

# Impact of motivational languaging activities on novice English teachers' motivation: An activity theory perspective

HYUN SOO KIM

TAE-YOUNG KIM

*Chung-Ang University*

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**ABSTRACT:** The study aims to explore the influence of languaging on novice English teachers' motivation and to investigate the uniqueness of each English teacher's reactions to motivational languaging activities (MLAs) from an Activity Theory (AT) perspective. Three novice English teachers at secondary schools in South Korea were interviewed using questions based on an AT framework, and they completed six sets of MLAs consisting of two parts: motivation and languaging. Our findings indicated that the two relatively motivated teachers could use MLAs to develop their ideal teacher identity and improve their teaching confidence. By participating in MLAs, a demotivated teacher can reshape her thoughts regarding teaching and motivate herself again. It has also been shown that MLAs can mediate participation in an imaginary teacher community, possibly leading to enhancement of L2 teacher motivation, but that this also might not occur depending on one's teacher agency. (143 words)

**Key words:** English Teacher, Teacher Motivation, Activity Theory, Languaging, Motivational Languaging Activity

## **Impacto de las actividades de lenguaje motivacional en la motivación de los maestros novatos de inglés: Una perspectiva de la teoría de la actividad**

**RESUMEN:** El estudio tiene como objetivo explorar la influencia del lenguaje en la motivación de los profesores de inglés novatos e investigar la singularidad de las reacciones de cada profesor de inglés a las actividades de lenguaje motivacional (MLAs) desde una perspectiva de la teoría de la actividad (AT). Se entrevistó a tres profesores de inglés novatos de escuelas secundarias en Corea del Sur con preguntas basadas en un marco de AT, y completaron seis conjuntos de MLAs que constan de dos partes: motivación y lenguaje. Nuestros hallazgos indicaron que los dos maestros relativamente motivados podrían usar los MLAs para recuperar su identidad de maestro ideal y mejorar su confianza en la enseñanza. Al participar en los MLAs, una maestra desmotivada podría remodelar sus pensamientos con respecto a la enseñanza y motivarse nuevamente. También se ha demostrado que los MLAs podrían mediar en la participación en una comunidad de maestros imaginaria, lo que posiblemente conduce a una mejora en la motivación del maestro de L2, pero esto no ocurriría dependiendo de la agencia de maestros de uno.

**Palabras Clave:** Maestro de inglés, Motivación del maestro, Teoría de la actividad, Lenguaje, Actividad de lenguaje motivacional

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As the field of second language (L2) learning motivation has expanded in the last few decades (e.g., Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Gardner, 1985; Ushioda, 2003), it has been reported that L2 teacher motivation can play a critical role in learners' (de)motivation (Kubanyiova, 2009). Compared to L2 learning motivation, however, the examination of L2 teacher motivation, especially that of novice teachers, has been relatively neglected (Kumazawa, 2013). Because L2 teacher motivation fluctuates with time and a (de)motivated teacher has been found to be a factor in learners' (de)motivation (Lee & Kim, 2015), how to maintain or boost teacher motivation needs to be discussed.

This case study qualitatively examines how specifically motivational languaging activities (MLAs) influence novice teachers' L2 teaching motivation. Kim (2019) developed MLAs based on the concept of languaging in L2 learning developed by Swain (2006, 2010, 2013). Languaging is the "activity of mediating cognitively complex ideas using language" (Swain & Lapkin, 2011, p. 105). The beneficial effects of languaging have been studied in different sub-areas of SLA, such as teaching writing (Watanabe, 2019), pragmatics (van Compernelle & Kinginger, 2019), and learning motivation (Kim, 2019). Extending the notion of languaging to L2 learning motivation, Kim (2019) proved that MLAs can enhance L2 learning motivation in Korean learners of English. Based on this evidence, the authors conducted a case study with three English teachers in secondary schools in South Korea (hereafter Korea).

The purpose of this study was to examine if and how MLAs could help those teachers maintain teacher motivation and to capture the dynamics of their motivation and the uniqueness of each teacher's activity from the perspective of Activity Theory (AT). Since Kim and Zhang (2013) discussed the potential of a Vygotskian AT perspective for a more comprehensive analysis of teacher motivation, there have been studies that adopted and supported an AT perspective to examine this motivation (Song & Kim, 2016; Zhang, 2014). Using AT allows us to focus on the interactions between teachers as individuals and the social, cultural, and historical contexts that they inhabit; it also enables us to explain the tensions between different sociocultural elements in the context (Engeström, 1999; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; van Lier, 2004).

In this study, teaching motivation was investigated in novice substitute teachers. The rationale behind using substitute teachers is that a considerable number of them are working at secondary schools across Korea. Hong (2018) reported that among junior high school teachers, there are 16,134 substitute teachers (32.46% of the entire junior high school teacher population), with 20,519 substitute teachers in high school (41.28% of the entire high school teacher population). Because surges in the number of substitute teachers are reported across the globe (Dockins & Wilson, 2019), the L2 teacher motivation of substitute teachers needs to be investigated.

The present study focuses on the following research questions:

1. Do MLAs influence novice teachers' L2 teaching motivation in a positive way? If so, how?
2. Within an AT framework, how would a novice teacher as a subject in an activity system interact with MLAs?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Activity Theory

AT was conceptualized by Vygotsky (1978) and then developed further by Leont'ev (1978). Activity from an AT perspective is defined as “a specific form of the societal existence of humans consisting of purposeful changing of natural and social reality,” and any activity is supposed to include “goals, means, the process of molding the object, and the result” (Davydov, 1999, p. 39). Engeström (1999) highlighted the contextual and societal characteristics of activity and revised Leont'ev's (1978) initial model. Engeström's AT model consists of six different elements of human activity: “subject,” “instrument” (or mediational tools), “object,” “rules,” “community,” and “division of labor.”

The six elements all interact with and mediate each other in the activity system (see Figure 1). Subject, instrument, and object comprise a basic upper triangle of the system. The subject of an activity is an agent in the activity: a teacher would be the subject in a teaching activity. The instruments are physical and symbolic tools that mediate the subject's action to achieve the object of the activity system; while the blackboard, for example, is a physical tool, the language that the teacher speaks is a symbolic tool. The teacher's own beliefs about the best way to learn English could also be considered a symbolic tool (Song & Kim, 2016). These instruments all mediate the teachers' action of instructing in their own way. The object is a specific goal that the subject has set. In L2 teaching activity, improvement in a student's L2 competence could be the object.

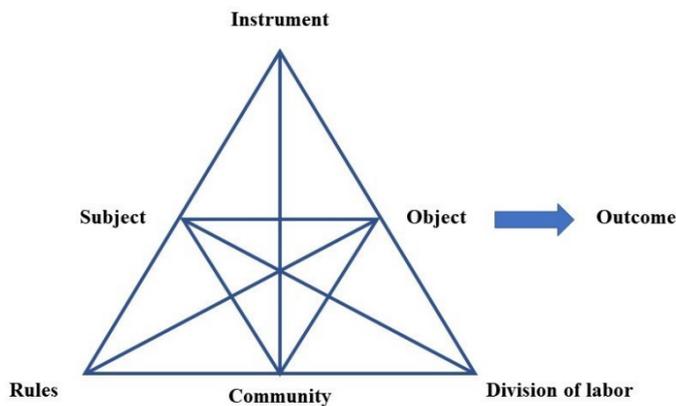


Figure 1. Complex model of an activity system (Engeström, 1999, p. 31).

Rules, community, and division of labor are located at the bottom of an expanded triangle. These elements reflect the contextual factors, and Engeström and Miettinen (1999, p. 11) emphasized that “individuals act in collective practices, communities, and institutions.” The rules are regulations and norms that both a subject and the people in a community should

follow. Using L2 only in the classroom could be an example of the rules in L2 teaching activity. The community would be the group or organization that the subject belongs to, and the division of labor would then mean the shared responsibilities that the subject is required to complete in the community. In the context of L2 teaching activity, for instance, the school, L2 class, and the group of teachers would be included in the elements of the community. The division of labor could be understood as the teachers teaching L2 and the learners learning L2.

In contrast to direct or immediate motive, motivation relates to expanded and contextual elements, including rules, community, and division of labor (Kim, 2010). Motivation is “the realization of motives” (Markova, 1990, p. 28); for motive to become motivation, specific goals and participation should be aligned. Motivation is more contextual than motive, and motive is the basic drive to do something whereas motivation involves one’s life experiences, which prioritizes the person’s participation in a language community (Kim, 2010). The concept of participation in this context includes both actual participation and imaginary engagement (Wenger, 1998). For example, in the context of L2 learning, learners might not be able to meet an actual group of people who use the L2, but they can certainly imagine themselves to be successful L2 learners who can speak it fluently with others.

The use of AT in L2 teacher motivation is still an academic rarity. By employing Engeström’s (1999) activity model, Zhang (2014) proved that L2 teacher motivation would change over time, verifying its dynamic nature and emphasizing the importance of teacher agency. Gao (2010) explained agency as one’s will and ability to achieve the desired goals in the situation and context one is surrounded by. She argued that L2 teacher motivation would be an outcome of the teacher’s reactions as subject in AT to the interaction between elements such as the community or mediational tools; even in a similar or the same context, where there exist conflicts, the level of L2 teacher motivation of each teacher would be different, and it is one’s agency that decides whether one will overcome demotivation or not. Therefore, it can be assumed that a teacher’s exercise of their agency in their teaching activity would change their reaction to MLAs in this study.

## 2.2. Motivational Language Activities (MLAs)

Languageing was originally introduced as an activity facilitating students’ understanding of complex grammatical concepts, introduced among English learners of French trying to learn the subtle grammatical differences in voice (Swain, Lapkin, Knouzi, Suzuki, & Brooks, 2009). It allows them to externalize their understanding of the concept to be learned through verbalization, so the externalized idea itself “could become an object of conscious reflection and modification in internalization” (van Compernelle & Kinginger, 2019, p. 99). As Vygotsky (1986) stated, language use mediates our thinking process, analogous to how physical tools are used as instruments to achieve a certain goal. Based on Vygotskian socio-cultural theory, Swain (2000) argued that language use is a fundamental process in learning and development, and that through languageing, one can develop complete control over new language forms and concepts.

L2 learning motivation has been studied actively over the past decade within various theoretical frameworks, such as Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model, Deci and Ryan’s (2002) self-determination theory, and the L2 motivational self system by Dörnyei (2019).

Only a few studies explored the potential of languaging in the sub-fields of L2 learning; for instance, Kim (2019) explored the possibility of using languaging as a way of enhancing L2 learning motivation. We suggested that, regardless of the language that learners use, speaking and writing could shape or reshape their thinking, as Vygotsky (1986) also argued. By involving learners in languaging activity to formulate and clarify their ideal future self as a successful English learner, they can be helped to realize the gap between their present status and their ideal self; then, on that basis, they can organize a plan to fully realize their ideal self in the future (Dörnyei, 2009). Therefore, languaging can lead learners to develop and maintain a higher level of L2 learning motivation.

For the present study, MLAs<sup>1</sup> were designed and conducted in either verbal or written form. In the study, investigating both the general effectiveness of MLAs and the most effective type of MLAs was the aim. A total of 837 Korean elementary and junior high school students cooperated on three different types of MLAs: 1) writing an English-learning diary, 2) opinion writing after watching and reading about famous South Koreans who were good examples of successful English learners, and 3) peer discussions after watching and reading those exemplary stories. It was revealed that opinion writing MLAs were the most effective ones in regard to improving English-learning motivation, in both groups of students. Notably, among the elementary school students, there were significantly different changes in ideal L2 self, attitude toward English learning, and integrativeness in English-learning motivation. On the other hand, cultural interest was significantly increased as an English-learning motivation among junior high school students. Based on this result, the present study explores the potential of MLAs for novice English teachers' motivation. By engaging novice teachers to do languaging, MLAs can be expected to bring a positive impact on L2 teacher motivation, as they have shown a positive result in L2 learning motivation.

### 3. METHODS

#### 3.1. Participants

After the researchers made the call for participation, three volunteers were selected for this case study according to their profiles. Eunbi is a substitute teacher at a public high school in Incheon, a city near Seoul. Jihan also works as a substitute teacher at a public middle school in Seoul. Mijin is a full-time teacher at a public middle school in Seoul. Each of them has a bachelor's degree in English Education from a private university in Seoul. (All names are pseudonyms.)

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<sup>1</sup> The reason MLAs are considered an "activity" but not a "task" is that everyone creates their own meaning even when given the same task. Coughlan and Duff (1994) showed that the same communicative task generated a unique activity for each participant. In this sense, MLAs, which concern one's L2 motivation, are fundamentally unique and personal, since L2 motivation is the result of one's interaction with other contextual factors such as people, tasks, and environmental contexts (Ushioda, 2003).

### 3.2. Data Collection

#### 3.2.1. Interview

The researchers first asked for participants' consent and then proceeded with semi-structured interviews. The interview questions were designed based on Jang and Kim's (2018) research using the AT framework (See Appendix). Interviewees were asked additional questions based on their answers to the questions.

#### 3.2.2. Design of languaging activity

The languaging activity consists of two different parts: motivation and actual languaging. First, to identify any change in their motivation, participants were asked to choose any number between -5 and +5 to indicate their self-perceived current level of teaching motivation. The purpose of this numerical indication is to provide them the general opportunity to think about their own teaching motivation and to keep track of its dynamics, not to analyze it precisely in a quantitative manner. They were also asked to write down the specific motivational and demotivational factors affecting them. Later, each participant drew a line graph of their motivational change in relation to the number they initially reported, as in Song and Kim (2016).

We designed the languaging part based on the languaging activity in Kim's (2019) research, which proved the effectiveness of opinion writing after watching and reading exemplary Koreans who speak fluent English. Here, a researcher would ask participants to watch video clips from *Best English Teacher*, which includes a selection of exemplary English lessons by renowned professional teachers. We chose this series of videos to give participants examples of an ideal teacher self, who can manage lessons very well, teaching students in innovative and effective ways. The program was produced by the Educational Broadcasting System (EBS), the national TV station specializing in educational content. Among the 52 available videos, we picked up the ones until the fifth languaging session, so that novice teachers could watch lessons from a range of different teachers. At the last (sixth) session, participants picked one video in which they showed interest. As shown in Figure 2, they could access the *Best English Teacher* website and watch video clips of lessons being given by other teachers.



sed on Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory method: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. During the iterative reading, information reported by each participant was categorized (open coding) and then reclassified with the categorized information (axial coding). Finally, we set a hierarchy of the classified information and selected keywords relevant to AT and motivation (selective coding). For example, in Jihan's interview data, he often stated that he endeavored to provide his students with purposeful activities so that they could feel motivated to become involved and use English in class. He also mentioned he hoped that his students could use English in his class. In the open coding stage, these examples were coded as "stimulating students," "motivating students" and "students' participation." Then, these subcategories were coded as "student-centered lesson" in the axial coding stage. Finally, "student-centered lesson" was categorized as "object" in his activity system of English teaching. Data were coded several times by two different researchers, and differences in coding were resolved through discussion.

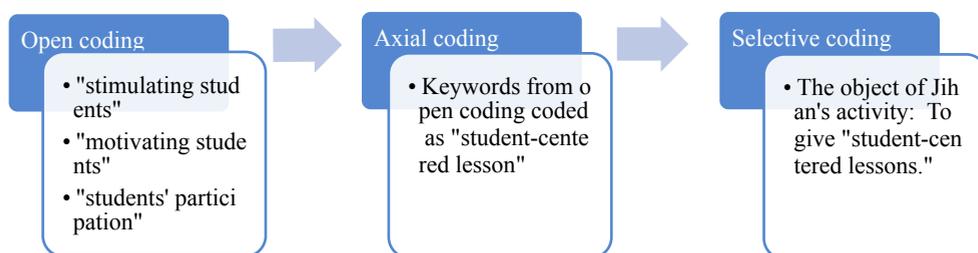


Figure 3. The coding stages of the analysis

#### 4. FINDINGS

The teaching motivation dynamics of the three novice English instructors are presented in Figure 4. The graphs were drawn based on the number reported by each participant, on a scale of -5 to +5.

Eunbi and Jihan commented that they felt generally motivated; their graphs were stable between "3" and "4." Conversely, Mijin tended to consistently report that she felt demotivated. Mijin's motivation graph appeared to be drawn relatively lower than the other graphs, falling back to zero during the second and third and returning to "2" later. The graphs were checked by the participants after they were drawn. These dynamic motivational changes are illustrated with close reference to the AT framework in the following sections.

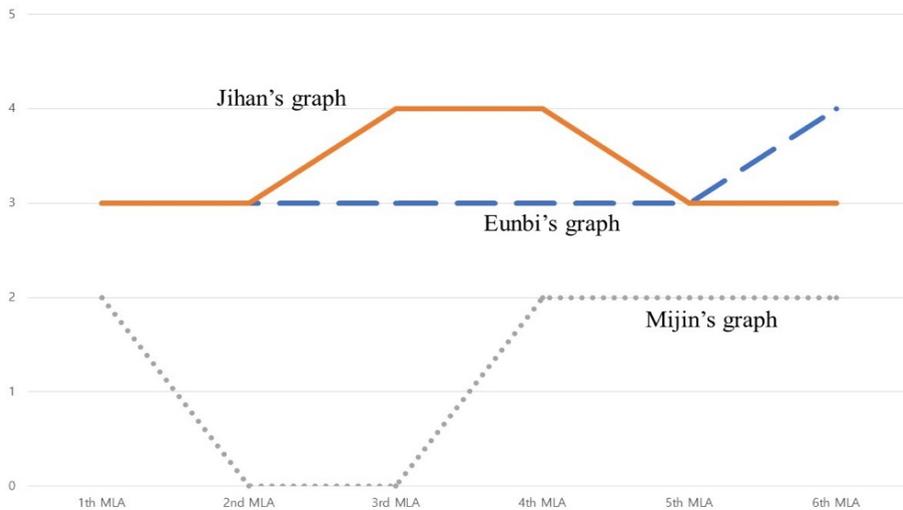


Figure 4. Motivational change of three novice English teachers

#### 4.1. Eunbi's case

Eunbi, as a subject of her system, was very content about the fact that she was working as an English teacher. She had always wanted to be one since she was a child. Because one of her family members was a teacher, she had a role model, and she thought that teaching would be a fulfilling vocation. When she was asked about motivational factors in the fourth set of MLAs, she answered that she was proud of her work, even though she was not yet a full-time teacher.

Eunbi's current object in her activity system was to be an English teacher who could help her students think that English is easy and fun, because she reported that her students were neither motivated nor good at studying English. She was working in a vocational school, and the jobs that her students would like to have later did not necessarily require them to be proficient in English. In fact, she reported that she spent most of her time taking care of tardiness, absence, or misbehavior in her homeroom class. It was observed frequently in her MLAs that she was focusing on adjusting her lessons to her students' low level of English proficiency.

Excerpt 1 [In every MLAs]

Question: What kind of suggestions could you make for the teacher in the video to improve?

Eunbi: I think it would be better if she considers the low-level students.

However, during the MLAs, Eunbi appeared to have a different object. She repeatedly mentioned through the six MLAs that she admired a particular teacher who was professional and charismatic, and she would like to become a teacher like her. On the third MLA, she

said that in 10 years she could see herself as a great English teacher who would be professional and own many useful teaching resources. For the sixth activity, she wrote that she felt envious of the teachers in the *Best English Teacher* video and that it was helpful for her to observe their lessons in order to learn various kinds of activities and teaching skills.

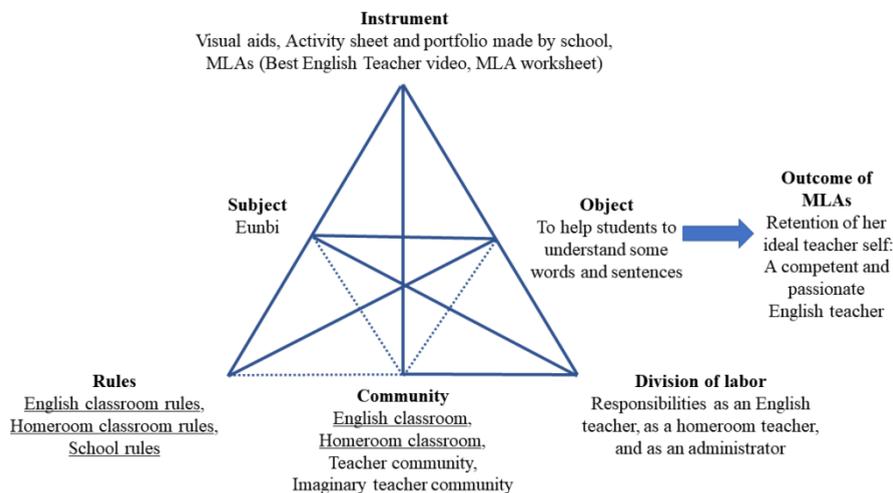


Figure 5. Complex model of an activity system of Eunbi after MLAs.

In Figure 5, the conflicts caused by Eunbi’s students are presented as dotted lines in her activity system. The elements that caused the conflicts are underlined. Eunbi’s students, part of the community in her system, were in conflict with her, the school rules, and her original object. The students’ misbehavior was also mentioned as a demotivating factor for her. As a result, the change to the current object of her activity system reflected that she could not help adjusting her object for the community.

After the MLAs, Eunbi could perceive the gap between the object adjusted for reality—an aid to memorize some English words—and the original object—her ideal self as a professional English teacher—as the latter was objectified by her participation in the MLAs. She wrote during the sixth activity that she felt at a loss whenever she had to answer how she could apply the things she saw in the video to her class. Although the reality she had to face was not optimal for her to pursue her original object, she still reported that the series of MLAs was helpful because it gave her a chance to learn about teaching.

Excerpt 2 [From the sixth MLA (May 4, 2019)]

Question: Which part of the activity did you like the most?

Eunbi: I realized that there were many different types of fun and useful activities. I felt envious because those teachers from the videos were so great.... I cannot really do class observation here, but I still think that is how you learn.... It was helpful that I could watch the lessons of other great English teachers and think about how I could apply [them] to my class.

While the settled object of MLAs in general or from the perspective of researchers is to facilitate teaching motivation, the unique outcome of Eunbi's MLAs turned out to be a retention of her ideal teacher self. Watching videos of senior teachers and reflecting on herself helped her remember what she has wanted to be and reimagine what she could become later in her career. This would help her tolerate a situation that might have been demotivating. In this way, the MLAs functioned as a mediational tool to motivate a novice like Eunbi by reminding her of the future goal she should push herself to attain. The results of the MLAs are italicized in Figure 5.

As seen in Figure 5, we added an imaginary teacher group to the community elements based on what Eunbi reported. According to Kim (2010), motivation can arise when the integration of motive, goal, and participation occurs. Imaginary involvement happened in Eunbi's case: by watching the *Best English Teacher* video, she could observe the lessons of skillful teachers and engage in an imaginary teacher group created online thereby. Therefore, as shown in Figure 5, the MLAs appeared to enhance Eunbi's motivation by allowing the retrieval of her original object, which was mediated by imaginary participation.

#### 4.2. Jihan's case

Jihan seemed to be satisfied with his job as an English teacher. When he was asked about his initial career motives, he said he liked the liveliness of school whenever the students studied or played. He also thought teaching was attractive because what he studied at university was directly connected to teaching English.

Jihan's object was to become a skillful English teacher who would design student-centered English lessons. During the interview, he reported that he would encourage students to ask questions and engage in many of the activities he prepared. He also said he wanted to motivate demotivated students who were not confident about studying English. This could be observed in the MLAs that he was focusing on, referring to the motivational factors in the *Best English Teacher* videos.

Jihan's activity did not reflect tension between him and the contextual factors. He was not assigned to a homeroom class or to any administrative work, because he was a substitute teacher. He reported that he was satisfied because he could focus solely on teaching. Additionally, he said that his fellow teachers treated him fairly and his students gave him a lot of attention.

However, there were tensions between the subject and the instrument; one was between him and his teacher self-belief, due to his position as substitute teacher. He was not confident about his teaching ability. Since he was studying for the national teacher qualification exam to become a full-time teacher, he was trying hard to balance preparing for his exam and preparing his lessons.

Excerpt 3 [From the fifth complementary interview (May 23, 2019)]

Jihan: Since I study and work at the same time, I feel pressurized about not focusing on studying. I sometimes feel anxious about my position because I am not a full-time teacher, even though other teachers treated me fairly.

The other tension was between Jihan as the subject and his textbook as the instrument. In Figure 6, the tension between Jihan and his textbook is presented as a lightning-shaped

arrow in his activity system. He thought that the textbook he used was too boring to prepare interesting English lessons that would motivate his students. This tension appeared because he was eager to try something different, but he lacked ideas and experience, so he had to passively follow his textbook. Two elements (i.e., textbooks, lack of confidence in teaching English) and that caused the tensions were underlined.

While working with the MLAs, Jihan said that he was able to learn many things about the lessons and teaching skills. During the sixth activity, he reported that he gained some insight into teaching skills for the design of lesson objectives and various types of student-centered activities. By participating in the MLAs, the tension between Jihan and his textbook was alleviated. He became able to utilize his textbook in a meaningful way even though the book itself was not interesting, since he learned various types of activities from the videos.

Excerpt 4 [The sixth MLA (May 26, 2019)]

Jihan: I could learn so much about what a good lesson should be like.... Because this is the first year of my teaching, it was difficult for me to set a goal or directions for my class. I also could learn various types of activities.... I could have some time to reflect on how I would improve my class.

Thus, after a series of MLAs, Jihan was able to gain some confidence in his teaching skills, as shown in Figure 6. To a novice teacher like Jihan, the MLAs mediated the improvement of his teaching skills, which helped to relieve the tensions between him and the instrument, and it was shown that Jihan had his own unique outcome as a result of these activities.

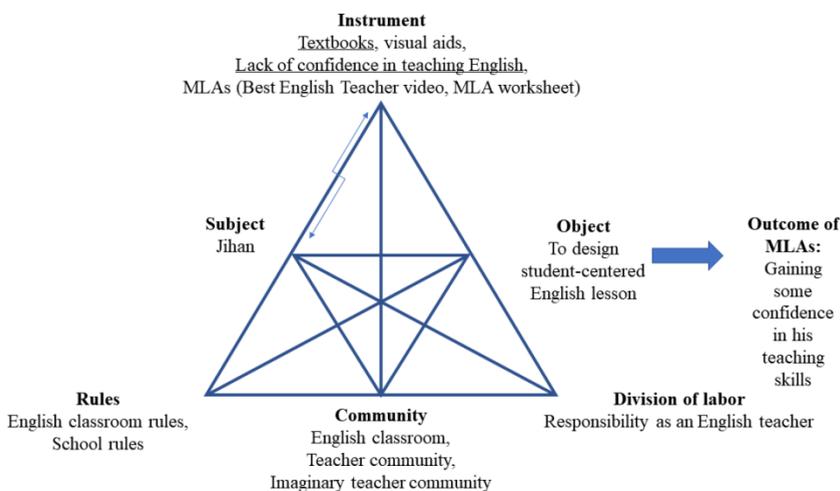


Figure 6. Complex model of an activity system of Jihan after MLAs

4.3. Mijin’s case

Mijin was more demotivated than other participants in the study. When Mijin was asked about her initial career motives, she answered that she had never thought about becoming a teacher before she had to choose her university major. She thought that teaching had great job security and less of a workload compared to other jobs. She mentioned that she was content with her current work environment where overtime work was not necessary.

Mijin reported that the object of her teaching activity was to become a teacher who could make output-based English lessons where students could use and practice English. However, she appeared to have conflicts with her students, as the community in her activity system. She often mentioned students who interrupted her lessons as a demotivational factor. Figure 7 shows the conflicts that her students had with Mijin, the classroom rules, and her object.

Excerpt 5 [From the second complementary interview (May 21, 2019)]

Mijin: I failed to make them respect me and listen to me.... I wished I did not have to teach them this year again. I hope that I would manage to make a better impression on the new students next year.

Another conflict in Mijin’s activity system concerned division of labor. She reported that “tedious administrative work” and “various incidents caused by her students” were demotivating factors. She said that before she became a teacher, she never really thought of teachers’ responsibilities as administrative workers, or about the role of homeroom teachers whose duty is to guide and supervise their students. A similar result was shown in Kumazawa (2013): novice teachers experienced demotivation when they felt the gap between their ideal teacher-self and reality.

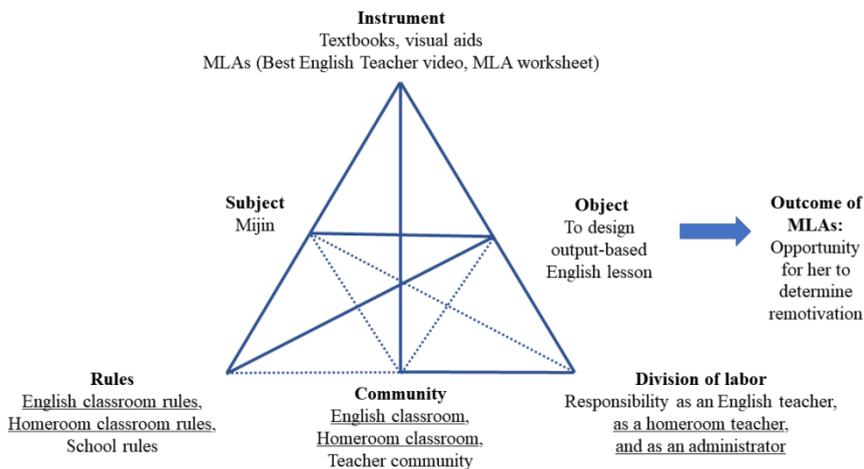


Figure 7. Complex model of Mijin’s activity system after MLAs

While she was going through the MLAs, however, Mijin realized that it was not desirable to stay demotivated. She stated that she felt even more demotivated when she compared herself to other teachers, saying that they loved their jobs and their students. She was afraid that she might not deserve to become a teacher.

To a demotivated teacher like Mijin, the MLAs provided a chance to reflect on her teaching life and contemplate what she could do to motivate herself again. When she was asked which part of the MLAs she liked the most, she wrote that she preferred the motivation part to the languaging part. In the motivation part, she had to report the motivational and demotivational factors in her teaching environment. These factors included “good relationship with colleagues” and “students who show some interest in English.” By writing these answers in the MLAs, Mijin could start to reflect on those positive factors rather than just being overwhelmed by the demotivational ones.

Excerpt 6 [The sixth MLA (June 9, 2019)]

Question. Which part of the activity did you like the most?

Mijin: It was helpful to watch some great lessons, but I felt skeptical because they looked unrealistic to me. I personally preferred the part that I report about motivation because I could check and diagnose how I feel about my life as a teacher.... I should try to motivate myself again.

Although Eunbi and Mijin both reported that they felt the lessons from *Best English Teacher* seemed difficult for them to complete, their reactions were different. The reason why Mijin preferred the motivation part to the languaging part was that the lessons and activities on the videos seemed great, but unrealistic for her to apply to her lessons. Therefore, the imaginary teacher group was not included in the community of her activity system model, as presented in Figure 7.

Mijin’s outcome from the MLAs was different from that of other participants: the externalization of her thoughts and the determination to motivate herself. As in van Compernelle and Kinginger’s (2019) explanation of languaging as explored by Swain et al. (2009), Mijin could objectify her thoughts about her present motivational status and reshape her thoughts about teaching activity. The MLAs gave her an opportunity to commit to motivating herself again by inducing her to put efforts toward self-reflection as part of her labor. Even though these activities could not solve the conflicts caused by her students, they still mediated positive changes in Mijin’s mind to help her exert her own agency.

For all the three teachers, it would be difficult to argue that the MLAs had the potential to solve tensions or conflicts caused by contextual factors in the activity systems. However, the results were positive in general, in that the teachers had a chance to objectify their level of motivation and (de)motivational factors by participating in the MLAs. As a result, they became aware of the contextual elements that consisted within their respective activity systems as English teachers. Therefore, MLAs could facilitate novice teachers to be more aware of their tensions or conflicts so that eventually they could try to alleviate them or motivate themselves again.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1. The relationship between MLAs and novice teachers' L2 teaching motivation

One of the main findings of this study is that the outcomes of MLAs appear to be positive in general but their outcomes for each teacher are unique. As Coughlan and Duff (1994) argued, a task is never accepted as the same by two different individuals; everyone creates their own unique experience with the task. In this study, it was shown that MLAs could shed light on a teacher's original object vis-à-vis their teaching activity. They could also enhance confidence by providing a chance to learn from an excellent role model. For instance, the MLAs reminded Eunbi of the ideal teacher-self that she had had to compromise due to contextual factors, while Jihan gained more confidence in himself as a teacher after watching the *Best English Teacher* videos introduced by the MLAs. To demotivated novice teachers like Mijin, the activities could provide the chance to reshape their thoughts about motivation. This kind of motivational transition in the minds of teachers may not be adequately captured by quantitative methods (Sivan, 1986; Ushioda, 2003). For this reason, by adopting AT perspectives, motivational change in teaching can be appropriately investigated.

### 5.2. Novice teachers' AT system and MLAs

Considering a community as a contextual factor in one's activity system, MLAs show the potential to encourage teachers to participate in an imaginary group of teachers, with corresponding motivational effects. Eunbi and Jihan reported that they benefited from the MLAs by observing other expert teachers' model lessons, from which they learned various types of useful activities for English class, leading in turn to positive changes in their motivation. As addressed in previous studies (e.g., Markova, 1990), it is critical for someone to participate either physically or imaginarily in order to develop and maintain their motivation. Encouraging novice teachers to utilize online resources and websites of other teachers, for example, could help their teaching motivation by instilling a sense of belonging.

This aspect of the relationship between novice teachers and teacher communities can be understood by referring to the concepts of legitimate peripheral participation and full participation. As Lave and Wenger (1991) argued, newcomers will be lacking skills and will remain peripheral in community activity; the novice teachers in this study showed that they considered themselves peripheral participants who need to learn more from senior teachers or who should become better at dealing with students. MLAs for novice teachers could potentially mediate an "apprenticeship" as a teacher, while websites and online communities introduced by MLAs could mediate their imaginary participation by providing them with videos of senior teachers to observe (Wenger, 1998). In this way, MLAs could enhance novice teachers' L2 teaching motivation, providing a crucial mediational tool for them to ponder upon and to foster participate in the imaginary teacher community. This procedure encouraged novice English teachers to move forward to full participation.

However, it was shown that the occurrence of imaginary participation depended on each teacher's agency. A person's agency is closely linked to the significance that is placed on relevant things, events, or one's unique history (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). In other words, initial career motives, involving each teacher's own history and how they have become a

teacher, would influence the novice teacher's unique exertion of agency. In this study, Eunbi and Mijin were in similar contexts where they experienced conflicts with their students. Even though it was hard for them to apply what they had learned from the *Best English Teacher* videos, Eunbi seemed to participate in the imaginary teachers' community due to being inspired by their lessons, whereas Mijin abstained.

The fundamental difference between these two teachers was their initial career motives. Eunbi's initial career motives were internal ones, such as pride in being a teacher. Therefore, Eunbi exerted agency to participate in the imaginary teacher community during the MLAs; in that way, she could get closer to the ideal teacher-self of her initial career motives. However, because Mijin's initial career motives were more related to external motives such as job security, her agency was exerted differently, resulting in a paucity of imaginary participation. As Zhang (2014) argued, motivational changes will vary depending on teachers' exertion of agency, although their external teaching contexts might seem similar. This argument can also be applied to the occurrence of imaginary participation, which also has the potential to boost motivation (Wenger, 1998).

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The present study examined interactions in MLAs for three novice English teachers at secondary schools in Korea and revealed how MLAs' teaching motivation was influenced, using a Vygotskian AT framework. The results showed that MLAs could enhance teaching motivation, but the way MLAs interacted with the respective participants presented drastic differences. The results of MLAs could serve as a reminder of the prototypical, ideal teacher-self and/or boost one's self-confidence as a teacher. By participating in MLAs, teachers could externalize and reshape their thoughts about their motivation. Finally, participation in an imaginary teacher community could have a positive influence on L2 teacher motivation.

Although it is difficult to generalize the results of this case study, it has also been highlighted in other research that to maintain L2 teaching motivation, it is necessary for a novice teacher to belong to teacher learning communities and to be engaged in reflection and discussion on teaching improvement (Kim, 2020). By doing that, novice teachers can avoid demotivation caused by their lack of experience in teaching and guiding students. Thus, this study reemphasizes the importance of novice teachers' in-service training through participation in a teacher community to foster L2 teaching motivation; MLAs can mediate engagement in an imaginary teacher community, enhancing the level of teaching motivation.

However, participation in a teacher community might or might not occur, depending on a teacher's exertion of professional agency. In this study, Mijin did not show active participation. Novice teachers like her who are already demotivated might feel more pressure comparing themselves to expert teachers from the videos. Therefore, in further studies and applications of MLAs, stories of expert teachers who overcame demotivation in the past could be added to see if they help demotivated novice teachers to engage better in imaginary teacher communities.

(Word Count: 6,911 words without abstracts and appendix)

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## 8. APPENDIX

*Table 1. List of Interview Questions*

SUBJECT	1. Please explain about your initial career motives.
INSTRUMENTS	2. Which language do you use to teach English?
	3. Which methods do you think is the best?
OBJECT	4. What is your lesson objective? What do you want to teach to your students?
	5. What was the best moment where you felt fulfilled as a teacher?
RULES	6. What are the rules you should follow as a teacher in English class?
	7. What are the rules your students should follow in English class?
COMMUNITY	8. How is your relationship with your colleague teachers?
	9. How is your relationship with your students?
DIVISION OF LABOR	10. Have you ever felt stressed out because of too much workload such as administrative work?