

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The present study focuses on English teachers' reflection of the EIL ideology in terms of their self-image and identity as well as how the perspectives of EIL may impinge on their phonology teaching beliefs. The interview and the discussion in the study group meetings were included in the study. This chapter provides an overview of methodology conducted in this study.

#### **3.1 Setting**

The study was conducted in a public senior high school in Taipei. Students in this school receive English classes from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The 10 graders in this school have 4 general English classes and 1 speaking and listening class. The 11<sup>th</sup> graders have 5 to 6 general English classes and 1 or none speaking and listening class for the first semester and 1 or none reading and writing class for the second semester, depending on classes they attend. The 12<sup>th</sup> graders have 6 to 7 general English classes. Students in this school have limited contact with foreigners but their experience in speaking English after class vary from student to student, depending on whether they attend extra English classes after school.

#### **3.2 Participants**

The participants of the study were three female Taiwanese English teachers. In the present study, the three female participants were given the pseudonyms, Emma, Melody, and Jenny.

The participants from this senior high school were appropriate for the study for two reasons. First, they were the researcher' colleagues who had known the researcher well enough in their workplace. As the interview in the study greatly involved participants' privacy, mutual trust between the researcher and the participants was

hence particularly important. Secondly, the three participants varied in their education background, teaching experience, personality, etc. Factors of their difference would be of great value for the researcher in the discussion of how they would welcome differently the EIL ideology in their teaching. Based on the two reasons, the researcher chose the three participants and expected to gather as wide a scope of perspective as possible from them both in the interview and during the study group.

### **3.2.1 Emma**

Emma, in her late twenties, had 5-year teaching experience in high school, and majored in English literature in college and in teacher education in the graduate school. During the college and graduate school years, she took less courses concerning English teaching compared with other teachers in this high school. She had never taken any courses about EIL. She had some experience in traveling abroad to Europe and North America, but never lived abroad.

She started her English lessons early when she was a third grader. She liked English because she gained a sense of accomplishment due to her good grades from the English class. In addition to normal school education, she spent time learning English from native speakers in the language center on and off during summer vacation in her high school and college years. When asked why she would like to pay for the extra English classes, she said:

“The foreign teachers there were good-looking, spoke English with a native accent, which attracted me a lot. I went there (the language center) to learn more English, not for tests.”

After she began her career as an English teacher, she also learned English from native English speakers for more knowledge in western culture and colloquial English usage. As she said, “I know it is a myth, but when it comes to culture knowledge and

English idioms, I just felt that foreigners were more correct users (than us). “

However, after realizing that she had become an advanced English learner and having English lessons with foreign teachers might not be of great help to her, she turned to self-learning by reading *Time* and talking to herself in English.

According to the researcher’s observation, Emma was a well-organized teacher, who liked to have everything well-prepared before each class. She would take specific teaching notes in her textbook to make sure she made as few mistakes as possible in class. She tended to be nervous and edgy without sufficient preparation, but if well-prepared, she would act as a most professional English teacher on stage.

### **3.2.2 Melody**

Melody, in her early thirties, had 8-year teaching experience, and graduated from a teacher training university, majoring in English education. She spent one year in the U.K., after teaching for four years, to earn her master degree in TESOL, and was very interested in curriculum design. She took a course on EIL in her graduate program; however, she didn’t think that course impressed her a lot. Except for her one-year stay in the U.K., she also had experience traveling to other countries.

Melody got her first contact with English by listening to English songs and had been fascinated by it since then. Like Emma, she got a sense of accomplishment from English because of the high scores she got in junior high.

Melody was seen as a very humorous teacher in the school, who always drew her students’ attention because of her amiable and humorous personality. She liked to create a more relaxing atmosphere in class by sharing her stories frequently. She gave an impression of a happy English teacher, who enjoyed being around with her students. However, after her one-year stay in the U.K., she said she had full expectation for herself in putting what she had learned from the graduate program into

practice, mainly the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) teaching approach, but, unfortunately, she failed to do so as she said: “When I was back from the U.K., I had to teach 12<sup>th</sup> graders and I simply couldn’t use that teaching method (CLT) because the school education in Taiwan was still test-oriented....I had to help students prepare for their college entrance exam....I felt really frustrated at that time. The world (the overall English teaching environment) simply wasn’t the way it was in Taiwan.”

### **3.2.3 Jenny**

Jenny, in her late thirties, had 5-year teaching experience in junior high school and 5-year in senior high school. She also graduated from a teacher training university, majoring in English education. After 7 years of teaching, she attended a graduate program for in-service English teachers and finished her degree after four years of summer study. In her graduate years, she was interested in designing lessons to help students develop critical thinking. She had never taken any EIL courses. She also had some experience in traveling abroad to many foreign countries but never lived abroad.

Jenny said that her love for English grew out of her father’s expectations. Her father, once a sailor, thought that English was an international language and hoped his daughter could master it. During her school years, she worked hard to sound like a native speaker by listening to the records recorded by the native speakers and to one of her junior high school teachers, who she viewed as someone with a more “standard” accent.

Jenny was a take-charge person, who could work efficiently at work. In class, she was good at using games to arouse students’ interest in English. For example, she would design games with her computer and used the game as an evaluation in class to give students vocabulary quizzes and to put more fun in learning at the same time.

Jenny was good at integrating technology into her teaching. For example, she used PowerPoint and demonstrated interesting clips from the Internet in her class very often. According to her student in the present study, Jenny often used clips from the youtube website, either pronounced by native English speakers or by non-native English speakers in the English listening and speaking class. Her preference in using technology in class seemed to work very successfully in her class.

### **3.3 Instrument**

The present study adopted interview, study group and a simple questionnaire as the source of data.

#### **3.3.1 Interview**

The reason why interview is adopted in the present study is because “interviews yield rich insights into people’s biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings.” (May, 2001) The researcher expects to investigate participants’ views on the EIL ideology by asking in-depth questions. In addition, from the interview, it is also hoped that critical incident (Tripp, 1994) can be analyzed and interpreted. As Tripp (1994) defines ‘critical incident’, he states:

they (critical incidents) are not at all dramatic or obvious - they are mostly straightforward accounts of very commonplace events that occur in routine professional practice which are critical in the sense that they are indicative of underlying motive and structures...in teaching, importantly, critical incidents are created. Incidents happen all the time, but critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation: a critical incident therefore is an interpretation of the significance of an event...

In the present study, the interview was conducted in Chinese so as to give the participants the maximum ease when answering the researcher. The interview

included both informal and semi-structured types. Each interview was recorded with the permission from the participants, and the researcher took field note during the interview. An interview outline (See Appendix A, p. 77) was also used during the interview to make sure the researcher managed the time well and cover the topics important to the study. After each interview, the content was transcribed verbatim.

In the beginning, the informal interview, which aimed to encourage participants to tell their stories of how and when they learned English, was adopted. For example, to begin the interview, the researcher asked: “Why did you like English?” “Why did you want to be an English teacher?” “How did you learn English?” As they told their stories, the researcher would respond accordingly and the related semi-structured questions would appear without a certain sequence. Semi-structured interview questions, on the other hand, first, focused on participants’ view about accent learning and teaching. For example, participants were asked: “How do you like your English accent?” “Do you teach English pronunciation? Why or why not?” “Would you utilize EIL-based materials in your class?” Other semi-structured interview questions intended to inquire participants’ knowledge about EIL and how they taught English pronunciation. For example, the researcher asked: “What is the standard of your English teaching? American or British English?” In this way, the researcher could observe how much the participants realized EIL, so as to compare how they would respond differently to EIL ideology after the study group meetings.

The subjects’ background information was also included in and significant to the study, because the researcher would take into account their background as factors of influence on their perspectives. The interview for each participant lasted within one hour, and was held once in the study in places convenient both for the participant and the researcher, such as the classroom or the nearby café.

### 3.3.2 Study Group Meetings

The study group meetings in the present study aimed to help participants to, first, get to know the EIL paradigm before investigating how they will welcome EIL, and secondly, to provide participants with an opportunity to increase their interaction with other colleagues, i.e. the participants themselves and the researcher. As O'Donnell-Allen (2001) notes, teachers, like all learners, extend and expand their understanding of teaching through a variety of socially-mediated contexts. In addition, the study group meetings also served as a means of teachers' professional development to help participants approach their teaching with new methodology. Briefly, participants might gain some change through the discussion in the study group meetings. Batten (1991) states the advantages of reflecting on and verbalizing what teacher do to bring about positive change:

If teachers can be encouraged and helped to identify and reflect on the positive aspects of their teaching ....they may provide us with a clearer insight into the nature of effective teaching, enhance their own teaching, and establish a basis for sharing their knowledge with other teachers through school-based professional development.

It is very much hoped that participants would benefit from participation in the study group meetings to gain not only new knowledge about the pedagogic paradigm but also opportunities to interact with other colleagues.

The study group meetings, the main source of the data collection in the present study, were conducted after the interview in the hope of inducing and observing the transition of teacher participants' teaching beliefs after the introduction of EIL. The necessity of the study group meetings in the research is obvious: many teachers in EFL settings (particularly non-native speakers) do not seem to be very sensitive to the new perspectives that are opening up to them (Llurda, 2004). As the study aims to see

whether the transition of EIL teaching beliefs occurs, the introduction of EIL knowledge has to be infused in the study since no EIL courses of any form had been provided for the participants in their previous teacher education. As Brown (1993) mentions, “paradigm shifts cannot be made when people do not overtly identify paradigms which currently dominate the field.” Therefore, the researcher adopted the study group meetings as the treatment in the study to help the teacher participants understand the concept of EIL, the current paradigm in TESOL, so as to observe their degree of willingness to welcome EIL in their English teaching, especially in their pronunciation teaching.

### **3.3.3 Questionnaire**

In the present study, the researcher included a questionnaire (See Appendix E, p. 83) because some of the questions the researcher was interested to observe might not be appropriately and easily displayed in the interview. The questionnaire included only two questions. The first one asked the participants to prioritize the “rightful owner” of the English language. The second one asked the participants to prioritize the importance of students’ using English. The questionnaire was used right after the interview and was used again to compare the different mindset the participants might have after the study group meeting.

## **3.4 Procedure**

The procedure of the present study consisted of two stages, the preparatory stage and the data collection stage.

### **3.4.1 The Preparatory Stage**

The purpose of this stage was to find the representative participants for the study, to select the reading materials, and to design handouts for discussion in the study group meetings.

To find the appropriate participants for the study, such factors as participants’

teaching experience, exposure to EIL knowledge, participants' willingness to join the study group and their openness to talk about themselves were all considered. The researcher needed to strike a balance among the above factors so as to find sufficient scope for the study. After getting the oral permission from the ideal participants, the researcher asked from the participants for a written agreement form (See Appendix F, p. 84) with definite items, such as when and how the study group meetings and the interview would be held. Furthermore, they were informed that the data from the interview and the study group would be recorded and transcribed, but their identity would be kept anonymous. At the end of the form, they were asked to sign their names so as to be assured of their knowledge about their right and obligation in the research.

As for the material selection, deliberately edited materials were needed to meet the needs of the study group. For example, the researcher would choose journals whose topics related to the research questions and those with appropriate article length, considering the time the participants might need to digest the content. Before officially deciding on the materials, the researcher considered it important that the source of the materials should include latest issues from several related journals, such as *World Englishes*, *TESOL Quarterly*, *ELT journal*, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *English Today*, etc. In addition, the researcher also tried to include journals with related topics written by local researcher, for the content might cover the teaching situation in Taiwan. The researcher mainly targeted such writing in *English Teaching & Learning*, one of the most important references for local English teachers. Lastly, the researcher turned to the Internet for latest information about EIL, hoping to find some lesson plans or practice based on EIL ideology. In the end, given the limited time the participants could participate in the study group meeting, the researcher

decided on four journals, each conveying important messages about EIL with specific illustrations about how EIL might influence the present status quo in TESOL.

After deciding on the appropriate journals for the participants to read prior to the study group meeting, the researcher had to design questions for the discussion in the study group. The questions were based on the journals the participants read and aimed to encourage them to answer the questions based on their practical teaching needs without having to agree on the content in the journals. The researcher tried to tailor each question in a way that might help the participants to think back on the important topics covered in the reading so as to help the researcher observe how the participants welcome the new teaching paradigm.

Lastly, the researcher designed a questionnaire with questions.

### **3.4.2 The Data Collection Stage**

After the preparation for the data collection, the researcher started the research. At the beginning of the study, the researcher and the participant decided on the place they wanted to undergo the interview, depending on the convenience of both sides then. Each interview lasted within one hour and was recorded and transcribed verbatim then. At the end of the interview, the participants were required to answer the questions from the questionnaire.

After the interview, the researcher and the participants decided on the time and place they wanted to meet in the study group meetings. Before the study group began, the participants were distributed reading materials in advance so as to read the journals in their spare time and were encouraged to share what they read next time when they met. Each study group meeting was recorded and transcribed after, too.

The study group meetings were held twice in the study, each lasting one hour. The study group meetings were conducted in Chinese so as to make them less

forthcoming in their discussion since the anxiety of speaking English might arise as the members in the study were all colleagues in the same school. The materials used, including one schedule (see Appendix B, p. 79) and four journals, were selected and designed by the researcher. The participants were handed two journals at least one week before the meeting. For the convenience of the participants, both the study group meetings were held in August, during the summer vacation, about two weeks apart, so that the participants might have adequate time to digest what they read.

The goal of the first study group meeting was to help the participants to have a general picture about EIL, focusing on its ideology, its difference from EFL and ESL and, most importantly, how it may influence their teaching beliefs. The journals participants read were “Non-native-speaker teachers and English as an International Language” (Llurda, 2004) and 「以英語為國際語之意涵與教學觀」 (廖柏森, 2005)。

The goal of the second study group meeting was to help participants to understand how EIL could be integrated into English teaching. The assigned journals were “Community, Currency and the Lingua Franca Core” (Jenkins, J) and “ ‘Welcome to the Club’: Helping to foster a positive self-image in English learners.” (Kowalski, C).

As each study group meeting began, the participants were given a handout (See Appendix C and D, p. 80, 81), with questions arranged systematically from basic to specific topic for the use of the group discussion. As the researcher hoped to encourage the participants to reflect on important topics in the reading, the questions on the handout usually started with: “What do you think of ....?” “Do you agree with ....on ....?” “How do you like the idea....?” The participants were not required to accept all their viewpoints from the reading, but were invited to voice their

opinions based on their experience and their teaching needs in class. The purpose of the discussion was to provide the participants with an opportunity to compare their present teaching status quo and the new ideology.

Besides, through the free discussion, teachers, like learners, extend and expand their understanding of teaching through a variety of socially-mediated contexts (O'Donnell-Allen, 2001). As the researcher and the participants were colleagues in the same school, they could easily relate to each other in terms of their practical needs in English class. Provided with such inspiring environment in the study group meetings, they were all given chance to raise their awareness of EIL as well as adequate room to discuss among themselves how they could best cope with the new paradigm so as to best benefit their teaching.

The discussion was recorded and transcribed later and the field note was taken during the meeting.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Three relevant elements in analyzing qualitative data include description, analysis and interpretation (Wolcott, 1994). The collected data have to be broken down and recombined to build a clear picture so as to respond to the aims of the research (Richards, 2003). The present study followed the above three elements to analyze the data collected from the interview and the study group meetings

In both interview and study group meetings, the content was recorded and transcribed and the summary was outlined immediately after each interview and study group meeting was finished. After transcription, interview and study group meeting discussion data were analyzed for common themes on teachers' accounts in terms of the accent issue and the EIL ideology. The researcher coded and categorized the data from the interview and the study group meetings based on theoretical and conceptual links, analytic notes and ongoing analysis (Richards, 2003). Richards (2003) believes

in the “imaginative” quality of qualitative analysis and claims that “in order to penetrate beneath the surface of things, the researchers must be prepared to find alternative approaches to organization and interpretive challenges.” Therefore, the researcher hoped to answer the research questions with sufficient clues from the data by taking adaptive approaches and constantly making adjustment in ways of seeing and analyzing the data.