

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Two major research methods-- *questionnaire survey* and *interview*-- are adopted in the present study. It is hoped that through the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, the results from the this research will be more precise in explaining what factors senior high school English teachers may consider in selecting EFL textbooks. Furthermore, this chapter also explains subject selection and data analysis used in the present study.

3.1 Subject Selection

The subjects of the present research were senior high school English teachers in greater Taipei area (both Taipei City and Taipei County). As mentioned in Chapter One, selecting senior high school English teachers rather than junior high school English teachers as the subjects of this research was based on the following reasons.

First, senior high school English teachers were more experienced in textbook selection because they began to select their own English textbooks in 1999, two years earlier than junior high school English teachers. Second, the number of

private senior high schools was larger than that of private junior high schools in the greater Taipei area. The number of private schools should reach a certain level so that the comparison between the English teachers in public and private schools could be made. Third, senior high school students tended to have a similar English proficiency¹, a factor often influencing teachers' textbook selection.

The subjects of this research were selected according to the administrative location of schools. There are 12 administration areas in Taipei City, in which there were 49 senior high schools, containing 27 public schools and 22 private schools. The ratio of public schools to private schools was approximately one to one. According to this ratio, two schools were selected in every administration area with one public school and the other private school. As for the subjects in Taipei County, they were also selected based on the administrative location of schools. The purpose of selecting teachers in Taipei County was to examine the differences between the urban and rural schools. As a result, regardless of public and private schools, senior high schools located in the administration area of "town" (鄉、鎮) were selected.

To sum up, it was estimated that the targeted schools from both Taipei City and Taipei County reached a total of 34 schools. Furthermore, schools were

¹ Before junior high school students can be admitted to the senior high schools, they have to pass Academic Attainment Testing (基本學力測驗), which serves as a filter to place students into different schools.

divided into three types: small scale, medium scale, and large scale². The copies of the questionnaire were distributed according to the scale types, with small scale schools receiving 10 copies, medium scale receiving 15 copies, and large scale receiving 20 copies.

Besides examining teachers' considerations for textbook selection, the present study also attempted to investigate what factors *compilers* were primarily concerned about in textbook compilation, and to see if those factors were in accordance with those of teachers. Six textbook compilers were selected, representing four different publishing companies. Among the ten sets of textbooks available in the market, three of the four publishing companies being interviewed took up most of the textbook sales in greater Taipei area³, which accounted for the reason why compilers of the three publishing companies were selected. Compilers' opinions were mainly collected through interviews. The interview questions were listed in section 3.2.2.

² According to the statistics from MOE, the school scale is based on the quantity of the class in every school. Small scale schools consist of classes below 20, medium scale schools consist of 20-40 classes, and large scale schools consist of above 40 classes.

³ It is indicated from the present paper (see results of the personal background information in Chapter Four) that most teachers in greater Taipei area adopt textbooks of the three publishing companies, with 55.2% of the total 185 teachers adopting the textbook of one company, 34.9% adopting the textbook of another company, and 9.9% adopting the textbook of the other company.

3.2 Instruments

There were two instruments used in the present study: One was the questionnaire to gather quantitative data, and the other was the interview to gather qualitative data.

3.2.1 Design of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in the present study was made up of four parts: personal information, internal factors, external factors, and Others⁴.

The first part of the questionnaire was personal information, which intended to understand subjects' background such as gender, age, education, service years, frequency of in-service training, and so on. The remaining three parts, external, internal and others were the major parts of the questionnaire. The second part of the questionnaire was external factors⁵ with 15 items related to either the institutional environment, e.g. Entrance Examination, etc., or the people concerned, e.g. the textbook compiler's reputation, etc. The third part of the questionnaire dealt with internal factors with 32 items related to the content, organization, and rationale of the

⁴ This part basically contains questions related to both internal and external factors, except one question that requires teachers to think of other factors not listed in the questionnaire. Furthermore, all questions of this part are multiple-choice type instead of 5-scale type, which explains why they are put in another section.

⁵ The section of external factors is prior to that of internal factors in the questionnaire because it is more emphasized in the present study.

material. The items of this part were mainly adapted from previous models of checklists, especially from Shih's (1999) and Tseng's (2003). The last part of the questionnaire, Others, contained seven multiple-choice questions, one of which was open-ended, requiring teachers to provide reasons. There was an optional section at the end of the questionnaire requesting voluntary interviewees for more detailed data.

In order to make sure the final version of questionnaire did not contain any vague and incomprehensible items. At the same time, to enhance the validity of the questionnaire, a *pilot study* was conducted in June of 2004. The originally designed questionnaires were distributed to five senior high schools. Among them, three public schools, Ching-Mei (景美), Cheng-Kung (成功), and Sung-Shan (松山), and one private school: Tsai-Hsing (再興) were located in Taipei City; and the last public school: Chin-Shan (金山) senior high was located in Taipei County. A total of 63 completed questionnaires were collected. After a preliminary study, several items of the questionnaire were rewritten, deleted, and added⁶. (A copy of the revised questionnaire was attached in Appendix A)

⁶ The rewritten item is that “the teaching load is appropriate based on class hours and practical needs” rather than simply “the teaching load is appropriate”. The added item is to ask if there are any checklists teacher may take for reference. If yes, who offers it?

3.2.2 Design of the Interview

The *teachers* who took part in the interview were those who showed the willingness to be the interviewees as responded in their questionnaires. The questions prepared for the interview explored more detailed information on the two types of factors.

1. Name at least six factors (either internal, or external factors) that you consider most in selecting English textbooks and give your reasons.
2. What kinds of difficulties have you confronted when selecting your own textbooks?
3. If you were to become unsatisfied with a textbook in the middle of an academic year, what would you do?
4. Are you familiar with the Curriculum Guidelines for the Senior High School that underlies the rationale of the English textbook of the senior high school? Do you feel that it is the most important guiding principles for the internal factors in selecting textbooks? Why or why not?
5. Are you familiar with some checklists for internal factors in evaluating textbooks? Do you believe they are helpful to you in selecting textbooks? Which type of scoring systems do you favor? And why?

6. Can you think of any other channels for obtaining the information about textbook selection such as workshops, reference books or relevant journals? Which is more effective? And why?
7. What contributions do you think the senior teachers and young teachers can respectively make to the selection of textbooks?
8. Do you think the present school policy of textbook selection can yield more benefits for students than the prescribed textbook published by MOE? And why?
9. If there were no Joint College Entrance Examination, how would you select your own textbooks?⁷
10. Do you agree that besides teaching students grammatical knowledge, the English textbook should also make students more conscious of foreign cultures, and develop a global point of view? And do you take culture component as one of your crucial factors when selecting textbooks?

The interview questions designed to probe the *compilers'* primary concerns for textbook compilation were illustrated below.

1. What members constitute the compilation panel? And how are they selected?
2. What factors do you generally take into account when compiling textbooks? Why

⁷ To find out the reasons accounting for the results of the questionnaire, interview questions 9 and 10, not designed in the beginning, were later formulated for the interviewees.

do you think those factors are important for textbook compilation?

3. Is there a needs analysis conducted before the compilation? And who are the target subjects?
1. Do you compile textbooks for students of different school types such as public or private, urban or rural schools?
2. Is there an open channel for teachers to express their feedbacks on the textbook?
3. Is the textbook subjected to regular revision during certain period of time? Based on what is the textbook revised?
4. Is there any checklist offered by your publishing company to help teachers with textbook selection? Do you recommend that teachers should use a checklist to select the potential sets of textbooks?
5. Does your publishing company hold the workshops on textbook selection regularly? Are they held in both urban and rural areas?
6. What are the role differences between a textbook compiler and a textbook user?
7. What are the current trend and future prospect for textbook compilation?

3.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means and standard deviation were applied to analyze the collected data through SPSS program. After scores of the items of the questionnaire were calculated, several statistic procedures were conducted to examine the research questions of the present study. Meanwhile, T-test analysis was also used to examine the different consideration patters between teachers of public and private schools, urban and rural schools and senior and young. Furthermore, the data from the interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed for further study of the present research.