NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKING TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THEIR PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY OF ELEMENTARY TEAM-TEACHING IN HSIN CHU CITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to investigate the beliefs of a team-teaching native English-speaking teacher (NEST) and a non-native English-speaking teacher (non-NEST) and the extent to which their beliefs are manifested in their classroom practice. The participants are a NEST and a non-NEST who have had one year of experience in team-teaching with each other in an elementary school in Hsin Chu City, Taiwan. The data collection instruments include interviews, belief inventories, classroom observations, and document analysis. Through analyzing the teachers' beliefs in the following areas: (1) advantages and disadvantages of being native and non-native English teachers, (2) team-teaching, (3) roles of the English language, (4) language learning and learners, and (5) teaching practices, the study shows that the two teachers shared many common beliefs, but that their beliefs were not necessarily consistent with their performance in the classroom. Pedagogical implications and suggestions are derived mainly for the benefit of policy makers and for maintaining positive collaboration between NESTs and non-NESTs.

Key Words: team-teaching, EFL, NEST, non-NEST, teachers' beliefs

INTRODUCTION

English has long become the *lingua franca* among peoples of the world. In many non-English speaking countries, like Taiwan, English is widely recognized as an important path to a successful life, since high-pay jobs or advanced academic opportunities are often offered to those who are capable of functioning in English. There is thus always a great demand for both native and non-native English speakers to fill English teaching positions in this country, and native English speaking teachers (NESTs)

constitute an important part of the overall language educator population, yet there has only been limited number of studies about them.

It is widely recognized that native and non-native speaker teachers each contribute differently to a learner's overall language learning experience. In fact, team-teaching between them is often considered best for learners as it is possible to get the benefits of what both groups of teachers can offer. However, there is also not much understanding as to how the two groups of teachers actually work together and how they perceive each other and themselves as teachers.

Recognizing the lack of the above in the literature, the present study investigates the beliefs of one pair of NEST and non-NEST about team teaching, including the two teachers' perceptions about themselves and their partners as language teachers. Teachers' beliefs here refer to tacit assumptions on academic topics which teachers consider to be true (Clark & Peterson, 1986), which may come from many sources, including their past experiences and the present contextual factors (Borg, 2001). It is crucial to look into teachers' beliefs, as they offer explanations as to how teachers perceive themselves and why they behave the way they do in classrooms. Furthermore, examining the beliefs that teachers hold in a collaborative teaching model serves to juxtapose the similarities and differences in their beliefs and practices. The study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the teachers and make contributions through analyzing major areas of teachers' beliefs, including native and non-native issues, team teaching, the role of the English language and English teaching, language learning and learners, and sentence structures in English teaching.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Native and Non-Native English Speaking Teachers

Before the study is discussed any further, it is necessary to provide a definition of the terms "NEST" and "non-NEST". Although issues related to NESTs and non-NESTs have raised much research interest in recent years, the terms "native" and "non-native" remain controversial; there has been no consensus on their definition (Kachru, 1985; Kramsch, 1998; Medgyes, 2001). To simplify the issue, this study adopts the definition provided by Medgyes (2001): That is, a NEST is an English teacher who speaks the language as a mother tongue, while a non-NEST refers to an

English teacher who speaks the language as a second or foreign language. What follows is a discussion on related research.

An increasing number of studies have been conducted to compare the two cohorts of teachers, targeting their perceptions of themselves and their counterparts, and their classroom practices. First of all, language proficiency is an issue of great concern since it may contribute to the differences in teaching by NESTs and non-NESTs, which, in turn, may affect non-NESTs' self-image, a critical element for successful teaching. Reeves and Medgyes' (1994) research, using a survey method, investigated how 198 non-NESTs from ten countries perceived themselves in comparison with NESTs. The major finding was that time spent in an English-speaking country, frequency of contact with native speakers, professional co-operation, and other factors influenced the non-NESTs' command of English. According to these researchers, the way to salvage a non-NEST's self-image is to publicly acknowledge the difference in the linguistic competence of the two cohorts and strive to narrow the linguistic gap between non-NESTs and NESTs. Arva and Medgyes (2000), on the other hand, investigated how NESTs and non-NESTs perceived their own teaching behaviors and those of the other cohort of teachers. Their perceptions were compared with their teaching behaviors to see if there were any discrepancies. Five Hungarian and five British teachers were involved in the study, and each was observed for one lesson and interviewed. One of the findings showed that NESTs were perceived to be less professional by non-NESTs, who thought of their counterparts as not preparing for their classes; however, the observations by researchers of the study showed that NESTs were actually well-prepared in their lessons. Another interesting finding was that non-NESTs reported their linguistic disadvantage and NESTs also commented on non-NESTs' imperfect English, which sometimes contained inappropriate usage and mistakes. Surprisingly, the researchers observed that the non-NESTs were fluent in English. The non-NESTs' proficiency level was higher than what they themselves had expected.

The second important issue of interest is teaching quality: Do NESTs and non-NEST teach differently? Do they teach equally well? In recent years, an increasing number of studies on the issue of native and non-native teachers have been conducted in Taiwan. Although NESTs have long been hired in private institutions, their recruitment in public schools started only a few years ago. This could probably explain the recent high interest in this issue. A review of the studies in Taiwan found that these studies

tend to focus on a particular aspect of the practice, i.e., teacher talk and teacher-student interaction (Chen, 2004; Lin, 2004; Wu, 2004; Yeh, 2004). Some of the findings showed that non-NESTs differed from NESTs with shorter utterances and more exact-repetitions, mostly due to lack of linguistic competence. Other studies are limited in depth because only one instrument, i.e., a questionnaire, was employed (Chen, 2004; Ting, 2000). Nevertheless, most studies arrived at the same conclusion that NESTs and non-NESTs teach differently. In addition, NESTs and non-NESTs are also paid differently. Not only are NESTs paid twice the hourly rate of non-NESTs in cram schools (NT$500~NT$600 per hour for NESTs versus NT$300~NT$350 per hour for non-NESTs), non-NESTs have to take on additional administrative work as well (Tsai, 2002). The inevitable question is, are NESTs really superior to non-NESTs?

Strengths and Weaknesses of Each Cohort

The truth of the matter is that the two cohorts of teachers are equally valuable as they have different strengths and weaknesses. Inarguably, NESTs' foremost strengths include their linguistic competence; their authentic pronunciation and vocabulary use serve as models for English learners (Barratt & Kontra, 2000; Medgyes, 2001). Since learning a language includes knowing about its culture, NESTs also have the strength of being "authentic, walking, breathing resources about their cultures" (Barratt & Kontra, 2000). In addition, a NEST's presence is a motivating factor which forces students to use the target language (Arva & Medgyes, 2000). Finally, most NESTs are described by students and fellow non-NESTs as being friendly, enthusiastic, and sociable, presenting a refreshing change to the conventional teaching styles to which students are accustomed.

However, NESTs are not without weaknesses which may hinder their teaching (Arva & Medgyes, 2000). First of all, even though NESTs are more competent in English, most cannot provide explanations to students' grammatical questions and problems. Secondly, NESTs feel "handicapped" to some degree as they do not speak the students' first language (Medgyes, 2001). Next, NESTs tend to have a lower level of empathy with their students and also to hold higher expectations of them, as they have not experienced English language learning process that their students are undergoing. Setting unrealistic goals could frustrate students to the point of giving up. Finally, NESTs are sometimes criticized for their casual attitude to teaching, which could often be regarded as unprofessional by

their non-native colleagues and students.

The "dark side" of being a non-NEST mainly lies in the lack of target language linguistic competence, which contributes to a feeling of inferiority when comparing herself with a native speaker (Medgyes, 2001). The top three most difficult components of the English language for non-NESTs are speaking, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Reves & Medgyes, 1994). Moreover, non-NESTs also lack a deeper understanding of the cultural context of English. Since most non-NESTs are not immersed in the target culture, they seldom have the first-hand cultural experience that NESTs do.

Nevertheless, non-NESTs also have many strengths. First, they are good learning models for their students, showing students that they can achieve linguistic competency just like their teachers. The non-NESTs can also teach language learning strategies better than their native counterparts because the former have had the actual experience of using those strategies. Next, non-NESTs approach the target language knowledge (not the same as linguistic competence) in ways to which their students can relate. While NESTs often struggle with teaching grammar, non-NESTs are most comfortable in this area. Additionally, non-NESTs can anticipate and avoid language difficulties that are to be encountered by their students because, again, the teachers have been on the same learning path before. They are also more empathetic towards their learners and are capable of setting more practical and realistic goals for students. Finally, non-NESTs' knowledge of their students' mother tongue is a great advantage, as moderate use of it could enhance comprehension.

In sum, that NESTs are *better teachers* than non-NESTs may be described as a prevailing misconception. Previous studies have clearly shown that although the two cohorts of teachers have different strengths in classroom practice, such differences do not make one superior to the other.

Team-Teaching

Since both NESTs and Non-NESTs have different strengths and weaknesses, they can collaborate to create an optimal learning environment. Collaborative teaching has been used since the 1960's in the United States, as a movement to promote innovative teaching (Shannon & Meath-Lang, 1992). Initially, teachers worked together in order to include special education children in regular classes and to introduce interdisciplinary content knowledge in the same class (Lawton, 1999). One form of such collaboration is through team-teaching, which involves

two or more teachers in the same classroom. Four types of team-teaching were identified by Cunningham (1960, as cited in Bailey, Dale & Squire, 1992, pp. 22-23), including team leader type, associate type, master teacher/beginning teacher, and coordinated team type, with the team leader type being the most commonly seen type of classroom collaboration between NESTs and non-NESTs in Asian countries. In this model, one teacher would have a higher professional status than the other, often with such a special title as "team leader" or "chief instructor."

Team teaching between NEST and non-NESTs has become a wide-spread practice in schools in Asia. In Japan, the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme was established in 1987 to recruit native-speaker university graduates from abroad to work as assistant language teachers (ALTs) to teach designated languages under the team leader type of team-teaching. The Korean Ministry of Education followed Japan's footsteps about ten years later, establishing the "English Program in Korea" (EPIK) in 1995. In this program, only university graduates from six English-speaking countries are eligible to apply to teach in primary and secondary schools. In the year 2006, EPIK recruited 240 members to join the 1,943 past participants.

In Taiwan, there are two large-scale English language programs known for team-teaching between NESTs and non-NESTs, namely the Yilan Fulbright Program and the Hsin Chu City English Program. The present study focuses on team teaching in Hsin Chu City because it has a longer history—launched in 2001 as the first program in the nation to employ NESTs to teach in public elementary schools. The local city government hired a private language institution to recruit, manage, and train NESTs, who are required to be college graduates with a teacher's certificate in any subject area. For a total school year, two classes of fourth graders would have one period (forty minutes) of English lesson every week, team-taught under the team leader model, where the NEST is the head teacher. Fifth to sixth graders have two lessons per week, one team-taught and the other taught by one non-NEST alone.

Team-teaching between NESTs and non-NESTs supposedly fosters an ideal situation for language learning because it brings the best out of the two teachers, yet studies have revealed numerous difficulties. Stern (1992) pointed out problems in the hiring process, teacher's qualifications, and teachers' commitment. In addition, although all NESTs are college graduates, their academic degrees do not guarantee that they will be good English teachers. It is thus imperative to provide teachers with proper

training, specifically in developing an understanding of the EFL context that they teach in, but most foreign teachers are reluctant to participate in teacher training sessions. Tsai and Tseng (2006) also pointed out that there are differences in the expectations of the two cohorts of teachers. NESTs tend to place themselves as teaching assistants, while non-NESTs expect NESTs to enable them to enhance their professional knowledge. Dialogues between them are needed to fortify the team- teaching, and teacher training is necessary for both cohorts to improve the quality of their teaching.

The Hsin Chu program that this study focuses on has also been observed to have all of the above problems (Chou, 2005; Lin, 2002; Luo, 2005). First and foremost, the qualifications of the NESTs have been questioned, as many of the teachers did not have language-related majors or any teaching experience. In addition, some NESTs have stated that their contracts were not honored by the hiring agency, which has led to a high turnover rate. The NESTs are sometimes expected to do work not listed in the contract, for instance, helping out at sports fairs or other social activities. Furthermore, NESTs and non-NESTs do not necessarily team-teach well together, most likely due to personality issues, different understandings of their respective roles under this model, or a lack of knowledge about their cohorts' culture and teaching beliefs. In Chou's (2005) research, seventy five percent of non-NESTs agreed that they needed to spend a significant amount of communicating their teaching beliefs to the member of the other cohort in team-teaching. Finally, when a NEST leaves, students need some time to adjust to a new NEST's teaching style. To extend previous research, there is therefore a need to understand in depth the teachers' beliefs and the nature of conflicts that arise when NESTs and non-NESTs team-teach.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to seek insight into the beliefs and practices of a co-teaching NEST and non-NEST in Hsin Chu City. The research questions are:

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

2. What are the similarities and differences between the NEST's and the non-NEST's beliefs about team-teaching? Are their beliefs manifested in their classroom practice?

3. What are the similarities and differences between the NEST's and the non-NEST's beliefs about the role of the English language? Are their beliefs manifested in their classroom practice?

4. What are the similarities and differences between the NEST's and the non-NEST's beliefs about language learning and learners? Are their beliefs manifested in their classroom practice?

5. What are the similarities and differences between the NEST's and the non-NEST's beliefs about English teaching, with emphasis on sentence structures? Are their beliefs manifested in their classroom practice?

METHODOLOGY

The Hsin Chu City team-teaching model in 2007 as the context of this study consisted of a joint session between a NEST and non-NEST and an individual session by the non-NEST in a week. The participants were chosen mainly based on their willingness to participate in this study. At first it was difficult to find participants who did not mind spending long hours being interviewed and being videotaped in the classroom; however, two teachers finally agreed to participate in the study. The NEST, Emily (pseudonym), was a Caucasian South African teacher who majored in Literary Science. She taught English as a first language and second language in her country, and now as a foreign language in Taiwan, with a total of 11 years of teaching experience. At the time of the data collection for this study, the non-NEST was Portia (pseudonym), who majored in foreign languages in university, and later went to the U.S for her M.B.A degree. She had a total of five years of teaching experience.

The research was conducted as a case study using four data collection methods: classroom observations, interviews, teachers' beliefs inventories, and document collection. The researcher video-recorded classroom instruction thirteen times, including seven team-teaching lessons and six of Portia's individual lessons, in the months between October and December, 2007. Interview questions were compiled from the literature and refined through negotiation between the two researchers. For instance, there were questions such as "What is the purpose of team-teaching in

elementary school English classrooms to probe into the teachers' concept of team-teaching. What are its advantages and disadvantages?" A stimulated recall session was also incorporated where the teachers were asked to explain the techniques and activities that they used in class. A total of nine semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted in the teachers' native language right after the second classroom observation. The participants were also asked to provide any documents related to their teaching. Syllabus, lesson plans, lesson handouts, tests, and NEST training handouts were thus collected throughout the course of the research.

The study also used two surveys to probe into teachers' beliefs: Johnson's "Beliefs inventory: Approaches to ESL instruction" (1992) and Horwitz's "Surveying students beliefs about language learning" (1987). Johnson (1992)'s inventory aimed at investigating the participants' views on second language teaching. Participants circled five out of fifteen statements in the inventory, the choice of which reflected whether they favored a skill-based approach, a rule-based approach, or a function-based approach. The second inventory, Horwitz's (1987) "Beliefs about language learning", was originally developed to explore students' opinions on issues related to language learning. The inventory was adapted by Richards and Lockhart (2005) to investigate teachers' beliefs about language learning. The statements showed teachers' beliefs regarding foreign language aptitude, difficulty of language learning, nature of language learning, and learning and communication strategies. Participants indicated how much they agreed with twenty five-point Likert scale statements and answered two multiple choice questions. Answers elicited by the two inventories allowed proper triangulation with data taken from the other data collection methods and lent insights into the participants' beliefs during the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Beliefs about the Advantages and Disadvantages of Being NESTs and Non-NESTs

The NEST and non-NEST in the present study share some similarities and differences regarding in perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of being a NEST and non-NEST. Firstly, both teachers agreed that the major advantage of being a NEST is their superior English proficiency, as their language production shows authentic pronunciation, a wide vocabulary, and other features. In addition, both teachers also agreed that the main disadvantage for non-NESTs is their lack of proficiency in

English. These findings are the same as the results from Barratt and Kontra (2000) and Medgyes (2001), indicating language proficiency as the major difference that sets NESTs and non-NESTs apart.

Secondly, non-NEST's perception of the NEST's disadvantages, such as NESTs' ability to teach and their accents also coincides with the findings in Barratt and Kontra (2000) and Chou (2005)'s study. The NESTs are hired from inner circle countries (Kachru, 1985), and speak with diverse accents. As Taiwan's English education at the time mainly focuses on North American accents, students and teachers find it difficult to understand accents from other areas. For instance, Portia (the non-NEST) mentioned that one of the NESTs she had worked with was a black South African teacher who had a South African Black English accent. Portia mentioned that since one of the main purposes of hiring NESTs is to have students follow a standard pronunciation, it seemed to defy the purpose to hire NESTs with South Africa.

There are also findings in the study that were not discussed in the previous literature. For instance, Emily (the NEST), stated that her pronunciation was a disadvantage, not an advantage as mentioned by other NESTs. Emily mentioned she could not understand why students could not pronounce words in the same way as her, even after asking the students to practice many times. Emily's difficulty in teaching pronunciation could be due to her lack of linguistic knowledge, particularly as to how the learners may be influenced by their native language, Mandarin Chinese. Portia (the non-NEST) also mentioned that one of the important roles she served was as a support for students during the joint lessons where she could answer the students' questions when they did not dare to ask the NESTs. This advantage is not directly related to non-NESTs, but to their facilitative role in team-teaching, which has also not been discussed before in the literature. Finally, no literature was found to list the NESTs' physical appearance as a major advantage for attracting students' immediate attention, but this is an interesting finding in this study.

Beliefs about Collaborative Teaching

There are several findings regarding the teachers' beliefs about team-teaching in the study that are consistent with previous literature. First of all, the two 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's

(2001) concept of an ideal English learning environment where NESTs and Non-NESTS work together to complement each others' strengths and weaknesses.

Secondly, both teachers acknowledged the role of NESTs as the lead teachers and non-NESTs as supporting teachers, following the "team leader type" of model discussed by Cunningham (1960, as cited in Bailey et al., 1992). Though this arrangement may implicate that the teachers are of different status, both Emily and Portia mentioned that the labels only indicated the nature of their work, not their status. According to Emily, team-teaching should be "a balance of teaching" where both teachers maintain equal status, although it may appear that the NEST is taking the lead while the non-NEST is supporting the NEST. Emily used the imagery of wheels on a car to describe team teaching:

> If one [wheel] isn't there, the car won't go smoothly. You've gotta make sure that things go smoothly in class. It can only work if both are equally involved in teaching. Even if one is taking the lead in teaching, the other one is doing other things to make teaching easier. Make sure the books are opened to the right page; the students are listening and not drawing pictures, little things like that.

On the other hand Portia stated, "I don't define myself as an assistant, but as playing a role supplementary to the NEST. They [NESTs] are the main focus during the team-teaching, since they are hired so that students can listen to a native speaker. I do some assistant work for them, but I don't define myself as an assistant. I don't think they define me as an assistant either." The two teachers' roles in the classroom were similar to those in Luo's (2005) research, where NESTs were the leaders and non-NESTs 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 tasks. What is special here in the current study is that there is no status difference; both teachers regarded their roles as important support to student learning.

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 to a co-teacher's teaching style and having an easy-going personality as crucial conditions for success in collaboration. Overall, Emily emphasized the importance of the co-teacher's professional background, which could make or break the

lessons. She was once paired with a non-NEST music teacher, not an English teacher, for team-teaching. Emily asked this teacher to translate something in the class for the students, but it became evident that the translation was not sufficient work and her message did not get through to the students because the students still looked puzzled. Both Emily and Portia also agreed that it is important to establish a good work rapport and relationship with co-teachers—advice Oxford (2007) gave in her presentation on team-teaching. Thus, Emily suggested setting a schedule for regular and frequent lesson planning in order to improve the team-teaching, while Portia would invite some of her NEST friends to her house for meals. She would share with them her teaching experience and understanding of Taiwanese culture in an effort to help them become adjusted to their new teaching contexts. Indeed, learning from each other and enjoying the company of their co-teachers are on Buckley's (1999) list of the advantages of team-teaching.

The main inconsistency with previous studies is the teachers' perceptions of their roles. In this study, Emily was informed that she was hired to train the non-NESTs, while Portia thought she was filling in gaps in the NEST's teaching. The two teachers' conflicting expectations echo with the findings of the team-teaching model in Yi-Lan county, in Tsai and Tseng (2006)'s study, only here the NEST defined herself as a teaching assistant while the non-NEST looked to her counterpart for inspiration in teaching. Obviously, factors such as the context, the teaching content, students' proficiency and characteristics, and a teacher's personality and style, could all shape the team-teaching model. Each team-teaching experience is thus unique to the two team-teachers and their contexts. NESTs and non-NESTs are advised to engage in frequent discussions and experiment with the teaching model that works the best for themselves and their students.

Beliefs about the English Language

No literature has been found to compare a NEST and non-NESTs' beliefs on various aspects of English language; hence, the exploration in this study has generated some interesting findings. First of all, both teachers varied in their opinions about English language in their interviews, while their practice oftentimes contradicted their beliefs. Emily believed that English is important, but did not tell the students so explicitly; rather, she just asked students to work hard. On the other hand, Portia believed students should know the importance of learning English; she told students

explicitly that learning it was a way to increase their social and economic mobility. She believes that they should not be pushed by their parents to do their English homework, but must have the willingness to complete it by themselves. The hard work students put in will not go to waste, as eventually they will be able to reap the benefits of mastering a foreign language. Obviously, the non-NEST here was more willing to engage in "pat talks," or offer encouraging messages, than the non-NEST, which may reflect the general role expectations for a teacher in this culture.

In addition, the teachers also differed in their beliefs regarding the most important components of English to be learned. While Emily claimed the importance of vocabulary and grammar, Portia emphasized reading and writing. However, in Emily's lessons, sentence pattern practices occupied a larger proportion of her teaching hour, not vocabulary. In addition, even though she mentioned grammar, Emily rarely taught it in the joint class but left it to her co-teacher. A plausible explanation is that she might think that grammar rules would be much more easily explained and understood when elaborated in the students' first language, and that only the non-NEST could do so. As for Portia, her belief in writing was reflected in the homework assignments she gave to the students, while her belief regarding reading was actually about vocabulary. Portia was not aware of the importance of vocabulary she placed in her lessons. She would train students to get familiarized with the words before conducting drills since she believed that vocabulary was the building block of sentence structures. By so doing, students had the ability to create an infinite number of sentences through simply replacing the vocabulary in substitution drills. This was the teaching method Portia used most often in class.

Another interesting finding was that although NESTs are generally perceived to be the ones providing cultural information about the target-language (Barratt & Kontra, 2000; Reeves & Medgyes, 1994), in this study it was the non-NEST who supplied more cultural information. For instance, the lessons at the end of October shared the theme of Halloween, and it was Portia, the non-NEST, who explained to the students the origins of Halloween in the joint lesson. She also compared the Chinese ghost month with Halloween so students could understand the western holiday better. Portia indicated that her stay in the U.S was helpful as she had experienced North American culture first hand. When Emily was asked in a follow-up interview why she did not share more information about Halloween with the students, she explained that Halloween was not celebrated in South Africa. This incident reveals that the course content

may place too much emphasis on U.S. culture, leading to the misconception that all native English speakers would be familiar with Halloween, or the way in which it is celebrated in the U.S. Hiring teachers from other English-speaking countries of the world would have the benefit of expanding our world view.

Beliefs about Language Learning and Learners

As for beliefs about language learning and learners, there was no literature found to compare NESTs and non-NESTs beliefs in this area. In this study, both the NEST and non-NEST had similar beliefs regarding language learning and learners. First of all, they shared the same opinion that frequent practice of the language and immersing oneself in English surroundings would facilitate language learning. They also believed that a large number of drills for sentence structures, reading, and phonics should be included in their lessons. Secondly, both teachers mentioned that the disparity in students' language proficiency could hinder teaching, though Portia, the non-NEST, tended to emphasize the magnitude of this problem more. High achievers were in a beneficial cycle that upgraded their proficiency, while the low achievers or misbehaving students were in a detrimental cycle that reduced their desire to learn. Both teachers agreed that team-teaching was helpful to eliminate the gap. While Emily was teaching in front of the class, Portia would be walking around to make sure that students were following along. Both teachers also checked on the students' progress when activities were being conducted.

The one difference between the two teachers is in their thoughts on the problems commonly encountered by the students. Emily found writing and grammar to be the main obstacles for students. She believed that some aspects of writing, i.e., capitalization of letters, was difficult for the students because they are not commonly used in the Chinese language. In the classroom, Emily did point out common grammatical mistakes, when students were confused as to when to add the present progressive tense suffix "-ing." She would ask the students, "Do you say soccering?", and they replied no. Students had time in class to correct the mistakes on their worksheets in class. For Portia, she found that students often have difficulties in speaking, reading, and writing. To help the students conquer their fear of speaking, Portia mentioned that she would assign "little teachers," or students with better English proficiency, to work on a task with a weaker student. As for reading and writing problems, Portia mentioned that students understood individual sentences, but often had

problems grasping the main idea of a reading passage. Therefore, the teacher decided to use a more traditional approach, teaching them grammar concepts and using more drills. Another way that Portia used to improve the students' level of English was giving quizzes and exams which forced the students to study. Portia mentioned that the effects of the exams were visible, since students were doing better in exercises such as unscrambling sentences.

The result from analyzing the two teachers' response to Horwitz's (1987) inventory on teachers' beliefs about language learning (see Table 1) showed that the two teachers indeed share very similar beliefs, despite their different backgrounds. Since the answers were on a Likert-scale, they were put into four groups: "Same", in the case where the exact same degree of points are chosen, "similar", where there is only a one point difference in the scoring index (e.g., 1 vs 2, or 4 vs 5), "incomparable", where there is a neutral value in the scoring (e.g. 3 vs 5), and completely different, where the scores are two points different (e.g., 2 vs 4). In the category of foreign language aptitude, the teachers shared six "same", two "similar", and one "non-comparable" answer. In the section on learning and communication strategies, the teachers shared four "same" and two "different" answers. In the category of nature of language learning, the teachers showed two "similar", two "incomparable", and one "different" answer. In the section on difficulty of language learning, the teachers shared three "similar" and one "incomparable" answer. In total, the teachers had ten "same", seven "similar", four "incomparable", and three "different" answers. The similarities and differences between teachers' beliefs are discussed further in the next sections.

Table 1.   Teachers' Beliefs Inventory—Beliefs about Language Learning

Category	Original No.	Statements	Scoring Index				
Foreign Language Aptitude	1	It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	1	2	3	**4**	**5**
	2	Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	**5**
	3	Some languages are easier to learn than others.	1	2	3	4	**5**
	4	People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.	1	2	**3**	4	5
	8	It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	1	2	3	**4**	5
	9	People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning a foreign language.	**1**	2	3	4	5
	13	Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.	1	2	**3**	**4**	5
	19	People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.	1	2	**3**	4	5
	20	Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	1	2	3	**4**	5
Learning and Communication Strategies	5	It is important to speak English with excellent pronunciation.	1	2	**3**	4	5
	7	You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	**1**	2	3	4	5
	12	It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	1	2	3	4	**5**
	14	If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	1	**2**	3	**4**	5
	17	It is important to practice with cassette tapes/ CDs.	1	**2**	3	**4**	5

Table 1.　(Continued)

Category	Original No.	Statements	Scoring Index
The Nature of Language Learning	6	It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.	1　2　3　4　5
	10	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.	1　2　3　4　5
	11	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary words.	1　2　3　4　5
	15	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar.	1　2　3　4　5
	18	Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects.	1　2　3　4　5
The Difficulties in Language Learning	16	It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	1　2　3　4　5
	21	It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	1　2　3　4　5
	22	English is:	

(a) A very difficult language　　　(b) A difficult language
(c) A language of medium difficulty　　(d) An easy language
(e) A very easy language

23　If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take
　　them to speak the language very well?
　　(a) Less than a year　　(b) 1-2 years　　(c) 3-5 years
　　(d) 5-10 years　　　　(e) You can learn a language in one hour a day

Note. Scoring index: 1=Strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Neutral; 4=Disagree; 5=Strongly disagree. Emily (NEST)'s answers are shaded; Portia (non-NEST)'s answers are boxed; Same answers from both teachers are shaded and boxed.

Beliefs about English Teaching, with an Emphasis on Sentence Structures

As to beliefs about English teaching and emphasis on sentence structures, the teachers had different views about the language teaching approaches they used, but not all of their beliefs were reflected in the lessons.

In her response to Johnson's inventory, Emily chose three skill-based statements, one rule-based statement, and one function statement (see Table 2). For instance, Emily's choice of Statement Twelve, "Language can be described as a set of behaviors which are mastered through lots of drills and practice with the language patterns of native speakers" fully illustrated the importance of using repetition and memorization in class. In practice, Emily's teaching did in fact show plenty of instances of the skill-based approach. Emily used mainly substitution drills, for teaching sentence structures, with question-and-answer drills and chain drills. This finding is unlike that of the results in Reeves and Medgyes' (1994) study, where NESTs were perceived as using function-based approaches. This situation could be possibly due to the influence Portia had on Emily, as Portia favored a skill-based approach.

As for Portia, her responses to the inventory were different from her interview responses. In the inventory, it showed that she chose two function-based statements, two rule-based statements, and one skill-based statement. In interviews, she mentioned that she is taking a very traditional approach in her teaching, using many drills and grammar explanations as a means to strengthen the foundation of the students' English. In practice, Portia's lessons showed more of a skill-based approach because of the many types of drills she used, and some emphasis on a rule-based approach in her use of explanations of language structure. Substitution is emphasized because students could see how new sentences are created by simply replacing the vocabulary. Plenty of grammar rules were also explained in team-teaching and individual classes as well. Portia's beliefs showed that her preferences were for function-based and rule-based approaches, which resounded with the findings in Reeves and Medgyes' (1994) study. Since non-NESTs often have more insight into explicit language knowledge and are able to speak the students' first language (Arva & Medgyes, 2000), it is natural that grammar teaching is left to non-NESTs in the joint lessons.

Table 2. Approaches to ESL Instruction

Responses	Approaches	Item No.	Shared by both Teachers	Statement
Emily's (NEST) Responses	Function-based	2	Y	As long as ESL/EFL students understand what they are saying, they are actually learning the language.
	Rule-based	11	Y	It is important to provide clear, frequent, precise presentations of grammatical structures during English language instruction.
	Skill-based	6	N	When ESL/EFL students make oral errors, it usually helps them to provide them with lots of oral practice with the language patterns which seem to cause them difficulty.
	Skill-based	12	N	Language can be described as a set of behaviors which are mastered through lots of drill and practice with the language patterns of native speakers.
	Skill-based	14	Y	ESL/EFL students usually need to master some of the basic listening and speaking skills before they can begin to read and write.

Table 2. (Continued)

Responses	Approaches	Item No.	Shared by both Teachers	Statement
Portia's (non-NEST) Responses	Function-based	2	Y	As long as ESL/EFL students understand what they are saying, they are actually learning the language.
	Function-based	7	N	Language can be thought of as meaningful communication and is learned subconsciously in non-academic, social situations.
	Rule-based	8	N	If ESL/EFL students understand some of the basic grammatical rules of the language, they can usually create lots of new sentences on their own.
	Rule-based	11	Y	It is important to provide clear, frequent, precise presentations of grammatical structures during English language instruction.
	Skill-based	14	Y	ESL/EFL students usually need to master some of the basic listening and speaking skills before they can begin to read and write.

Note. The underlined statements represent the same statements chosen by both teachers.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined a team-teaching NEST's and non-NEST's beliefs about native and non-native English speaker issues, team-teaching, the English language, language learning and learners, and English language teaching with an emphasis on sentence structures. In terms of their beliefs about their roles to play in the classroom, Emily, the NEST, saw herself as a leader, facilitator and even a trainer, and it was evident that she was the one in the center of the classroom, taking control of the lesson. Meanwhile, Portia, the non-NEST, saw herself as a facilitator to the students, thereby taking up an assistant type of work, such as translation, demonstration, and eventually providing students with individual help. With regard to the beliefs of the English language and the teachers' perceptions of what were the most important aspects to be mastered in English, both teachers stated that all aspects were important. However, in classroom activities, Emily, the NEST, practiced many sentence structure drills, and left grammatical explanations to her co-teacher. Portia emphasized vocabulary by using quizzes, drills, and games. Since the teachers were under a constraint of forty minutes per period, two periods for a class, a week they eventually focused on what they believed students needed the most practice on. Both teachers agreed that being immersed in an all-English environment would be most helpful to them in learning the language. In their classes, most activities were carried out in drills, with substitution drills for sentence structures and repetition drills for vocabulary. Once again, the teachers chose what they believed to be the most effective method, under the constraints of limited time and a large amount of content.

In regard to beliefs about teaching, both teachers showed consistency in their behavior in some areas, while contradictions in others. When interviewed about their perception of the qualities of a good teacher, both teachers believed that enjoying teaching is the main characteristic. In practice, Emily interacted with students outside the class, talking to them, playing games with them, along with providing individual assistance in class. Portia used humor, making funny comments about the stories in the textbook to make her students laugh frequently in class.

As to their beliefs about the main approaches to teaching, Emily showed a tendency towards a skill-based approach in her inventory and interview answers. In her classes, she took up a rule-based approach, using

substitution drills, chain drills, and question-and-answer drills to teach sentence structures. For Portia, there was an inconsistency between her beliefs and practices. While her interview and inventory answers showed a preference for function and rule-based approaches, her interview answers leaned towards a skill-based one. In practice, evidence of a rule-based approach, such as substitution drills, was prevalent.

Overall, even though the two teachers thought they believed in a certain tenet of teaching practice, they actually did not execute the practice in full in their lessons, mainly because of the numerous constraints that they worked under. From the teachers' answers to interview questions or questionnaires, we may conclude that sharing the same beliefs may lead to better cooperation in team-teaching. Even if the teachers do not see eye to eye, 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.

Based on the results of this study, several suggestions could be made to policy makers and teachers in order to improve the quality of teaching. Policy makers are advised to consider offering NESTs and non-NESTs mandatory training courses targeting two areas in particular: foreign language teaching (e.g., TESOL courses) and team-teaching. Although NESTs and non-NESTs may have received some training prior to team-teaching, it would still be helpful to have the two cohorts of teachers take the same required courses. Since not every teacher is an English language teaching major, TESOL courses would help teachers improve their practice and understand their students better. Courses on contrastive analysis between Mandarin and English would help teachers gain insight into how the students' first language influences the learning of the foreign language so that teachers would be able to spot and target students' common mistakes. Take pronunciation as an example, Taiwanese students often have problems trying to pronounce the "th" sound, which does not exist in Mandarin. If NESTs do not know that fact, they might think that their teaching method or the students' lack of proficiency is the source of the problem, and not the language item itself. Teachers would be better able to understand and help students with their language learning difficulties by being equipped with knowledge of the differences between the two languages. Moreover, there is a need for NESTs to become informed about the educational system in Taiwan, including, for instance,

the expectations for students' English proficiency at every grade level. The more teachers know of what is expected of their students, the more likely they will know how to plan their lessons best.

Next, teachers need to develop some understanding about team work and team-teaching, especially in terms of ways to work together in order to elicit the optimal effects of team-teaching. There is no fixed formula as to the best team-teaching model as it depends on such factors as the co-teachers' personality, teaching style, expectations, students' proficiency level and discipline, and the teaching context. It would be helpful for teachers to discuss with each other what they feel to be most important for the students and to try out different team-teaching models and see what works best for the teachers themselves. For instance, if the main problem the teachers encounter is that students are at different proficiency levels, teachers may feel it pertinent to accommodate the student's needs by giving individual assistance. Hence, more activities should be designed for use in the joint lesson that allow the teachers to instruct the students individually. On the other hand, if students have the same proficiency level, teachers could try splitting the class into half for each activity planned. Such a team teaching model would give both the NEST and the non-NEST the role of a lead teacher at different class times, eliminating the impression of a difference in one status of the teachers which might be detrimental to team-teaching.

As for teachers, it is important that they establish a good rapport with their co-teachers, communicate openly, adapt to each others' teaching styles, and have periodic meetings to discuss their lessons. NESTs and non-NESTs could build friendly relationships by such social activities as having meals together, helping each other out (not necessarily school-related), or simply spending time to get to know each other. The better the teachers get along, the better they will be at team-teaching, as Emily's and Portia's experiences have revealed. Teachers should also openly discuss any issues with their co-teachers whenever they feel it necessary. A lack of communication could lead to misunderstanding and create a rift in the teachers' rapport. Finally, it would be ideal if all the English teachers in the same school hold periodic meetings to discuss their lessons and planning. The meetings would provide opportunities to plan lessons together, share experiences, solve problems or meet challenges, and jointly complete tasks. The more teachers interact, the more they know of each others' teaching beliefs and about each other; all of these experiences and understanding would help team-teaching.

There are three limitations to this study on the beliefs and classroom practice of a team-teaching NEST and non-NEST. Firstly, due to scheduling conflicts, the researcher was unable to observe the team-teaching model of a single class. Instead, team-teaching sessions of one class and individual sessions of another class were observed. There would have been greater consistency had the progress of the same classes followed. Nevertheless, an advantage did emerge from the compromise made: it was possible to compare how the NEST and non-NEST differ in presenting the same content to their classes. In addition, because several lessons were canceled, sometimes at the last minute, it was not possible to video record as many lessons as originally planned. It would have been better to conduct classroom observations at the beginning of the semester in order to reduce the risk of the opportunity to make such observations being lost due to classes being canceled. In response to the limitations mentioned above, the researcher suggests the following directions for future study.

1. The team-teaching model of at least one class should be observed for at least a complete semester. Researchers would have to observe the same class twice a week, with a team-teaching English lesson in one class and an individual lesson taught by the non-NEST in other class.

2. Research could be conducted into the different variables associated with team-teaching teachers, such as length of team-teaching experience, qualifications (TESOL degree versus non-TESOL degrees), gender, and other factors.

3. A survey of students' opinions on team-teaching would also be interesting, and the results could be compared with the teachers' perceptions. The students' views of the roles of NESTs and non-NESTs may be different from the teachers' own perceptions.

4. Other areas of NEST and non-NEST teachers' beliefs could also be investigated. Moreover, beliefs of NESTs and non-NESTs teaching at different education levels (junior high and senior high) could also be compared.

Despite the limitations, this study has reached the goal of developing a deeper understanding of team-teaching experiences of NESTs and non-NESTs. One can expect that proficiency in English will remain part of the aspirations for our youngsters to aid them in seeking a better future

and that many more NESTs will arrive in our schools to help provide English education. The authors' wish is that more research will be inspired by this study so that a positive collaborative relationship and work environment would be created for both NESTs and non-NESTs and a quality language learning experience provided for students.

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