

Three Teachers' Initial Efforts to Use Twitter for Teaching English in Public Schools

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Twitter is perhaps the most widely recognized social network services (SNSs) worldwide. This study attends to the value of Twitter from the EFL pedagogical perspective. The purpose of this study is to investigate how three Korean English teachers in an elementary, middle, and high school used Twitter for three weeks with their students. The qualitative case study yielded findings particularly with regard to the teachers' use of patterns, interaction with students, and perceptions on using Twitter for instruction by analyzing the teachers' tweets, interviews, and their students' postings. The teachers employed microblogging differently depending on their students' ages, computer experience, their L2 belief, and perceptions concerning the use of technology in the classroom. Interaction patterns with their students also were noticeably different when using Twitter. However, the three teachers agreed that Twitter enables good writing practice for students of any age and provides a great opportunity for them to use English for authentic purposes spontaneously.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The term, Social Network Services (SNSs) was introduced only a few years ago in Korea, but is no longer considered a new term to the majority of Korean people. Unlike other made-in-korea Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) tools, SNSs such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *My Space*¹⁾ are considered 'foreign and uncomfortable' by many to use in a domestic context. Nevertheless, Koreans are keenly interested in pop culture and associated technology and make concerted efforts to minimize a 'digital divide.' Some even warn there is certainly the potential for disaster in SNSs (Young, 2010) or criticize them for "needless sharing" (Ovadia, 2009, p. 202). However, SNSs, like other CMC tools, can provide a good opportunity for L2 learners to connect easily and mingle with other in the target language discourse community. In that sense, SNSs constitute an important research area for L2 educators interested in language learning from a socio-cultural perspective.

Twitter is a recently-recognized microblogging service world wide that allows users to post and read 140 character-messages, called *Tweets*. These short information packets can be anything from what someone bought yesterday to feedback on a president election. This compressed and quick communication medium intrigues people, and it soon will become the world biggest SNS. What also gets people involved in Twitter is easy access in many different channels through the homepage, other web 2.0 systems, smart phones, or wireless mp3 players and so on. Furthermore, many famous people utilize Twitter for advertising, disseminating news, or leading public opinion, enabling others follow and share their lives and thoughts.

It is, thus, worthwhile to review the value of Twitter also from the EFL pedagogical viewpoint. In particular, since it is teachers who decide whether to use Twitter as an instructional tool, it will be the first step to examine how teachers perceive it, including whether to embed microblogging into students' language practice or in the school curriculum. If teachers' belief is negative or conflicting with the pedagogical nature of technology, it cannot be effectively utilized into language learning regardless of its values (Chen, 2008; Honey & Moeller, 1990).

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to investigate how Twitter can be used in the classroom for instructional purposes. This research views three Korean English teachers in an elementary, middle, and high school teachers who attempted to use Twitter with their students for three weeks. It is a qualitative case study that focuses on the

1) SNS address <http://www.facebook.com>, <http://twitter.com>, <http://www.myspace.com>

teachers' use patterns, interaction with students, and perceptions of using Twitter as an instructional tool in diverse Korean school contexts. In the process, this study seeks answers to the following questions:

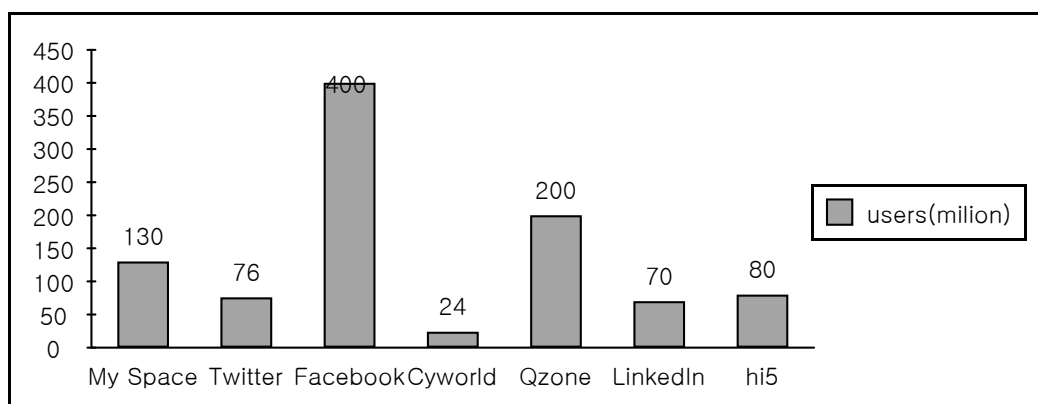
- How did the three English teachers use Twitter for their instruction?
- How did they interact with their students when using Twitter?
- After three-week's use, how do they perceive Twitter as an instructional tool?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Social Networking Service (SNS)

Social Networking Service (SNS) is globally recognized web-based service to express oneself and to socially interact with people. boyd and Ellison (2007) define the key functions of SNS as follows. They “allow individuals to 1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, 2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and 3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (p. 211). The main features of SNS are posts, profiles, links to other profiles, photo or movie file unloading, RSS (Really Simple Syndication), and comments (or replies). What distinguishes SNSs from other existing online communities is that they allow users to make their social networks visible for new networking and to leave a short log or comment (called microblogging) for casual relationship. Many studies highlight the growing evidence that SNS plays a vital role in generating social capital (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008) and maintaining friendships (Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008).

The global distribution of SNS is so rapid that Facebook has 400 million users as of February, 2010, and China reached 124 million users of online social networks by the end of 2009. Table 1 shows a list of widely used SNSs in the world. Since these sites were launched after 2004 or later, their growth is phenomenal. In particular, since the majority of Facebook users are youngsters, comprising, for example, over 90% of undergraduates in the U. S, it is not surprising that one strand of recent research has focused on the outcomes of Facebook use from educational perspective (Hargittai, 2007; Hewitt & Forte, 2006; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008).



[Figure 1] User Statistics of Social Networking Service in the World (Wikipedia, May, 2010)

Many studies view the value of SNS from pedagogical perspectives. First of all, a SNS is a good communication practice tool available both in synchronous and asynchronous modes among students, between teachers and students, and also between school and parents (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Butler 2010; Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Mishra & Koehler, 2009). Second, Greenhow and Robelia (2009) indicate that SNS may provide contexts for learning to supplement school-based experiences. They used the SNS, *My Space*, with high school students from low income families in the USA and revealed that SNS used outside of school helped students to formulate their identity and demonstrate 21st century skills (ISTE 2008) such as *digital citizenship*. Mishra and Koehler (2009) offer examples of using Twitter 1) to complement face-to-face discussion in a classroom, and 2) to send school news to parents.

Ryberg and Christiansen (2008) also examines types of learning gained from engaging social networking sites. They chose the Danish social networking site (Mingler.dk) for peer-to-peer learning and development. They analyzed leaning development in SNS by using Wenger's concept (2007), *Community of Practice* (COP), and Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD. Community of practice are "group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly." (Wenger, 2007 online). This study shows how community members develop learning with each other in the SNS, and also indicates how they draw from other sites and in turn produce resources for other communities. His analysis concludes that learning in the SNS was accelerated in collaboration with other peers.

Some other researchers view activities of SNSs as writing of the self and self-authorship. McBride (2009) refers to the idea of performing identities and boyd (2007)'s "write themselves into being" and holds that the basic features of SNS including

easy communication, exchanging rapid reactions, observing others' information and updates, enable young age groups to experiment with their identities. Particularly, L2 learners develop new identities in the target discourse community. In this context, the learners take an active role in their learning by creating their own materials and interacting (McBride, 2009).

2. Twitter and Language Learning

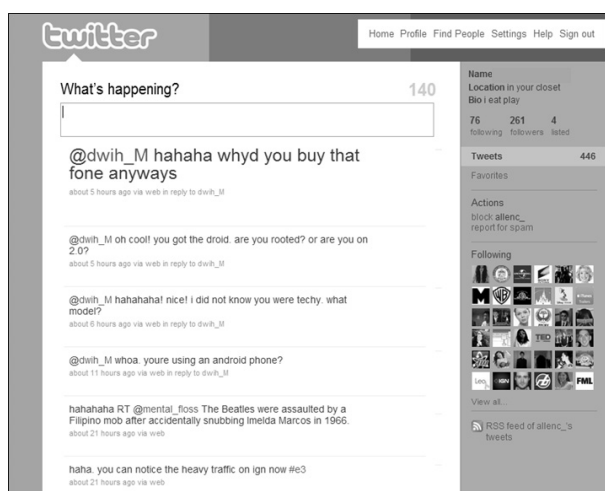
Microblogging is a shorter version of blogging. A microblog differs from a general blog in that there is a character limit, mostly 140, and its content is just a short sentence fragment, an image or an embedded video. One of the most commonly recognized microblogging services is Twitter. Users post tweets (text-based messages) that are read by community members (followers). Tweets are mostly personal information to share with friends and family, but they are sometimes used to distribute powerful messages or substantial information to non-specific people. Unlike other web 2.0 technology, Twitter contains limited simple functions, such as 'replies'(reacting to a specific tweet), 'retweets' (sharing a received tweet to all the followers), 'direct messages' (sending a message to a specific member), 'favorites' (bookmarking), and 'search' (finding information with a keyword). There are no widgets, no font types or color, no html, but only automatic URL links.

The nature of microblogging has been recently reviewed in many facets of L1 and L2 pedagogy. First of all, Twitter provides a favorable environment to increase L2 learners' authentic input and output, and to have them actively negotiate meaning (Antenos-Conforti, 2009). She attempted to use Twitter with 22 university students in Italian classes and discussed that microblogging via Twitter transformed social networking into education networking. Students who actively used Twitter showed improved confidence in communicating in Italian and an informal meaning-negotiation skill.

Second, Twitter can be viewed as an appropriate writing, editing and revising tool for younger students (Kurts, 2009). After employing Twitter into his writing classes²⁾ for first and second grade students of elementary school, he concludes that the character limit feature provides a powerful way to teach word choice, ideas, and punctuation. Antenos-Conforti (2009) also reports that Twitter enhances university students' writing accuracy in terms of grammar and vocabulary.

Third, Twitter can be a helpful language research tool (Mishra and Koehler, 2009; Ovadia, 2009). Mishra and Koehler (2009) also show that SNSs such as Twitter provides

2) Room 302 Twitter <http://twitter.com/room302>



[Figure 2] Personal Twitter Page Layout

a good content of target phrases that can be found in specialized search engines.³⁾ Ovadia (2009) explains that most of the search tools are historical by nature because they are searching older information that took some time to assemble, and even Google News does not provide a way to search results chronologically. However, Twitter's keyword search function finds messages about what is going on at any given moment, so it is more appropriate for capturing "hypercurrent information" (Ovadia, 2009, p. 202).

Alternatively, some studies report that Twitter doesn't seem to be an appropriate channel for sharing in-depth information because of the short nature of the posts (Butler, 2010). Twitter is also characterized as "a kind of needless sharing (I just bought new shoes!)" (Ovadia 2009, p. 202), "non-productive, nonacademic" (Young, 2010, p. 10). Ovadia (2009) states that Twitter is often used "as a shorthand way to represent how self-obsessed and self-involved people have become" (p. 202).

3. New Technology and Teacher Factors

Teacher factors have been considered pivotal in using technology for education, and some studies discuss teachers' roles in the 21st century classroom. Young (2010) cited a phrase, "from sage on the stage to guide on the side" to explain the changed role of teachers in the technology-enhanced classroom. As an example, he noted a university professor who are using Twitter to exchange Q & A and reported that students, even quiet students, were spontaneously outspoken and loved the opportunity to make their

3) Clusty <http://clusty.com>, Cuil <http://www.cuil.com>, Viewzi <http://viewzi.com>

voices heard. Mishra and Koehler (2006, 2009) insist that it is a teacher's role that repurposes new technologies for powerful classroom aids and integrates them into their instruction. Therefore, given an educator's professional knowledge, they suggest a Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework. According to them, "skill, competencies and knowledge specified in the TPACK framework requires teachers to go beyond their knowledge of particular disciplines, technologies and pedagogical techniques in isolation" (p. 16). Thus, expert teachers need to explore a way to orchestrate current technology, instruction and subject matter for better practice and solution in their classroom.

Early experience with technology affects teachers' beliefs. Johnson (2008) indicates that the beliefs of pre-service elementary school teachers regarding the use of technology in mathematics class were closely related to their elementary school experience, early experience with technology, and computer ability. Those teachers with positive experience and good computer ability have favorable beliefs about the technology and actively plan to use it.

Another important teacher factor was investigated by Chen (2008). Chen found there was inconsistency between a teacher's expressed belief and practice in using technology. From Chen's qualitative research with 12 Taiwanese high school teachers, Chen categorized reasons for the inconsistency: 1) the influence of external factors, 2) teachers' limited or improper theoretical understanding, and 3) teachers' other conflicting beliefs.

Honey and Moeller (1990) also examine how teachers' beliefs and values influence the successful integration of technology within the curriculum. Their semi-structured interviews with 20 teachers were conducted in elementary, middle, and high schools. The finding indicates that the teachers' educational beliefs play a crucial role in how they choose to appropriate and make use of technologies in their classroom.

III. THE STUDY

1. Participants and Their Schools

The participants in this study are three female English teachers, Miyoung Kim, Hae-Ran Park, and Sumi Lee,⁴⁾ who are students in a graduate TESOL program. They took a course offered by the researcher, "eLearning and ELT" which introduced diverse web 2.0 tools, SNSs and other CALL resources. They showed particular interest in

4) The teachers' names are all pseudonyms.

Twitter and selected it for their final group research project. The three voluntarily decided to use Twitter with their students.

1) Miyoung Kim

Miyoung Kim is currently a doctoral student and a high school English teacher. Ms. Kim has been teaching English in public schools for ten years: eight in middle schools, and two in a high school. Her school is located in a small town in Kyunggi-do. Miyoung has experimented with ideas regarding CALL for her instruction. Her M.A. thesis focused on student-centered UCC for content-based learning. This semester, she also introduced to her students a number of interesting websites and CALL software learned from her graduate course.

Ms. Kim had heard of the global popularity of Twitter from the media, so she was curious about this 'culture punch'. After using it for a couple of weeks through the graduate course, she found it appropriate for her students to practice writing because she believed the 140 character limit made it easier for them to try writing in English. She also thought it would be "just fun" for them. Miyoung initially planned to introduce Twitter-based writing as a performance assessment, but the other English teachers in her school did not agree. Accordingly, she gave it as an extracurricular activity. Miyoung visited Twitter each time she used a computer during the project.

2) Hae-Ran Park

Hae-Ran Park, new doctoral student, is a middle school English teacher in a medium-sized city in Kyunggi-do. Her students are from middle class families and study hard till late at night in hakwons (specialised institutes in Korean). She has been an English teacher in middle or high schools for 10 years. Hae-Ran expressed her feeling about computers by saying, "the computer is not my friend." She used to do Cyworld (a Korean SNS) a little bit in the past, but mainly to check current news regarding friends. Ms. Park has no experience using online communities or blogs, either with her students or for herself, although she enjoys searching for information and reading others' writings.

The CALL course was very challenging for her. As with Miyoung, what motivated her the most for her project was the 140 character limit like Miyoung. It sounded easy and light to her, and she thought her students would feel likewise. She was also convinced her students would love Twitter more than any other tools because they could follow their favorite celebrities.

3) Sumi Lee

Sumi is another doctoral student and an elementary school English teacher. She has been employed as a conversation instructor in a public school from this semester. Ms. Lee worked for elementary school students in a private institute and in after-school classes for the last three years. Her school is in a wealthy area near Seoul, and the students' English ability is considerably higher than the national curriculum standard.

Sumi is the youngest teacher and also is an early adopter of new technology. She has actively used Cyworld and Facebook for last three years and has about 70 people in her friend list. She also uses a wireless MP3 player via which she can do Twitter, but she did not have a Twitter account before taking the course. After exploring Twitter, she liked its simple and neat layout, easy networking with famous persons or celebrities, and short message posting. Accordingly, Sumi actively invited her family and friends to Twitter and suggested Twitter to the other two classmates as their team project.

2. Researcher's Participation of This Study

I was an active participant (Spradley, 1980) in this study. First, I was the instructor of the graduate course. Twitter was one of the weekly topics. I introduced Twitter and had them create a Twitter account in order to have them explore its functions. Second, I also discussed the aforementioned collaborative project with the three teachers in class. However, it was the three teachers themselves who brought up the idea of using Twitter as an extra activity, and my job was mainly to provide a feedback on their report and questions. Therefore, my interruption did not substantially influence the data of this study.

3. Twitter Activities: Final Project

As the final group project, the three teachers discussed and designed twitter tasks for their students. Basically the same tasks were introduced and used by them with their own students, in three age groups and for three weeks at their school. The planned tasks reported by them are as follows:

- Creating a Twitter account
- Writing profile information
- Following friends and famous people world wide (e.g. English-using celebrities, role models)
- Posting Public mentions and Replies

- Learning Retweet, Favorites, and Direct messages
- Uploading and describing photos

The data analysis supports that these tasks were mostly completed by the three teachers. Both the teachers and the students had no difficulties in completing the tasks.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected mainly from four sources: three teachers' tweets, teacher interviews, in-class discussion and students' twitter postings. I also reviewed some of the teachers' results from their project, such as their students' replies, twitter use patterns and interactions with the teachers for ample data triangulation.

1) Tweets

[Table 1] Basic Information of Three Teachers' Three-Week Twitter Activity

Name (Student grade)	Teachers' Total Tweets	followers (Ss)	following (Ss)	Students' Total Tweets
Miyoung Kim(11)	64	27(15)	39(15)	143
Hae-Ran Park(7)	101	30(15)	50(15)	155
Sumi Lee (5)	121	39(15)	42(15)	55

I collected all the teachers' tweets. Since the teachers and I are mutual followers of Twitter, it was easy to access their postings. I copied all the postings from the teachers and saved them individually into the document files. After three weeks tweeting with their students, teachers posted 266 tweets on their accounts. The further information regarding the teachers' twitter activities are shown in Table 1.

2) Teacher Interviews

I had interviews with the three teachers, one for each one, after the project ended in order to find out their motivations, perceptions, and twitter use patterns and so on. Each interview lasted 50–60 minutes, and most of the questions were open-ended. I have begun grand tour questions such as details of their teaching experience, their computer experience, and their students as Seidman (1991) suggests as a qualitative interview strategy. Examples of interview questions were as follows:

- What attracted you to use Twitter for your students and for your final project?
- Tell me what you have done in Twitter.
- What were your initial expectations when using Twitter for your project? Were they later the same or different? How?
- What strengths and weaknesses have you found in Twitter or from integrating Twitter into your class?
- Do you want to continue tweeting with your students? If so, in what way?

These interviews were all recorded and transcribed in Korean, and the transcripts were saved in separate teacher files. They were later translated into English for citation.

3) Informal Consultation and Students' Tweets

The three teachers and I held informal discussions in class (three sessions, each 10–15 minutes in length) about their projects during the last few weeks of the semester. Most discussion focused on how the project went and how tasks should be designed (twitter activities with their students). I took a brief note of our discussion during or after the class, and later I typed them and digitalized the data.

There are also data from the individual students' Twitters (See Table I). Fifteen students from each age group participated in this project. Students' postings were mostly quantitatively reviewed in order to examine how the three teachers interacted with their students when using Twitter.

4) Data Analysis

First, the researcher repeatedly reviewed all the logged and coded data from the three teachers, including multiple readings of the teacher's tweets and interview transcripts. This process later generated and modified research questions within an analytical framework containing three major components: 1) Twitter use, 2) reaction to students' tweets, 3) perceptions or beliefs. Each category contained smaller themes that emerged from the data coding, e.g. 'effective methods', 'envisioning future classrooms', 'barriers to continued use', 'integrating Twitter into the curriculum' and 'agreed vs. disagreed' (within the 'perception' category). The three teacher data were analyzed using the framework consisting of more than three thinking units (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz et al, 1991) in each category. Data were always triangulated with those from the different sources.

IV. FINDINGS

1. Three Teachers' Twitter Activities

The three teachers successfully completed their Twitter project. They recruited volunteers from their own classes with no difficulty simply by showing the website for 5–10 minutes in class and asking students if they ever wanted to do Twitter with them. Only Sumi Lee, elementary school teachers created an advertising UCC to attract her students. The three also reported that they encountered no technical difficulty having the students use Twitter and completing their planned tasks over three weeks after short workshops with the participants.

The three actively encouraged their students to use Twitter in many ways, and quickly responded to students' postings and questions. They visited the website everyday more than once when they came across inactive students at school, both. Sumi Lee and Miyoung Kim sometimes asked them why they did not visit the Twitter.

Most of her students posted at least one tweet a week. Not surprisingly, Miyoung's high school group whose English was considered better, was the most active. All students posted at least one tweet, and seven actively tweeted and wrote over 10 tweets. The most active student posted 27 tweets. Hae-Ran's middle school students showed remarkably different participation rates; one student posted 101 tweets for three weeks, while nine students left less than five tweets. Seven in Sumi's elementary class posted at least one tweet a week while the most active posted 11.

Data analysis also indicates that there were some different tweeting patterns among the teachers. First, the number of the tweets varied widely. Sumi Lee posted almost double (121) postings over Miyoung Kim (64). Ms. Lee replied 93 times, but Ms. Kim replied only 40. Further analysis shows that Ms. Lee visited Twitter at least 5–10 times daily and even sendt tweets on her bed using a wireless mp3 player. She said, "...but in Twitter, I can see only what I want to see (unlike Facebook), only the information and people whom I am interested in. So I do Twitter more."⁵⁾

Second, some teachers initiated topics to lead the conversation while others just reacted to students' postings. As shown in Table 1, Ms. Lee initiated topics 30 times by sending tweets (publics) to followers. Alternatively, for Ms. Park, 93 postings out of 101 tweets were replies. While both teachers actively tweeted, the way they acted in Twitter were quite different. As Hae-Ran commented, "I did not tweet much. I was too busy to reply to

5) The interview quotes were directly translated from Korean to English, so some discourse may not sound a natural English.

students' tweets." That is, some teachers actively led the followers and played a writer's role, while others remained as observers and information receivers.

Third, some teachers enjoyed microblogging for more private purposes, but others seemed to view Twitter more for school business. Sumi Lee reported that she tries to have their friends and family join and do Twitter together and had 39 followers during the project week. Ms. Lee often tweeted with other followers for her personal business in Korean, more than the other two teachers. Hae-Ran did not tweet for social networking at once, while Miyoung couldn't do Twitter during the first week due to the accident and rarely used Twitter for other business, other than the project.

In conclusion, Sumi Lee, the most active SNS user, quickly understood the value of Twitter, e.g. easy and effective social networking, so used it more actively for many purposes. Although they were exposed to Twitter for the same period in order to perform their project together, their tweeting behaviors were noticeably different. In effect they used Twitter differently in the given context based on their previous computer experience, use behavior, attitude toward SNS.

[Table 2] The Statistical Detail of the Three Teachers' Twitter Use Pattern

Name	Teacher Tweet Total	PM	Replies	RT	follower s(Ss)	followin g(Ss)	Student Tweet Total	Most Active follower's tweets
Miyoung Kim	64	19	40	5	27(15)	39(15)	143	27
Hae-Ran Park	101	6	93	2	30(15)	50(15)	155	101
Sumi Lee	121	30	87	4	39(15)	42(15)	55	11

* PM-- public mentions * RT-- retweets

2. The Three Teachers' Interactions with Students

All three teachers tried to interact with their students as much as possible. They quickly reacted to student postings, they encouraged students' to tweet in their own ways, and they were attentive and responsive even to small trials. They usually gave compliments, "You can say that again!! :)" and asked additional questions to continue the conversation, e.g. "Good boy! Where did you do volunteer work? Tell me more what you did there~~~~~* " However, the analysis of the data also shows different interaction patterns by the teachers, which in turn might influence their students' participation patterns and ways of viewing Twitter. In effect they each interacted with the students in an individual

manner.

1) Miyoung Kim's Interaction Style: "Club Members Only"

Miyoung is a topic initiator and open sharer in Twitter. She talked freely about herself, her feelings and opinions. Thirth percent of her postings were public mentions which is the greatest PM rate among the teachers. Data analysis reveals that her topics comprise three categories. First of all, she tweeted about her private life, for example,

- Last night, I threw my exhausted body onto the bed n finally watched "Dream Girls", which was released loooong time ago. Beyonce is amazing!
- Yesterday was my birthday. went to school, had bibimbap with prof.OOO and classmates, had small dinner with family....and was sick in bed..

[from Miyoung's Twitter]⁶⁾

These kinds of topics are not normally shared in class, especially, in an EFL class. Miyoung also uploaded her son's Halloween photo, not open to non-Twitter members. As Miyoung said in her interview, "...so I said, 'Oh, we're talking about Twitter', then other students looked envious, felt alienated, there were some students who even said, 'can I join it now?' and actively jumped in." She kept advertising Twitter and her Twitter club to students in class and noticed that her club members felt proud doing Twitter.

Second, she often tried to show commonality between herself and the students by empathizing with her followers. She reacted to or agreed upon her students' posting by giving her own similar example:

- @ Wow, I didn't know you're into Eminem. Long time ago ;) , I was interested in him when he starred in 8mile.
- What a genius guy!! I admire Steve Jobs ;)

[From Miyoung's Twitter]

Some of her students sent direct messages to her to ask whether her English writing was correct. She exchanged messages with them, sometimes in addition to public Twitter postings.

To sum up, Miyoung seems to have opened herself to her students so they could feel closer to her not as a classroom English teacher, but as a twitter buddy. This strategy

6) All the quotes from the teachers' Twitter were all written in English and were not edited by the researcher.

seemed successful to some degree, as her students tweeted more freely and enjoyed something in common among only club members. Miyoung built a social network with her club members in order to share personal matters.

2) Hae-Ran Park's Interaction Style: "Virtual Language Class"

Hae-Ran played a role as an English tutor and a learning advisor, and utilized Twitter as part of her lesson. She first had her students attend to form (both their own language and others), becoming aware of tweets as sample data to study, and finally becoming active L2 learners by using Twitter.

- You wrote it as the same as the text of an English textbook. Enjoy tweets!
- Do you use the expression "eat like a horse" that you learned in your English conversation class? You're always an excellent student!
- Where did you find out this sentence? Next time, how about looking around your followers' twitters and find sentences?
- You learned a new word! Use twitter as a good tool to improve your English ability
- Next time, visit others' twitter and find out meaningful sentences!

[From Hae-Ran's Twitter]

Second, Hae-Ran also provided a negative feedback (Carroll, & Swain 1993) to her students' writing, as well as simple compliments. She asked her students for clarification of meaning.

- Did you do self-study until 12? For your final exam? These days every student look so tired!
- Do you read his tweets or only hear the news from someone or over the Internet?
- Do you mean a text message?

[From Hae-Ran's Twitter]

Sometimes, she gave direct correction on the form:

- Where did you find the story? It's not so difficult. But you didn't separate some words, so it's a little difficult to read.

From the interview it is confirmed that this type of interaction was intended by Hae-Ran at the beginning. For example:

His english in his posting was inaccurate... hard for me to understand.. I was able to understand the meaning, but I think it is not correct, so at first I copied his sentences with question marks added and corrected his errors.. but from my second thought..'wait. we're doing this for communication. Do I have to do this?'

[From interview with Hae-Ran]

Third, she usually listened and tried to continue her students' topics. For this purpose, she employed her own strategy of 'asking questions' by repeatedly asking additional questions to her students' postings.

- What kind of music do you like? Especially Korean popsongs?
- Is your brother younger than you?

[From Hae-Ran's Twitter]

As shown in Table 2, Ms. Park left only 6 public mentions out of 93, which indicates she avoided initiating topics and wanted to remain as an advisor or a listener.

3) Sumi Lee's interaction style: "Enjoy It As I Do"

Sumi was a good model and active mingler in Twitter. She actively used Twitter for social networking, and followed celebrities and sometimes replied to their PMs. She had casual conversations with friends, classmates, or family, and she used other functions such as photos, favorites, or Korean twitter. Below are what appear to be good examples of her usage.

First of all, Sumi freely expressed personal matters mostly in Korean. She showed her feelings (e.g. Ra la la, la... I feel so good today), her personal schedule (e.g. I will be free tonight.), and conversation between herself and her friend("ooo, shall we go out for delicious meal?). In other words, she provided a more authentic SNS context to her students.

Second, like Miyoung Kim, Ms. Lee enjoyed initiating topics, and 24% of her postings were public mentions. She introduced her favorite animation character when she was a child and also later explained the title song and its lyrics. She also explained what she's now doing or asked her followers what they would do over the weekend. For example:

- Guitar lesson on Thursdays.. My left fingers & arms are very tired... Think guitar is much harder than cello.. 예구구=3

- Do you have any plan for this weekend? Tell me. ^^

[From Sumi's Twitter]

Third, Sumi often called or mentioned the follower's (her students') names. She probably wanted to clarify which one she was talking to and also made her students feel relaxed and friendly with their teacher in the new English speaking environment.

3. The Three Teachers' Perception of Using Twitter

After using Twitter for three weeks, the three teachers mostly had 'positive' impressions regarding its usage as a new learning tool. They want to continue doing Twitter with their students, and Miyoung and Hae-Ran have developed a concrete plan to use Twitter with more students after the final exam. Miyoung wanted to design twitter activities for performance assessment and is planning to discuss with a colleague teacher about how to do so. Hae-Ran believes that Twitter activity fits more properly into extra curricular activities, such as club activities on Saturday, while Sumi hoped to have all her students join Twitter in the future.

The teachers found similar strengths and weaknesses when using Twitter for their instruction. However, data triangulation shows that there is some disagreement in perceiving the value of Twitter from a pedagogical perspective. Highlights of these opinions and perceptions are below.

1) Agreements

The most commonly repeated theme is that the teachers perceive Twitter to be an appropriate tool for learning English for any age group. Following the three week experimental periods, they believed that Twitter will be a promising and powerful instruction medium.

① Good for writing practice

First, the teachers agree that Twitter is a good tool for writing practice, noting it is "comfortable," and "no burden," so students can easily try it. Sumi Lee explained that Twitter is good writing practice for 5th graders because even a really short message is OK.

As I look at their posting, there are a lot of short..like, "hi~ ㅋㅋㅋ" or "bye" or good night'. But, it doesn't look too humble in Twitter.

in class.. when I asked them to write something freely, the children feel a bit burdened, and also not all the children followed me well, so it's very difficult (to write) in class. Just one sentence is OK, but they don't want to write longer than 2-3 sentences. They think it's too much.

[From Interview with Sumi]

She added that there is not much chance to practice writing since speaking is emphasized much more in elementary English classes. Miyoung Kim also mentioned that her students seemed to try freely what they wanted to say in English. "...and .. just like the way we say in Korean, for example, one student tried 'Today is tired.'"

Hae-Ran also pointed out that Twitter writing is interactive and meaningful, unlike in-class writing practice which is controlled, individual, and only form-focused. it. She reported that it was good for her writing practice too.

I myself also looked up words from a dictionary when I couldn't think of any appropriate ones. I also do not have a chance to use English. That was interesting for me... Short writing is also good for me. No pressure... at least at the beginning.

[From Interview with Hae-Ran]

② Spontaneous Use of the Target Language

Another common agreement is that Twitter provides an opportunity for students to spontaneously use the language they learned. For example, Miyoung introduced an interesting case of her student, who actively utilized Twitter when trying to use the vocabulary he memorized that day.

At first, I didn't know why he was using the words. I just thought it sounded very awkward, so I told him that you said like a character in the Shakespeare play. And he said, 'you think this sounds strange, but I am just using what I'm memorizing now.'

[From Interview with Miyoung]

Sumi Lee also gave an example of her student who tried to understand what his following celebrity posted and to reply to it by using automatic web translator. She indicated, "Anyway they spontaneously read and understand English texts and leave a message. This type of trial is meaningful, I think."

Hae-Ran observed that students wrote what they wanted to write regardless of the teacher's suggestion, which is quite different from normal writing practice in class.

... I said, 'you may write anything you want, but since we learned in the textbook, introduce yourself and write about your daily life.' But my students wrote something else they wanted to write.

[From Interview with Hae-Ran]

③ Difficult to integrate Twitter into the regular curriculum

The three teachers feel that it will not be easy to integrate Twitter activities within the regular curriculum. The most frequently emerged theme was that students are too busy to use a computer either in school or at home. Both Hae-Ran and Miyoung mentioned their students did not make time for any extra curricular activities.

...they felt sorry. There were some students saying, 'teacher, I will try my best from this vacation.' They want to do it, but there are so many things for them to do.

[Miyoung from the interview]

Another important issue was a perceived lack of understanding from colleagues and parents regarding the use of a computer for learning English. All three teachers assumed that other teachers would not like it if they suggested Twitter-based activities as a performance assessment test. For example:

Old teachers said, 'well, must be good, but will that be too complicating?' so they did not know it well, they did not understand the Twitter yet.

[Miyoung from the interview]

We test speaking performance with memorized dialogue script (in my school), so if I suggest this (Twitter), I don't think they (other English teachers) will like it. In my position... it won't work.

[Hae-Ran from the interview]

There was one student whose English was very good, so I thought he could probably do Twitter very well, but the student posted only three tweets after all. So I wondered and asked him why, and he told me that his mother did not allow him to use a computer. She thought that he was doing a computer game.

[Sumi from the interview]

For this reason, the teachers mostly agreed they need a more careful plan the next time in order to persuade other teachers and parents. In summary, although the teachers

confirmed that the strong potential of Twitter as a good writing practice tool that provide authentic use of English, they think it will not be easy to use Twitter as part of their regular lessons. This is because of 1) students' busy schedules and 2) lack of understanding by other teachers and parents.

2) Disagreements

① Integration within the curriculum

The three teachers have different opinions regarding integration of Twitter within the school curriculum. Miyoung believes that Twitter-based writing can be a good medium for performance assessment, and wants to discuss this idea with another English teacher who is also trying video conferencing. As she notes:

If they (students) do video conferencing all of sudden, they will get nervous and puzzled, but if they do Twitters, it gives time to think, and to use a dictionary, so it will be great if they use both together.

[Miyoung from the interview]

Furthermore, she thinks that textbook topics can be easily embedded with Twitter activities:

There is a chapter titled "World heritage" so I asked them to try posting or unloading images to pretend to advertise culture of our country to people in Twitter...and then asked them upload the palace where King Sejong lived.... And also there was food, so some students explained Kimchi or bulgogi..

[Miyoung from the interview]

She also contends that if teachers plan and design the activity systematically, topics in the curriculum can be effectively covered in Twitter:

...it's not a barrier... students are very sensitive to their grade, so it's killing two birds with one stone. They start for fun and get a good grade. If it goes this way, I believe it must be effective.

[Miyoung from the interview]

Miyoung thus feels that Twitter can work best when students use it as part of their achievement record. Sumi Lee also believes Twitter can be a good learning tool for

elementary school students; she thinks that every in-class writing lesson can be followed by Twitter activities as a review assignment:

In fact, I would have all the students in my school join Twitter if they permitted me, ...
I can give them an assignment everyday, If they posted, I could give them feedback
fast, I am willing to do it if my students did it...

[Sumi from the interview]

In contrary, Hae-Ran thinks Twitter would work better in extra-curricular activities. She is thinking of opening a Twitter club ('dongari') in her school. Instead of giving an mandatory assignment that influences the final grade, Twitter activities should be optional so students can spontaneously participate.

② Teacher's role

The perceived role of the teacher regarding Twitter also differs. Although they believe teachers need to encourage students' trials, the precise nature of doing so varies. Miyoung, for example, thinks teachers should provide updated information to students, having them use as much as possible. Accuracy is not important:

Once they leave many tweets...I mean instead of accuracy, I might evaluate how much they write, how much they put their effort.. as a performance assessment.... because I would like to lead them to work actively there.

In practice, Miyoung Kim would not give feedback on the student errors. She would, however, provide news and information through retweeting, uploading videos or pictures. Sumi Lee perceives that English teacher's role in Twitter is to provide appropriate practice assignments for reviews or reinforcement, and to give feedback later.

I could give them an assignment everyday. If they left postings, I would give feedback..
I could do it rapidly. If they could do it, I would be willing to do it.

Sumi seems to believe that it is more effective to provide structured tasks, preferably ones related to textbook topics. Sumi's elementary school students had a lot of errors on their tweet postings, but she did not give feedback on their form.

Hae-Ran has a slightly different perception; she wants to highlight both meaning and form on students' tweets. Although, she is aware of the importance of meaningful

communicative exchanges in Twitter, she seems to believe that teachers should also be concerned about students' errors. From the data analysis, Hae-Ran perceives the teacher's role in Twitter is to have them conscious of English sentences and form. She also believes her role to be one of teacher and active adviser.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study repeats the research questions here to discuss the findings and draw the conclusion. The first question was "How did the three English teachers use Twitter for their instruction?" it concludes that they enjoyed it, but in their own way. Their Twitter activities varied in terms of the amount, types of tweets, and ways to enjoy microblogging although all three completed the three-week project. At first, all three teachers gave their students similar instruction to access Twitter, to post tweets, and to use the basic functions, but later some teachers led the conversation more actively by initiating topics, whereas some teacher just replied with feedback to the students' postings. The showed remarkable differences in usage and degree of activeness based on their computer experience, technology use behavior, and attitude toward Twitter activity.

The next question was "How did the teachers interact with their students on Twitter?" This also varied greatly. Miyoung seems to have opened herself to her students and acted as a twitter buddy, not a teacher. In essence, she built a social network with her club members to share personal matters. Hae-Ran, however, wanted to remain as an advisor or listener and worked hard to give feedback on her students' English sentences in her virtual language class. Sumi was a good role model and active mingler in Twitter and actively used it for social networking with her family and friends as well as her students. The differences among the teachers seems to also come from teacher's beliefs, and perception of using SNS for instruction as well as the target users' age. However, their interaction type does not seem to critically influence the students' motivation at least during the first three weeks because no noticeable difference was found in students' participation pattern. However, this research has focused only on the teachers themselves, so further studies can be expected to explore the connection between teacher-student interaction pattern and students' motivation.

The last question was concerned with teacher's perceptions, "After three-week's use, how do the three English teachers perceive Twitter as an instructional tool?" In response there was agreement on its utility and applicability in an L2 class. After the project, they

perceived Twitter as a potentially effective tool 1) for writing practice and 2) to provide an opportunity to use English spontaneously for an authentic purpose. The teachers' perception of Twitter in a L2 educational environment are well supported by the literature (Antenos-Conforti, 2009; Kurtz, 2009). In addition, the three pointed out that it would not be easy to integrate it within the school curriculum, in part, due to students' busy schedules and a lack of understanding by other teachers. However, their perceptions vary regarding a teacher's role and instructional methods. Some teachers seemed to believe that the teacher should play an advisor's or instructors' role while the others think that teachers should be one of twitter buddies.

It is not easy to evaluate the perception, but since teacher's beliefs of using technology significantly influence the success of learning (Honey & Moeller, 1990; Young 2010), their perception and understanding of using new technology need to be carefully examined from the combined knowledge, such as TPACK (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) or CALL. From the findings of this study, it is concluded that teacher training is necessary before they utilize Twitter for their instruction although they know its basic functions and have positive feeling of it. As the three teachers had shown, teachers might not view a new instructional tool from the similar CALL perspective, which possibly makes their practice inconsistent or even conflicting with the L2 theories. The further research should be conducted to develop an effective teacher education program and combined knowledge about the role of SNS in L2 learning.

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154 Three Teachers' Initial Efforts to Use Twitter for Teaching English in Public Schools

qualitative case study

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