of this study except one use SATL in Korean to display various context-specific social identities (e.g. with friends), but also stated that a greater understanding of English SATL would be of benefit to them, it can be tentatively concluded that Korean English-speakers might benefit from having a greater command and understanding of how SATL is used in English to project elements of their various social identities, especially if they envision themselves socialising and interacting with native English-speakers in contexts where SATL might be used to construct or project social identity.

2. Future Ideal L2 Self (Korean EFL context)

As the result of the data that clearly indicated both a dearth of opportunities that may require the display of various social identities via SATL in the Korean EFL context, and limited usage of SATL by the participants in this context, it can be concluded that having a greater understanding of this style of language would be of limited benefit in this

environment.

5.2 Implications

Providing a clear indication that the topic of SATL is of interest to adult learners pursuing English in an EFL context, the findings of this study are of significance to EFL educators.

Adding to the limited literature supporting the inclusion of SATL in English language classes (Mercury, 1995; Holster, 2005; Liyanage et al., 2015; Guo et al., 2016), the findings of this research suggest that due to the utility and ubiquity of SATL in the English language, especially as a tool for constructing and displaying social identity, EFL educators need to consider how they can meet the needs and desires of their students in relation to this specific linguistic style.

In addition, and of particular significance for EFL educators working with students harbouring dreams of living in an English-speaking environment, teachers should aim to implement strategies that facilitate and encourage the construction and display of various English-speaking social identities in an attempt to help students develop the required linguistic and pragmatic knowledge and confidence needed to display social identities of their own choosing; this can partially be achieved via interactions with other English-speakers in a range of different online communities.

Finally, and bearing in mind the data which revealed that the majority of participants were interested in learning more about SATL, the results of this study allude to the possible motivational benefits learning about this style of language could have in the EFL context.

5.3 Conclusion, Limitations of the Study, and Future

Directions

This research was undertaken in an attempt to address the gap in the literature related to the use of SATL to display various social identities by non-native English-users. Adopting a qualitative approach, and utilising semi-structured interviews to explore the thoughts and recollections of 10 adult Korean users of English, this study examined how the three interrelated components of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (i.e., learning context, ought-to self, and ideal L2 self) impact the use of SATL to construct and display various social identities in the Korean EFL context.

Findings suggest that Korean users of English are keenly interested in understanding the nature of SATL, regardless of whether or not they desire to use such language. Interestingly, the ideal L2 self not only impacted the participants' images of how they wanted to project themselves, or how they wanted to use English in the future, but also impacted the way participants stated they did not want to be perceived (i.e., recognized identity) due to the incorrect usage of SATL.

In relation to the Korean EFL learning context and notion of the ought-to self, it was clear that these two elements had an overall negative impact on the development of the linguistic, pragmatic, and socio-cultural knowledge required for the successful projection of various social identities via the use of SATL.

Not surprisingly, and corroborating previous findings, this research showed that the relationship between motivation and the future self is related in dynamic and interesting ways. As such, further research should explore how the notion of social identity, and the way one wishes to project their various L2 social identities, can facilitate the development of a more robust and vivid future ideal L2 self. In addition, due to the limitations of many EFL

contexts (i.e., limited English interaction and domains of use), research should be carried out to ascertain how the development of various social identities can be enhanced as a result of in-class practices and/or greater engagement with the global, online English-speaking community.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the results from this small scale study are not generalisable to other EFL contexts, or to all adult Korean users of English. Furthermore, findings could have been influenced by the limited age range of the participants. However, in spite of this, the findings are a clear indication that taboo language is not necessarily taboo for L2 speakers, with participants already displaying an interest in using and knowing more about this linguistic style. As such, further research into the notions of SATL and social identity needs to be carried out in various EFL contexts.

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Appendix A:

Interview Guide

Masters of Research Major Research Project: Future Self, Identity, and Taboo Language in a second language.

Section 1 – General Information

1. Gender
2. What is your date of birth?
3. What is your occupation?
4. Have you ever studied English abroad? If so, how long for?
5. Have you ever lived in an English speaking environment? If so, how long for?
6. Can you please describe how you learned English (e.g., in Korea, time abroad, grammar based, naturalistic)?
7. Self-rated English level (beginner/low-intermediate/intermediate/upper-intermediate/advanced/near-native English-speaker level)
8. What is your TOEIC/TOEFL/IELTS score (if applicable)?

Section 2 – Korean Focus: Social Identity

1. Where do you use Korean and who with? (e.g., at work with colleagues, at the bar with friends, at home with your family, with hobby groups or sports team)
2. Do you feel you speak in the same way with these people and groups? Why or why not?
3. Do you think your language changes? If so, how?
4. Do you feel your identity or sense of self is the same, similar, or different in each situation?

Section 3 - Korean Focus: Taboo Language and Swearing / Swearing and Social Identity

1. Keeping in mind the people and places where you use Korean– do you ever use swearing or taboo language?

2. If yes – who with and why? (e.g., to express anger, to be humorous, to express solidarity or for forming bonds/building rapport, it is comfortable, it is appropriate)
3. Do you ever use taboo language or swear in other situations?

Section 4 - English Focus: Social Identity / Reason for Learning / Future English-speaking Self

1. Where do you use English and who with? (e.g. at work with colleagues, at the bar with friends, at home with your family, with hobby groups or sports team)
2. Do you feel you speak in the same way when you are engaged in conversation with each of these people or groups? Why or why not?
3. Do you think your language changes? If so, how?
4. Do you feel your identity is the same, similar, or different in each situation?
5. Can you express yourself in the same way (i.e., express your identity and personality, not just your meaning) in English as you can in Korean? Why or why not? (Replies could include linguistic knowledge, emotional force/connection, or pragmatic function (e.g., to form a bond, to make a joke))
6. What are the main reasons you are learning English? (Or why did you learn English?)
7. How do you imagine you will engage with English speaking people/groups in the future?

Section 5 - English Focus: Taboo Language and Swearing / Swearing and Social Identity

1. Keeping in mind the people with and places where you currently use English– do you ever swear or use taboo language in English?
2. If yes – who with and why? (e.g., to express anger, to be humorous, to express solidarity or for forming bonds/building rapport, it is comfortable, it is appropriate)
3. Do you ever use taboo language or English swear words in other situations (e.g., to express anger, to be humorous)?
4. Do you think you use taboo language or swear more in English or Korean? Why do you think this is the case?
5. Do you think that a deeper understanding of how taboo language and swearing is used in English would help (or hinder) you in expressing elements of your English identity? Why or why not?

6. Think about the way you wish to use and engage with English and English speaking people in the future, do you think you would ever need to use or understand taboo language or swearing in English?

-----END-----

Appendix B:

Definitions of Key Terms

Swearing and Taboo Language

For this study swearing and taboo language will refer to the use of words which have the potential to be offensive, inappropriate, objectionable, or unacceptable in any given social context. Swear words and taboo language is also often referred to as “offensive language,” “cursing,” and “dirty words’ (e.g., *shit, fuck, bitch, dick, tit*). The Korean word is 욕.

Ideal Self / Future Self

“Ideal Self” and/or “Future Self” refers to who you would like to be when using English in the future. It also refers to what you would like to do with English in the future. How you imagine yourself to be, and what you imagine yourself doing.

Social Identity

Social identity is who you are (or the identity you project) in any given context or situation. One’s social identity/identities are related to context, relationships, social norms, and individual choice. (e.g., *professional identity, student identity, teacher identity, life of the party, joker*).

-----END-----

Appendix C:

Participant Information and Consent Form

Department of Human Sciences
Faculty of Linguistics
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY, NSW 2109



I, _____ have read (*or, where appropriate, have had read to me*) and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au), or Tisha Yoon in Seoul, South Korea (82) 1095749008. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix D:

Ethics Approval

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
(RESEARCH)
Research Office
CSC East Research HUB, Level 3



18 April 2018

Dr Jill Murray
Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
Macquarie University NSW 2109

Reference: 5201700486

Dear Dr Murray,

FINAL APPROVAL

Title of project: "Masters of Research Major Research Project: Future Self, Identity, and Taboo Language in a second language"

Thank you very much for your response. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and approval has been granted, effective 23rd May 2017. This letter constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research>

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Jill Murray
Mr Joshua Simon Wedlock

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 23rd May 2018
Progress Report 2 Due: 23rd May 2019
Progress Report 3 Due: 23rd May 2020
Progress Report 4 Due: 23rd May 2021
Final Report Due: 23rd May 2022

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/resources

**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
(RESEARCH)**

Research Office

C5C East Research HUB, Level 3



3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/managing_approved_research_projects

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics/post-approval>

<https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics/resources/research-ethics>

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a copy of this final approval letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr Naomi Sweller", written over a horizontal line.

Dr Naomi Sweller
Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics Review Sub-Committee
Human Research Ethics Committee