

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Research

English is the lingua franca used by people all over the world. In many non-English speaking countries, people recognize that learning English is the path to a better life, as higher-paying jobs are offered to those who can speak English. Hence, more and more people are learning English around the globe. In fact, non-native English speakers are outnumbering native speakers, in a ratio of three to one (Power, 2005). Those who teach English are divided into two cohorts, native English speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English speaking teachers (non-NESTs). There are debates in the teaching profession as to who is a better teacher. Both teachers are unique; hence, team-teaching between them is believed to be the best teaching model combining their strengths together. To understand both groups of teachers in depth, the researcher wishes to study NESTs and non-NESTs beliefs and their practices under team-teaching.

### 1.2 Significance of the Study

Native and non-native teacher issue has been the center of interest in TESOL in recent years. In Taiwan, NESTs make up a part of the language educators yet very little is known about them. As the government recruits more and more NESTs, it is imperative that we understand more about them. Most research in Taiwan are quantitative in nature; hence, the present study will employ a case study approach to comprehend both NESTs and non-NESTs in depth.

To better understand both groups of teachers, it is crucial to look into teachers' beliefs as they offer explanations to how teachers perceive themselves and why they behave the way they do in classrooms. The present study will focus on several major

areas of teachers' beliefs and analyze how they are manifested in actual practices (Nespor, 1986; Richardson, 1996; Johnson, 1999; Tsui, 2003). One domain of belief that will be examined is teachers' beliefs about team-teaching. Under the team-teaching model, the strengths of both NESTs and non-NESTs are united; however, the model is plagued by problems and urgently requires more research. Understanding the issue from both teachers' perspective could contribute to improving the quality of team-teaching.

### **1.3 Definition of Terms**

**NEST:** As the construct of native and non-native speakers has not yet reached a consensus (Kachru, 1985; Kramsch, 1998; Medgyes, 2001), this research will adopt the definition provided by Medgyes (2001). A NEST's is a teacher who speaks English as a native language, works in an EFL environments, whose students are monolingual, and does not speak the same native language as his or her students.

**Non-NEST:** The non-NEST is a teacher who speaks English as a second or foreign language, works in an EFL environment, whose students are monolingual, and speak the same native language as his or her students.

**Team Teaching:** A teaching team of at least two teachers, collaborating together in teaching activities. The teachers are engaged in different ways of collaboration, while using different pedagogical mediums to help students learn (Chou, 2005).

**Teacher's Beliefs:** The tacit, unconscious propositions which teachers hold to be true regarding different aspects of education.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the similarities and differences between the NEST and non-NEST beliefs about the advantages and disadvantage of being native and non-native English teachers?

2. What are the similarities and differences between the NEST and non-NEST beliefs about co-teaching? Are their beliefs manifested in their classroom practices?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the NEST and non-NEST beliefs about the English language? Are their beliefs manifested in their classroom practices?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the NEST and non-NEST beliefs about learning and learners? Are their beliefs manifested in their classroom practices?
5. What are the similarities and differences between the NEST and non-NEST beliefs about the role of sentence structures in English teaching? Are their beliefs manifested in their classroom practices?

To answer these questions, the researcher aims to use qualitative method in order to obtain a holistic understanding of NEST and non-NEST beliefs and practices.