

Chapter Three

Research Method

3.1 Introduction

New textbooks have begun to be used in 2002 for the implementation of the Nine-year Integrated Curriculum. For the first year, the new textbooks were written and compiled based on the tentative guidelines of Nine-year Integrated Curriculum, so the textbooks published in 2002 were called “provisional edition” by most of the publishers. For the second year, the formal the Nine-year Integrated Curriculum Guidelines that all the new JHS textbooks should be based on were finished and promulgated by MOE. Thus, JHS textbooks published in 2003 were called “standard edition” by most of the publishers. The new JHS textbooks published in 2002 were amended in response to the opinions, suggestions of teachers after their actual use in the school year of 2001. Therefore, this research mainly focused on the evaluation of the newly published JHS English textbooks in 2003 instead of the textbooks published in 2002.

Furthermore, students in elementary schools who began to study English in Taipei City and Taipei County were mostly from the grade 3 so the proficiency level and learning condition of students were much more similar. JHS English textbooks used in Taipei City and Taipei County were Kang-Hsuan textbooks, Nan-I textbooks, Han-Lin textbooks, Hess textbooks and Longman textbooks. This research was aimed to investigate the opinions of teachers after using the textbooks half a year in Taipei City and Taipei County. Questionnaire and interview were adopted to find the results of the above research questions.

3.2 Subjects

The subjects of this study were English teachers who had the experience of using

new version of JHS English textbook newly adopted in 2003 for the Grade 7 in Taipei City and Taipei County. Those teachers who used only unified textbooks and “provisional edition” were excluded from the study. In other words, recruited were only those who teach grade 7 in junior high schools while this study was being conducted. That is to say, only a small number of English teachers in each school were available. Those recruited had to fill out the questionnaires first. And some of them would be interviewed individually on voluntary basis after the questionnaire. And some of them would be interviewed individually on voluntary basis after the questionnaire.

The following table shows the numbers of copies sent out and collected back in each school from Taipei City and Taipei County. Because the collection of questionnaire in private schools was not easy, there was only one private school promising to fill in the questionnaire. Therefore, most of the schools in the study were public schools. The criteria for textbook selection and the usage of the new version of textbook in private schools were not discussed in the study.

The distribution of the subjects is shown in the following table.

Table 3 Distribution of the Subjects

Areas	Names of Schools	Copies sent out	Copies received
Taipei City	1. Bailing High School	5	3
	2. Beizheng Junior High School	1	1
	3. Donghu Junior High School	7	3
	4. Fanghe Junior High School	4	3
	5. Gezhi Junior High School	1	1
	6. Guting Junior High School	3	3

	7. Hongdao Junior High School	10	5
	8. Jieshou Junior High School	1	1
	9. Jingmei Junior High School	5	5
	10. Jingxing Junior High School	6	6
	11. Lanzhou Junior High School	2	0
	12. Lanya Junior High School	10	3
	13. Lishan Junior High School	10	8
	14. Liugong Junior High School	6	4
	15. Mingde Junior High School	17	12
	16. Minghu Junior High School	6	0
	17. Muzha Junior High School	5	3
	18. Nangang High School	5	1
	19. Sanmin Junior High School	7	3
	20. Shilin Junior High School	12	10
	21. Shipai Junior High School	14	13
	22. Taoyuan Junior High School	2	2
	23. Wanfang High School	4	4
	24. Xingfu Junior High School	1	1
	25. Xinyi Junior High School	6	6
	26. Xisong High School	5	5
	27. Zhongshan Junior high school	2	0
	28. Zhongzheng Junior High School	6	5
Taipei	1. Camphor Tree Junior High School	4	3
County	2. Chang Ho Junior High School	6	4

	3. Chin Kuen Junior High School	12	3
	4. Chin Lin Junior High School	8	2
	5. Chin shan Junior High School	3	3
	6. Chung-Shan Junior High School	10	7
	7. Dengfang Junior High School	7	6
	8. Erh-Chung Junior High School	9	8
	9. Feng Ming Junior High School	5	2
	10. Hai-Shan High School	15	11
	11. Hsin Chuang Junior High School	12	11
	12. Hsin Pu Junior High School	8	7
	13. Hsing-Wu High School	4	4
	14. Hsi Chih Junior High School	4	4
	15. Jih-Hoh High School	8	8
	16. Lin-Kou Junior High School	6	6
	17. Ming-Chih Junior High School	11	6
	18. Pali Junior High School	4	2
	19. Banciao Junior High School	8	4
	20. San-Ho Junior High School	14	3
	21. Shenkeng Junior High School	4	2
	22. Shiou-Fong High School	6	2
	23. Shu-Lin Senior High School	12	9
	24. Taisan Junior High School	3	2
	25. Tamshui Junior High School	8	5
	26. Tzyh-Chang Junior High School	5	2

	27. Wan Li Junior High School	1	1
	28. Wu-Feng Junior High School	10	8
	29. Yungho Junior High School	12	7

3.3 Instruments

The main instruments in this study included the questionnaire and interview for English teachers.

3.3.1 Questionnaire for English Teachers

The questions raised in the questionnaire were adopted from Shih's (2000) checklist of English textbook evaluation for the elementary schools and Chen's (2002) questionnaire questions for Senior High Schools English teachers. Since Shih's (2000) checklist and Chen's (2002) questionnaire questions were specific and detailed, the questionnaire questions in the research were adapted from these two sources. The questions of the second section concerning the teachers' evaluation criteria and the fourth section concerning teachers' opinions on the overall contents, physical layout, workbooks, teacher's manual and supplements of the current English textbook were adopted from Shih's checklist and Chen's questionnaire questions respectively. The questions of the third section concerning the evaluation process in each individual junior high school and those of the fifth section concerning the reasons why the textbook was changed the following semester were adopted from Chen's questionnaire questions. The questions were amended slightly aimed to investigate how the JHS English teachers feel about the new textbooks. Then the questionnaire

¹ The English teachers are Lin, Hui-fen from Xisong Junior high school and Chao, Wen-chuan from Camphor Tree Junior High school and so on

was sent to a couple of JHS English teachers¹ for validity. Their suggestions and comments were utilized for modifications. Finally, the questionnaire was formed after some revision.

The questionnaire was made up of five sections. The first section focused on teachers' personal background information, including gender, college majors, years of teaching experience, places of teaching, and the version of the new English textbook used. In addition, according to the Nine-year Integrated Curriculum, the class hours of language arts including Mandarin and English are a total of 8.4 hours per week. That is to say, Mandarin and English have to share eight class hours and one alternative class hour. According to the Curriculum, the alternative class hour should be designed to another new activity related to that learning area. Besides, the curriculum doesn't prescribe the exact class hours that Mandarin and Chinese should have, it causes troubles for both Chinese teachers and English teachers because they have to try to get more class hours in order to finish their teaching. Therefore, the class hours of Mandarin and English in each school are quite different so it is raised in the questionnaire as a reference for English teachers. At the end of this part, the teachers were asked if they were willing to be interviewed by the researcher. If they do, they could leave their phone number for further contact.

The second section involved the current state of selecting the new English textbook and teachers' evaluation criteria. It was modified slightly from Shih's (2000) table for the elementary schools English textbooks evaluation. These criteria included:

- (1) the compiler's expertise and his status in the academic circle
- (2) the publisher's reputation,
- (3) the teacher's first impression on the textbook when skimming,
- (4) the textbook's correspondence to the curriculum standards,

- (5) the difficulty of grammar,
- (6) the variety of themes
- (7) the design of activity
- (8) the illustrations, the layout, and the quality of printing
- (9) the content of teacher's manual,
- (10) the content of student's workbook
- (11) the service offered by the publisher
- (12) the seminars and training courses for teachers sponsored by the publisher.

Four choices (very important, important, not very important, and not important at all) were given in each item for English teachers to mark its significance.

The third section was to survey the evaluation process in each individual junior high school. It was included the following questions:

- (1) Has the English teacher taken part in textbook evaluation?
- (2) Who are the evaluation committee members?
- (3) What phases does the evaluation process include?
- (4) When making the evaluation, who offers the evaluation checklist?
- (5) By whom are the guidelines of textbook evaluation drawn up to the expectation of English teachers?

The fourth section was concerned with teachers' opinions on the overall contents, physical layout, students' workbooks, teacher's manual of the in-use English textbook and other concerning supplements, such as reference books, testing sheets, and the practice of grammar, vocabulary, listening comprehension and reading. It was divided into five parts. The 36 questions of the first four parts were answered on a four-point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree) and the fifth part was composed of 9 questions in the form of multiple choices and two open-ended questions.

The main questions of this part were as follows:

A. Content

1. difficulty of the teaching material
2. clear theme in each lesson
3. variety of themes
4. variety of genres
5. activity design based on the Communicative Approach
6. authenticity of the teaching material
7. the integration of four skills
8. instruction hours for the textbooks: sufficient or insufficient
9. length of the reading
10. the compilation of the textbooks based on the principles of progression, accumulation and spiral
11. cooperative learning and problem solving designed for the activities
12. adequate practice of phonics
13. meaningful learning and practice of vocabulary
14. appropriateness of each sentence
15. meaningful activity designed for the learning of grammar and sentence pattern

B. Layout

1. the quality of printing
2. the size of characters
3. the quality of paper
4. the correspondence of the illustration to theme

C. Student's workbook

1. relation to the content of textbook
2. difficulty of questions

D. Teacher's manual

1. activity design
2. background knowledge
3. answers provided for the practice of textbook
4. multiple evaluation provided

E. The difficulty and dissatisfaction of the in-use textbooks

This part consisted of 9 multiple choices questions and 2 open-ended questions. Concerning the multiple choices, teachers could choose more than one answer according to their teaching experiences. As to the open-ended questions, they were about the teachers' opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of the in-use textbooks.

The final section was the reasons why the in-use textbook was changed in the following semester. Besides, it also consisted of the comparison of the teaching of teachers and learning of students between the previous textbooks and the in-use textbooks.

3.3.2 Interview Questions for English Teachers

The interview was conducted to investigate issues and concerns unrevealed in the questionnaire. The interview questions were adapted from Chang's (2000) interview questions for senior high school teachers.

1. What is the procedure for deciding which textbook to adopt? Who is involved in the textbook selection?
2. What is the difference between the new English textbooks and the old MOE ones?
3. What are the teacher's opinions on the in-use textbook?
4. If the teacher changes the textbook in the following semester, what are the

teacher's suggestions or comments on the previous one?

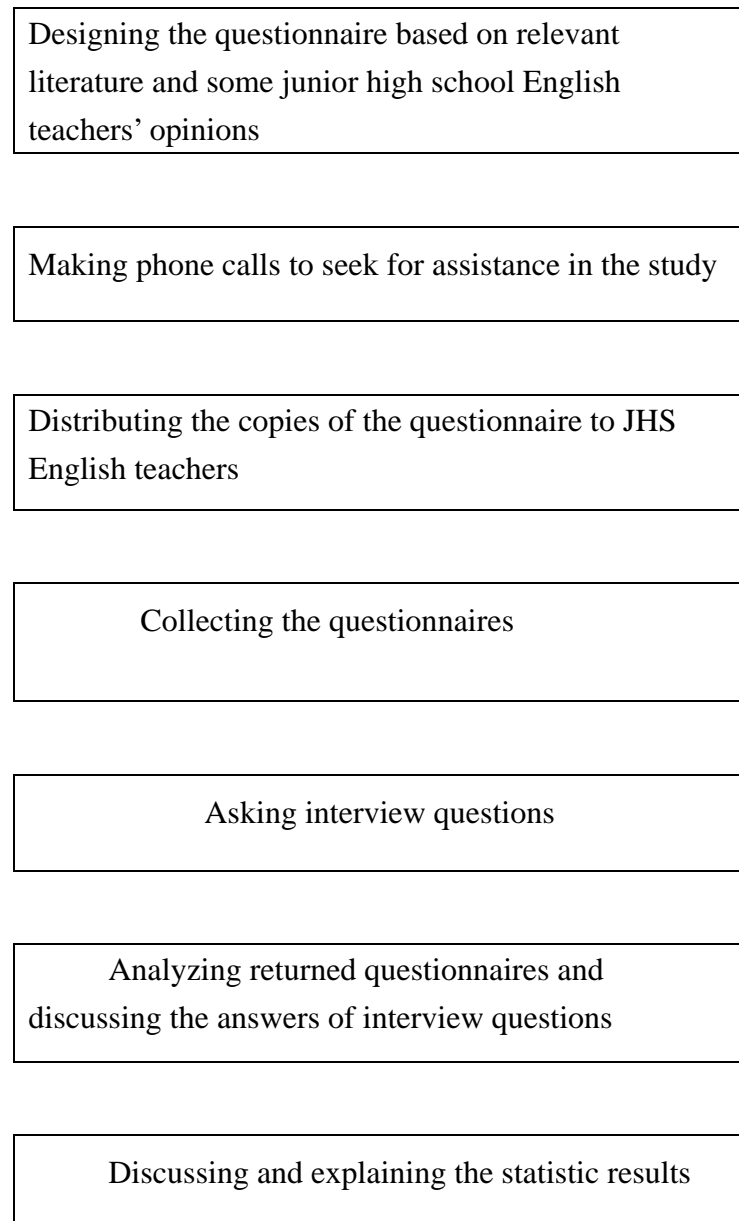
5. Is the in-use textbook suitable for the students in that school? Why or why not?
6. What is the greatest advantage of the in-use textbook?
7. Does the teacher use any supplementary materials besides those provided by the textbook publishers? What are they?
8. Does the teacher use any self-made teaching materials? What are they?
9. What is the most difficult part in this in-use textbook?
10. Is the teacher willing to use the same set of textbook in the following semester (grade 8)? Why or why not?
11. What is the teacher's expectation on the JHS English textbook?

The above questions were open-ended, so the interviewees could express their ideas as clearly as possible.

3.4 Procedures

The procedure of conducting this study was illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Procedures of conducting the study.



The questionnaire of this study was formed, with minor modification after examining the literature review, referring Shih's (2000) checklist and Chen's (2002) questionnaire and inquiring suggestions of experts in university as well as English teachers in junior high schools. Then phone calls were made to individual junior high schools in Taipei City and Taipei County to make sure whether they would assist in

the study and how many copies would be sent. Finally, the copies sent out were totally 382 in numbers, 163 to Taipei City, and 219 to Taipei City. This involved 28 schools in Taipei City and 29 schools in Taipei County.

About 66.2 return rates, two hundred and fifty-three questionnaires were collected for data analysis in April of 2004. The returned questionnaires were statistically analyzed item by item and discussed in detail.

Concerning the willingness of being interviewed, teachers marked “yes” or “no” at the bottom of the first page of the questionnaire. There were totally 31 teachers from 14 schools willing to be interviewed.

The researcher sent e-mail to these teachers to explain the details of the interview questions and inquired them the most convenient time for interview, while no answers returned. Therefore, the researcher made phone calls to these teachers to explain the details of the interview questions and set interview time with the interviewee. Finally, the researcher made a formal phone call to the teacher on the appointed time and record what the interviewee says at the same time.

3.4 Data Analysis

All the data collected from the returned questionnaire were keyed in to the computer. Through the statistical procedures, EXCEL, English teachers’ personal background information, teachers’ focus on the criteria of textbook selection, teachers’ perceptions of the in-use textbook and the comparison between the in-use textbook and the previous one were measured by the frequency and percentage. Next, analysis of multiple choices was conducted to realize how many of the teachers were satisfied with these new textbooks. Then, the answers to open-ended questions and interview questions were classified and discussed. Finally, the results of the research questions were presented and discussed.