

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the whole study, and the significant themes are discussed in depth. Section 5.1 to 5.5 answers the five research questions regarding the similarities and differences between various aspects of NESTs' and non-NESTs' beliefs and whether the beliefs are manifested in their classroom practices. Section 5.6 covers the implications of the results and section 5.7 presents the limitations of the study. Section 5.8 offers recommendations for future study in this field and finally, section 5.9 concludes the entire research study.

#### **5.1 Beliefs about the Advantages and Disadvantages of Being NESTs and non-NESTs**

The NEST and non-NEST's in the study share some similarities and differences regarding the perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of being a NEST and NNEST. Firstly, both teachers agreed that the major advantage of being NESTs is their superior English proficiency, as their language production shows authentic pronunciation, wide usage of vocabulary and other features. On the other hand, both teachers also agreed that the main disadvantage for NNESTs is their lack of proficient English. These findings are the same as the results from Barratt & Kontra (2000), Milambiling (1999) and Medgyes (2001), indicating language proficiency as the major difference that sets NESTs and NNESTs apart.

Secondly, the non-NEST's perception of NESTs' disadvantages, such as their ability to teach and accents also coincided with Barratt & Kontra (2000) and Chou (2005)'s study. Although the NESTs are hired from inner circles countries (Kachru, 1985), English learned in these countries are spoken with diverse accents. As Taiwan's English education mainly focused on North American accents, students and teachers

found it difficult to understand South African Black English. Since the non-NEST mentioned that one of the main purposes of NESTs in Taiwan is to have students model after their language production, it seemed to defy the purpose when NESTs with strong accents are hired.

Next, some findings in the study were not found in previous literature. For instance, when the NEST stated that her pronunciation was a disadvantage because she could not understand why students could not pronounce like her, this feature is more likely due to her lack of linguistic knowledge, particularly of Mandarin influence on English learners. In addition, another finding was non-NEST's mention of being the support for students during joint lessons where she could answer students' questions when they did not dare to ask NESTs. The advantage is not directly related to NNESTs, but to their facilitative role in team teaching. Lastly, no literature was found to list NESTs' physical appearance as a major advantage for attracting students' immediate attention.

## **5.2 Beliefs about Team Teaching**

There are several findings regarding the teachers' beliefs about team teaching in the study that were consistent with previous literature. First of all, the teachers perceived team teaching as a way of assembling advantages from both cohorts of teachers in order to promote a better language environment. Their point of view supports Medgyes' (1992) concept of an ideal English learning environment where there NESTs and NNESTs work together to complement each others' strengths and weaknesses.

Secondly, both teachers acknowledged the role of NESTs as the leading teachers and NNESTs as supporting teachers, following "team leader type" of model as described by Cunningham (1960, cited in Bailey, et al., 1992). Both teachers

perceived each other to be of equal status, although they did different amount of work in the joint lessons. The arrangement was similar to Luo's research (2004), where NESTs were the leaders and NNESTs were the assistants in the joint lesson. It was observed that while the NEST was teaching, the non-NEST translated, demonstrated, elaborated and conducted sundry of tasks.

The next finding consistent with previous literature is "people factors" (Chou, 2005; Lan, 2007; Tsai, 2007) which both teachers believed determined successful team teaching. Both listed adapting co-teacher's teaching style and having an easy-going personality as crucial elements. Overall, the NEST emphasized on co-teacher's skill and knowledge, whereas the non-NEST focused on establishing a good relationship with co-teachers, the same advice Oxford (2007) gave in her presentation on team teaching.

Fourthly, both teachers mentioned the same two advantages, learning from each other and enjoying the company of their co-teachers, which were on Buckley's (2000) list of advantages of team teaching. Finally, the NEST's suggestion on improving her team teaching, which was to set schedule for regular and frequent lesson planning was mentioned in Oxford's (2007) presentation as the recommendations for team teaching co-teachers.

The main inconsistency with previous study was found regarding the teachers' perceptions of their roles. In this study, the NEST was informed that she is here to train the non-NESTs while the non-NEST mentioned that she was filling in gaps of NESTs teachings. The co-teaching model in Yi-Lan county researched in Tsai and Tseng (2006)'s was different from the one in Hsin Chu city as the NESTs defined themselves as teaching assistants in the former model. They are young scholars in Taiwan for cultural exchange and learn about teaching, not necessarily experienced in

language teaching. Hence, their co-teachers were disappointed since they initially believed they could improve their own teaching through working with these NESTs.

### **5.3 Beliefs about the English Language**

No literature has been found to compare a NEST and NNESTs' beliefs on various aspects of English language; hence, it is assumed that the results in this part are considered new findings. First of all, both teachers varied in their opinions about English language, and their practices contradicted their beliefs. Emily believed that English is important, but did not tell students explicitly; rather, she has students pay attention in class. On the other hand, the NEST believed the importance of English to be learner dependent, and indicated that she told students that learning the language would be their way out of their hometown.

In addition, the teachers also differed in their beliefs regarding the most important components of English to be learned. While the NEST indicated the importance of vocabulary and grammar, the non-NEST emphasized reading and writing. However, in the NEST's lessons, sentence structures activities occupied a larger proportion and not vocabulary. In addition, even though she mentioned grammar, the NEST rarely taught it in joint class, but left it to her co-teacher. A plausible explanation is that grammar rules are much easily explained and understood when elaborated in students' first language, and only the non-NEST could do so in Mandarin. As for the non-NEST, her belief on writing was reflected in the homework assignments she gave to students, while her belief regarding vocabulary was differently manifested in the lessons. The non-NEST was not consciously aware of the importance of vocabulary she placed in her lessons. Since vocabulary is building block of sentence structures, she might have wanted students become familiar with the words before conducting drills. This way, students could create infinite sentence

structures by simply replacing one vocabulary, as seen in substitution drills, the ones the non-NEST used most often in class.

Another interesting finding was that although NESTs are perceived to be the ones provide cultural information (Reeves & Medgyes, 1994; Barratt & Kontra, 2000), it was found that the non-NEST was the one who supplying information regarding the origins of Halloween in the joint lesson. The non-NEST had lived in the U.S.A. for some time, enough to experience the north American culture, while the NEST explained that her South African culture was not necessarily expected of her to divulge in her lessons.

#### **5.4 Beliefs about Language Learning and Learners**

As for beliefs about language learning and learners, there was no literature found to compare NESTs and NNESTs beliefs in this area. Both teachers shared the same opinion that practicing the language and immersed in an all- English surrounding facilitate language learning. Therefore, plenty of drills mainly for sentence structures, reading, and phonics should be included in their lessons. In addition, both teachers mentioned the disparity in students' language proficiency, and the non-NEST pointed out to be a serious problem which affected her teaching. Good students follow a beneficial cycle that drives their proficiency higher, while the low achievers or misbehaving students follow a detrimental cycle that reduces their desire to learn. Eventually the gap between the students' proficiency widens, and becomes even more difficult than it already is for her to teach any aspect English. Therefore, she indicated the solution is to make full use of team teaching, where she could provide assistance to weaker students during the joint lessons. Nevertheless, it was not in every joint lesson that the NEST was able to provide the assistance, but only when students were given time to work on their own.

## **5.5 Beliefs about the Role of Sentence Structures in English Teaching**

The major findings in both teachers' beliefs about English teaching deal mainly with teaching approaches and sentence structure teaching. The teachers have different views to the language teaching approaches they use, and not all of their beliefs are reflected in the lessons. The non-NEST's beliefs showed that her preference were function-based and rule-based approaches, which also were what Reeves & Medgyes (1994) listed as a common perception of non-NESTs on their teaching methods. On the other hand, Emily's beliefs were consistent through out interviews and inventory, which revealed her to prefer skill-based approaches. The finding was unlike the results in Reeves and Medgyes (1994) study, where NESTs were perceived use function-based approaches. For the non-NEST, the drills and grammar explanations in her lessons showed that she leans towards skill-based and rule-based teaching. As for the NEST, her beliefs were manifested in her practices, as she used mainly drills in her lessons. Even though the NEST also believed that grammar is important, it is taught by the non-NEST in the joint lesson. Since NNESTs have more insight to the English language and are able to speak students' first language (Arva & Megyes, 1999), it is natural that grammar teaching is left to NNESTs in the joint lessons. The implementation of skill-based and rule-based teaching was mainly due to the teachers' perception as a way to help the less proficient students. They believe that only through repetition and memorization are the students able to learn a language, which also explains why teachers say they do not use games that often. These two approaches were also evident in teaching sentence structures as well. Emily used a variety of drills, while Portia used mainly substitution drills and other activities.

## **5.6 Implications of This Study**

Based on the research conducted on team teaching in this study, several

suggestions are made for policy makers and teachers aiming to improve the quality of teaching. Policy makers should consider making NESTs and non-NESTs take mandatory courses targeting two areas: foreign language teaching (e.g., TESOL courses) and team teaching. Although NESTs do receive some training prior to team teaching, it would be helpful to have the two cohorts of teachers take the same required courses. Since most NESTs are not language teaching majors, TESOL courses would definitely help teachers understand their students better. Courses like contrastive analysis between Mandarin and English would help teachers gain insight to how students' first language influences the learning of the foreign language. Therefore, teachers would be able to spot and target students' commonly made mistakes. Take pronunciation as an example, Chinese students often have problem trying to pronounce the "th" sound, which does not exist in Mandarin. If NESTs do not know that fact, they might have thought their teaching method or the students' lack of proficiency is the source of the problem, and not the language item itself. By being equipped with the knowledge of the differences in these two languages, teachers would be able to understand and help students with their language learning difficulties differences much more easily. Moreover, NESTs should be well informed of the education system in Taiwan, for instance, the expectation of students' English proficiency in every grade. The more teachers know of what is expected of their students, the more likely they will know of how to plan their lessons.

Next, teachers need to be educated more about team teaching, especially on working together to bring out the optimal effects of this teaching model. There is no fixed formula as to the best team teaching model as it depends on many variables such as co-teachers' personality, teaching style, expectations, student's proficiency level and discipline, teaching context and other elements. Teachers need to discuss what

they feel is most important for the students, and try out different team teaching models and see what best works for them. For instance, if the main problem the teachers encounter is students are on different proficiency levels, teachers may feel it pertinent to accommodate their needs through giving individual assistance. Hence, more activities should be designed in the joint lesson that allowed the teachers to instruct the students personally. Although results from this case study should not be generalized, students severely lagging behind is indeed a problem in many schools. Teachers could use team teaching to reduce the severity of the problem. On the other hand, if students have the same proficiency level, teachers could try splitting the classes into half for each activity planned. Such team teaching model has both NEST and non-NEST taking up the roles of leading teachers.

As for the teachers, it is recommended that they establish good rapport with their co-teachers, openly communicate, adapt to each others' teaching styles and have periodical meetings to discuss their lessons. First of all, NESTs and non-NESTs could build a friendly relationship by having meals together, helping each other out (not necessarily school-related), and simply spending time to get to know each other. The better the teachers get along, the better they will be at team teaching together. Secondly, teachers should openly discuss with their co-teachers whenever they felt necessary. When the teachers are uncomfortable with certain actions their co-teachers take upon, they should inform their co-teachers. Lack of communications leads to misunderstanding, and further creates a rift in the teachers' rapport. Finally, all the English teachers in the same school should hold meetings periodically to discuss their lessons and planning. Since multiple NESTs and non-NESTs work with one another, the meetings would provide opportunities to plan the lessons together, share their experiences and teaching difficulties they face, and complete other tasks. The more



teachers interact together, the more they know of each others' teaching beliefs and learn each other; the knowledge of which would improve their team teaching.

### **5.7 Limitation of This Study**

There are three major limitations to this research on co-teaching NEST and NNEST's beliefs and classroom practice. Firstly, the researcher was unable to observe the co-teaching model of a single class, due to her academic schedule. Instead, she observed co-teaching sessions of one class, and individual sessions of another class. There would have been greater consistency had she followed the progress of the same class. Nevertheless, an advantage emerged from the researcher's compromised arrangement; she was able to compare how the NEST and NNEST differ in presenting the same content to their classes. In addition, the researcher was unable to video record the number of lesson she had planned as lessons were canceled, sometimes at the last minute. It would have been better to conduct classroom observations at the beginning of the semester in order to reduce the risk of classes being canceled. Finally, the researcher should have analyzed the collected data once she received them. She could have more opportunity to ask the teachers regarding the collected data. The reasons of some phenomenon in the research could have been better presented.

### **5.8 Recommendations for Future Studies**

In response to the limitations mentioned above, the researcher suggested the following directions for future study.

1. Team-teaching model of at least one class should be observed. Researchers would have to observe the same class twice a week, where they would have a team teaching English lesson and an individual lesson taught by the non-NEST. Researchers would be following the progress of the same class, so it would be visible of how content is taught consecutively.

2. Researching team-teaching teachers of different variables, such as length of team teaching experience, qualifications (TESOL degree versus non-TESOL degrees), genders and others factors. For instance, a first-year NEST could very well have a different picture of what team teaching compared with a second year NEST. In addition, it would be interesting to investigate NESTs who have language education degree along side with those who do not to see if they differ much in their practices.
3. Researching students' opinions on team teaching would also be an interesting, and it could be compared with the teachers' perceptions. For instance, the students' view on NESTs and non-NESTs roles may be different from the teachers' own perceptions.
4. Other areas of NEST and non-NEST teachers' beliefs could also be investigated. Phonics occupies a large amount of content in the lessons, along with vocabulary items. Moreover, beliefs of NESTS and non-NESTs teaching different education levels (junior high and senior high) could also be compared. At different levels, teachers often emphasize certain elements of English more than others.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

In the present study, the researcher has examined team teaching NEST and non-NEST beliefs on native and non-native English speaker issues, team teaching, the English language, language learning and learners, and English language teaching with emphasis on sentence structures. The two participants in the study do in fact have share the same beliefs, such as their approaches to language teaching, and at other times they hold different beliefs, e.g., some of their roles in team teaching. In addition, it was observed that teachers' beliefs are often manifested in their classroom practices. Even if the pair of teachers do not share the same beliefs, they can still work well

together, as long as their personalities are compatible with each other. Having different beliefs is actually an advantage, since it stimulates discussion and learning between the teachers. Their team teaching models would differ depending on the variables in the context.