A CASE STUDY OF EFL TEACHERS IN TAIWAN: IDENTITIES, INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AND INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

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ABSTRACT

This study explored relationships between five EFL teachers’ identities and their teaching practices in Taiwan. A qualitative case study examined the complexities and paradoxes associated with these teachers’ professional, social, political, and cultural identities and their representation of these in classes. The study was particularly concerned with how the identities of the five non-native English teachers impacted their teaching since the political and social-cultural contexts in Taiwan are very different from when they were students.

Extensive verbatim quotations from participants provided detailed insights into the teachers’ prior experiences as second language learners in Taiwan and abroad. Through analysis of data derived from interviews, reflection journals, classroom observations and autobiographies, the research identified several phenomena present in the teaching of these five participants. For example, how the participants explained and compared the culture of English and local culture was based and shaped by their prior experiences as students, their personal practical knowledge and background, their values and beliefs, and principles of learning and teaching. Each participant’s different identities, such as non-native EFL teacher, Chinese, Taiwanese, middle-class of the society, affected how they interpreted what went on in their classrooms. The study found that the five participants’ knowledge of multiculturalism and language awareness, their Chinese-centered education, and their educational and personal experiences were evident showed in their teaching. The participants had difficulty integrating multiculturalism and authentic text materials as well as teaching methods and
instructional content situated in learners’ realities into their curricula. The study also indicated the reasons that participants used mainly grammar-translation teaching approaches.

The linguistic relativity principal argues that understanding across cultures and languages does not depend on linguistic structure but on common conceptual systems, born from the larger context of our experience, in other words, our identities. Thus, because of lack of explicit cultural representations and awareness of cultural differences, EFL teacher education programs in Taiwan should include multiculturalism and multicultural education, teaching materials related to local contexts, teacher and inquiry, and critical pedagogy.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Nature of the problem

The traditional grammar-based teaching approach in teaching English as a Foreign Language has been replaced by a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in Taiwan (Taiwan Today News Network, January 15, 2000). The aim of the communicative approach is to produce students who can communicate with native speakers about their needs, and such a communicative competence asks not only for linguistic knowledge, but also for skill in using the knowledge (Ellis, 1996).

The CLT approach puts a greater emphasis on cultural content. As there is increased emphasis on cultural content, more and more researchers (e.g., Damen, 1987; Kramsch, 1991) view cultural teaching as the fifth dimension of language teaching, accompanying the four widely accepted skills of language teaching (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Therefore, cultural awareness and intercultural communication competence are important in language teaching. Based on the findings in their research study, Jin and Cortazzi (1998) claimed that intercultural communication competence not only enables students to communicate appropriately in intercultural contexts, but also further helps them understand the communication patterns, expectations, and interpretations of others. As Robinett (1978) comments, cited by Zaid (1999), “in teaching and learning a second language, most of the emphasis has been on practicing grammatically correct language, while it should be on which of the correct forms are appropriate in a given situation” (p. 152).
Sociolinguistic competence, which is concerned with the social rules of language use, is equally as important as grammatical competence--the linguistic rules of a language. Poole (1992) concluded, “acquisition of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge is integral to one another” (p. 593).

According to the research done by Dunnett et al. (1998), intercultural understanding that encourages learners within the target culture to question the cultural content and recognize cultural differences offers three benefits: it eliminates cultural imperialism, raises students’ cultural awareness, and solves some of the dilemmas (e.g., possible loss of cultural identity) of intercultural classrooms. In other words, intercultural understanding helps students to stabilize their self-identity while comparing their culture to others. This research shows an intercultural perspective plays an important role in raising cultural awareness and promoting cultural understanding in language learning.

The reasons that I am interested in these questions are because I assume that only a few English teachers in Taiwan are aware of their own cultural identity owning to the education they had. The education of Northern Chinese culture given to the teachers in Taiwan promotes monolingualism and monoculturalism and ignores local culture and languages. In the process of Northern Chinese cultural domination via Mandarin as the medium to transmit cultural knowledge, values, and beliefs of Northern Chinese society to Taiwan, the role of education has always under scrutiny. For example, according to an investigation (Taiwanese E Literature & Arts, February 2001) about the ethnicity of authors in Language Art textbooks of junior high schools in Taiwan, over 90% of the authors are Mainlanders, who are about 13%
of the population in Taiwan. It probably affects how teachers construct their identities and their intercultural perspectives.

Taiwan’s political climate has changed dramatically since the mid 1980s. Striking demographic changes have made Taiwan very different from the (seemingly) homogeneous place it once was. The accompanying cultural and political changes in Taiwan’s society are evident in all institutions, but especially in public schools. One of the most important consequences of Taiwan’s democratization is the languages movement, which aims to revive the major local language (Taiwanese) and other minorities’ languages (Hakka and native languages of aboriginal people). Language policy has been changed from suppressing local languages in schools to legitimizing them into elementary curriculum through legislation starting from 1999. A strong component of the language movement is the development of local identity. Education reform and the cultural and demographic changes require teachers to rethink classroom practice and collaborate in ways they may never have before.

Identity and difference are constituted not through naturalized categories, but instead through practices that have the potential for constant reformation. Teacher identity is a concept, and divisions such as race, gender, ethnicity, and class have emerged as salient ways to think about and describe differences due to specific historical and contemporary power structures and corresponding practices. Identity is also actively produced and reproduced, and does not remain a stable entity that exists before the social world. However, much of what teachers know about teaching comes from their memories as students, as language learners, and as students of language teaching. Their beliefs about teachers and teaching are instrumental in shaping how
they interpret what goes on in their classrooms, as are their beliefs and past experiences as learners. Therefore, in this study, I am particularly concerned with how the identities of English teachers in Taiwan impact their teaching since the political and social-cultural contexts are very different from when they were students.

In the following section, I will begin with an introduction to the socio-cultural context of languages in Taiwan, which includes language policy past and present, language shift, language mixing and language attitudes, then, English education in Taiwan, and my role as researcher in this study.

1.2 The Socio-cultural context of languages in Taiwan

1.2.1 Language policy

Anticipating victory over Japan in the Second World War, the Kuomintang (KMT), the ruling Chinese Nationalist Party, began planning the takeover of Taiwan in 1944. The KMT government led by Chiang Kai-shek fled from the mainland to Taiwan in 1949 after it lost the Chinese Civil War to the Communists. Since then, the island has been politically dominated by the KMT, which was tightly controlled by the mainland minority group until quite recently. The political transformation has had a very serious impact on language education, because the KMT promoted Guoyu (Mandarin), since 1945, and prohibited local languages in public, schools, TV, radio, published materials, public meetings.

The islanders are divided into three ethnic groups. The largest of these groups is the Taiwanese, who constitute about 73.3% of the population of the island, and their native language is Tai-yu (Taiwanese). The other two ethnic groups are Hakka (about 12% of the population), who speak Hakka, and the aboriginal people (about
1.7% of the population), whose native languages belong to the Malayo-Polynesian family. The mainlanders who migrated to the island after the Second World War were called by the islanders "people from other provinces of China" (about 13% of the population). They speak different regional dialects of Chinese. They have lost their language communities, since on the island the number of people speaking the same regional dialect is small, and they are normally dispersed. Hence they can communicate with one another and with Taiwanese only in Guoyu (Mandarin). Therefore, Guoyu (Mandarin) not only has been defined by the KMT government as the only politically legitimate language, but also has become a major marker of identity among the mainlanders. In contrast, the use of other languages, especially Tai-yu (Taiwanese), has tended to be regarded as a challenge to the legitimacy of the KMT rule (Figueroa, 1985).

The introduction of Mandarin led to a major transformation of the language situation in Taiwan. Mandarin was promoted as the sole official and prestigious language. The government allocated the usage of Mandarin to the official spheres: government and administration, military, and education (Figueroa, 1985). The status of local languages was very low. They were treated as merely dialects of the national language by the government. Thus, the language policy of the Nationalists neglected proper planning for the development of other vernaculars (Cheng, 1978). Some examples include: deprivation of the right to vernacular education, ignorance of the social and educational functions of vernaculars, limitations on the use of vernaculars in mass media, ban on Romanized Taiwanese, failure to give the vernacular language the deserved legal status (Cheng, 1978; Figueroa, 1985; Hong, 1992).
government’s restrictive language policy was seen as a form of political discrimination imposed on the local population (Gold, 1986; Hsu, 1989).

The promotion of Chinese culture has also been done at the expense of any attention to Taiwan. The culture of local languages was ignored and banned as evidenced by the lack of interest expressed by major cultural organizations regarding local artistic expression in the form of operas, plays, and folk songs (Chang, 1994; Wachman 1994). The language and cultural policies of KMT thus became a source of political tension, which may also serve to reinforce the Taiwanese sense of group identity (Wachman, 1994).

1.2.2 Recent political change and language policy

Political democratization in the late 1980s has brought changes in the social-political situation. “Full democracy in Taiwan, embodied in the first direct presidential election in March, 1996, the first ever in the long history of Chinese civilization, brought about a new sense of national identity based on the sharing of a common historical experience and an imagined community created in the local newspapers, novels, and print media through local ways of speaking” (Anderson, 1994, cited in Huang, 2000, p. 139). In this context of social and political liberalization, the Government’s language policy has been lessened, and it shows more tolerance for language diversity. For example, in 1987, punishment for speaking local languages at school was officially prohibited. Language tolerance has been used as a medium for political reconciliation (Erbaugh, 1995). The governors or mayors of the opposition party (DPP) have implemented mother languages education in elementary and junior high schools since 1990. The Minister of Education, in 1999,
legitimized the local languages into the elementary curriculum through the Legislature. The language planning in Taiwan has changed from the orientation, language-as-problem to language-as-right, but is far away from language-as-resource (Ruiz, 1984).

1.2.3 Language shift

Lee (1981) pointed out that the “bilingual situation in Taiwan is an unstable one. There is a shift toward the predominance of Mandarin as evidenced by its growing use in the intimate domain” (p. 121). Other studies also found a considerable shift towards Mandarin in the domain of workplace, friendship, and home (Huang, 1988). The most significant shift towards Mandarin could be found among the younger generation. Therefore, it is believed that local languages are in danger of extinction. Kubler (1988) warned that “with the great emphasis on Mandarin in education and the influence of Mandarin from radio, television, and the printed word, Taiwanese and other local languages and dialects in Taiwan are indeed in danger of slowly disappearing—if not day by day, then certainly year by year” (p. 270).

1.2.4 Language mixing

It is common to hear code mixing between Mandarin and other local languages in Taiwan, especially for the younger generation because most people are bilingual or trilingual. Younger people who have received their education in Mandarin prefer to discuss certain topics only in that language. These Mandarin words fall into the following four categories: (1) modern, intellectual or scientific terms; (2) proper or personal names; (3) classic literacy forms; and (4) formal greeting ritual (Kubler, 1988). According to Tsai (1997), these Mandarin words
appearing in local language conversations serve the following functions: (1) to emphasize or add sense of seriousness; (2) to show distance away from the addressee; (3) to signify the willingness to be polite; (4) to signify joy and merriness and (5) to create an ironic effect. On the other hand, local languages used in Mandarin contexts serve four functions: (1) to signify solidarity; (2) to refer to attributes related to their mother language speakers; (3) to create humorous effects; and (4) to show anguish and humiliation (Tsai, 1997, p 85, cited in Jang, 1998, p. 6).

Liao (2000) claims that language mixing differs regionally because of its diverse ethnic and cultural composition. He said:

> It is generally believed that people in Taipei, both Mainlanders and Taiwanese, speak Mandarin better and with a higher frequency than those from central and southern Taiwan. Outside of Taipei, Mainlanders and Taiwanese may speak Taiwanese equally fluently but speak Mandarin with a local Taiwanese accent. The further south one goes, the more one observes a dominance of Taiwanese in the mixed code used. It is often spoken exclusively in some contexts, no matter informal or formal settings (p.167).

1.2.5 Language attitudes and identity

Mandarin has a high prestige status because it is the only official language in Taiwan. Thus, Mandarin is considered to be more formal, official and distant. Hsu’s study (1989) shows that “to be able to speak Mandarin has become a mark of social status, education, success and intelligence” (p. 371). “Since local languages are the languages generally used in intimate contexts, they are associated with informality, intimacy, integrity and attractiveness” (Feifel, 1994, p. 98). However, the rising ethnic identity has changed peoples’ attitude toward local languages. These changing attitudes are reflected in the attempt to preserve local languages and culture, to raise the status of local languages, to expand the use of local language in the mass media,
to establish bilingual education and policy (Huang, 2000).

The attitude toward local languages varies by region because the diverse ethnic and cultural composition is to some extent regionalized (Liao, 2000), and, the ethnic identity differs regionally. For example, over 60 percent of people who voted for President Chen (who was DPP president candidate, presents and identifies himself as Taiwanese) in the second direct presidential election in March 2000 are living in the southern part of Taiwan. As Tse (2000) said:

The ethnic identity of the four major ethnolinguistic groups has been a major factor in social and political development in Taiwan. The interaction of these four groups of people significantly underlies modern Taiwanese history. However, while the identity of individual ethnolinguistic groups and the consciousness of such identity have been well documented and extensively studies, a sense of cross-ethnic group identity among the people living on the island seems to be less clearly defined. One reason for this is that, even up to the present day, people still have divergent opinions on the continuum of group identity (as opposed to ethnic identity), with ‘being Taiwanese’ on the one end and ‘being Chinese’ on the other (p. 157).

1.3 English education in Taiwan

Since the Nationalist government took over Taiwan, English had been the only foreign language subject in the curriculum of secondary education. The prestige of English is based on political circumstance: America has been a powerful friend of Taiwan for the last fifty years (Ching, 1996). The goal of secondary school education was to pass the entrance exams, which led to entrance to high schools and universities. Reading was therefore geared to the entrance exams and seen chiefly as a means to learn vocabulary and grammar that would help the students in that exam. Reading was used as a means to an end, and students were given little chance to develop their own strategies of reading. Students in public school had no native-speaking English teachers. English readings were mostly explained in Mandarin.
English teaching methods, like the other subjects in Taiwan, were heavily formalistic, with rote memory, standardized lectures, and regurgitational exams (Arden-Close, 1999).

Reading aloud was used frequently in the students’ reading lessons at school. However, students were critical of reading aloud, seeing the concentration on pronunciation as interfering with understanding of meaning (Arden-Close, 1999). Discussing a text is not a method students had used in school because English reading lessons had been geared to exams, and therefore a single ‘correct’ answer to a question, given by the teacher, had been the rule. “The attitude to reading in schools tends to the ‘submissive’ pole-in which the reader submits to trying to understand the author’s meaning in a text, a meaning which is single and not to be questioned,” Arden-Close (1999, p. 347) concluded. Analyzing the grammar of a passage in English had been heavily stressed in school reading lessons, too. Reading lessons had, as noted earlier, been used as a means to an end---the end being the learning of grammar or vocabulary, not learning how to read in a foreign language. Thus, students depended heavily on teachers’ interpretations of the texts. Although most secondary schools started to use new English textbooks that focused on the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, the teachers that I interviewed in my pilot study said that most teachers still do business as usual because they lack prior memories of oral learning language skills and models of teachers teaching CLT.

1.4 The researcher’s role: an English teacher’s journey of constructing identity

I experienced Taiwan’s democratization when I was an undergraduate student. Before becoming a freshman, I was a ‘good’ student according to the definition of
Northern Chinese culture, believing what teachers said and what was written in the textbooks (every student of the same grade used the same government-designed textbooks until 1999, the opening of the textbook market). Teachers and textbooks were seen as authoritative sources of knowledge. However, this is not the case in universities. I was “allowed” to have my own opinion about texts we read, but I did not know how because I was so used to banked education. And at the same time, there were demonstrations and protestations about almost all issues related to education, welfare, civil rights, and so on in Taiwan, which challenged what I had believed and learned in the compulsory education system. That is when I started to think critically about things around me and also began to be aware of my identity as an independent person. The journey of constructing my identity started from there, continuing through my masters program in Kansas City, my four years of teaching in Taipei to now.

During the four years of teaching, I believe the way I taught my classes was different each year because of my changing identity and also the cultural context in which I taught. In my first year teaching, I experienced how social class differences widen the gap between students and teachers, and the lessons planned by teachers may not be related to students’ lives and the gap may become wider and wider. The second year, I learned that I had to negotiate my identity within the school’s cultural context to teach my students. I had to say what the school authorities wanted me to say, not what I wanted to say. I learned that only having knowledge of the subject I teach is not enough to be a teacher in the third year of my teaching. I had to apply my pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge and especially
knowledge of the context into my teaching. I identified myself as a teacher, but also a learner, too. Therefore, in order to provide multiple embedded scaffolds to my students, I had to have an on-going professional development program to inspire my teaching and learning. In the fourth year of my teaching, I found that there was complex conflict among my professional, social, political and cultural identities and the presentation of these in my classes, which really impacted my teaching. What I am affects the role I play in my classes.

The way teachers understand and respond to their classrooms is mediated by their experiences as teachers, learners, and persons outside the classroom; personal and interpersonal factors; values and identities, as well as their professional knowledge. Therefore, it is important to provide future English teachers with a curriculum embracing the knowledge of culture and language awareness and cultural pluralism to “challenge the notion of assimilation which unavoidably results in the marginalization of groups who do not wish to accept the experience of “Chinaisation” as representative of humanity” (Zephir, 2000). A meaningful teacher education program must endorse a curriculum of inclusion, which puts the instruction of the language and the culture of diverse groups of students that make up today’s classroom at its center. The need for a strong commitment to the development of cultural understanding within the foreign language program is especially clear, particularly in light of recent developments internationally.

In order to gain an intercultural perspective, foreign language teachers should seek to take both an insider’s view (emic) and outsider’s view (etic) (Kramsch, 1993). “The emic perspective—the insider’s view, or the informant’s perspective of the
reality-is at the heart of ethnographic research. Obviously, the insider’s view of what is happening and why is instrumental in understanding and accurately describing situations and behaviors. The etic perspective is the outsider’s framework, the researcher’s abstractions, or the scientific explanation of reality” (Boyle, 1994, p. 166). Kramsch (1993) pointed out that the “only way to build a more complete understanding of both first culture (C1) and second culture (C2) is to develop a third perspective, that would enable learners to take both the insider’s and outsider’s view on C1 and C2” (p. 210). She also suggested that besides trying to understand the foreign culture, it is important for learners to be aware of their own cultural myths and realities that ease or impede their understanding of the foreign culture. Hence, I am particularly concerned here with examining how English teachers’ identities impact their teaching.

1.5 Research questions

In this study, I interviewed five participants who teach English at high schools in Taiwan. Observation in participants’ classes and autobiographic narratives and reflection journals from the five participants were also included in data of this study. I saw this study as a journey of seeking the participants’ identities and how their identities impact the teacher role they play in their social-cultural contexts. This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do these teachers define their cultural identities? What is their linguistic background? Which languages can they speak?
2. What are the teachers’ language learning experiences? How do these experiences impact their teaching?
3. How do the teachers perceive English and the culture of the target language (Anglo) and their own culture?

4. How do the teachers perceive their own mother language and the culture of the mother language?

5. What do they think of the intercultural approach to teaching?

6. How do the teachers teach (or not teach) the culture of the target language and their own culture in their English classes?

7. How do the teachers raise cultural awareness and promote cultural understanding in their classes?

8. How do the teachers believe their cultural and linguistic backgrounds affect their teaching?

9. What is the role of mother languages in their English classes?

10. How do the English teachers facilitate their students’ mother languages in English classes?

1 Mother language refers to “Mother tongue”.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, I will first discuss the relationship between sociocultural perspectives and second language teaching and learning, then, discuss the relationships between social-cultural identity and language, culture and language, culture and language awareness, multiculturalism and multicultural education and non-native speaking teachers in TESOL. The final section elaborates the impact of EFL teachers’ socio-cultural identities on their teaching and the need of EFL teacher training programs in this regard.

2.1 Sociocultural perspective and second language teaching and learning

English language education has been experiencing significant changes in the last few years in Taiwan. From 2001, primary schools have started to teach English from third grade to sixth grade, and the curriculum is based on the Communication Language Teaching approach. The secondary English textbook is also based on this approach, which is very different from the traditional grammar-translation method, and its goal is to develop learners’ communicative competence. Thus, it is necessary to acquire relevant cultural schemata in order to facilitate students’ learning of foreign languages. Adding the cultural content of the target culture as well as the local culture to the curriculum not only makes learning more meaningful and motivates students to learn English through such culturally relevant content, but also helps students to extend their cultural identity through cross-cultural experiences.

According to Canale and Swain (1980), there are four major competencies in communicative language teaching: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic
competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Among the four competencies, sociolinguistic competence, which involves two sets of rules—sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse, is the key factor in the process of meaning negotiation. Sociocultural rules make the cultural learning more important in language learning because these rules help individuals communicate appropriately in social contexts. Therefore, in order to assist students in attaining sociolinguistic competence, the EFL program curricula and the content of teacher training programs need to add cross-cultural awareness, language awareness and multicultural perspectives in EFL teaching (Dunnett et al., 1998).

"L2 (second language) teaching has been characterized as situated and interpretive. This characterization suggests that L2 teachers’ knowledge is, in part, experiential and constructed by teachers themselves as they respond to the contexts of their classrooms" (Goldmbek, 1998, p. 447). Therefore, teachers’ experiential knowledge, which includes L2 teachers’ ways of knowing and how they use their knowledge, affects how they teach in their language classroom. Teachers’ experiential knowledge includes their social-cultural identities, and is derived from their knowledge of their relationship to the world and their essential experience of themselves. It incorporates the worldview, value system, attitudes, and beliefs of a group with whom such elements are shared (Adler, 1982).

The sociocultural perspective interprets various phenomena related to human experiences as socially constructed, dynamic, and situated in multiple interdependent cultural contexts (Wertsch, 1989). Wertsch (1989) asserted that “the sociocultural approach enables us to recognize the ways in which the phenomena under
investigation, as well as the investigation itself, are socially, culturally, and historically situated” (p. 15). Vygotsky’s three general themes provide a theoretical framework for generating socioculturally situated accounts of mind. These themes are (1) the employment of genetic or developmental analysis; (2) the claim that mental functioning in the individual derives from social activity; and (3) a focus on tools and signs that mediate human mental functioning (Lee, 2000). Applying Vygotsky’s theory helps to distinguish the characteristics of a sociocultural perspective. These include a sociohistorical or cultural historical approach, emphasis both on social and individual activity, and the notion of mediation.

Sociocultural approaches to learning and development were first systematized and applied by Vygotsky and his collaborators in Russia in the 1920s and 1930s (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). For Vygotsky, human activities that take place in cultural contexts are mediated by language and other symbol systems and can be understood when investigated in their historical development. One of Vygotsky’s principles is internalization, which is viewed as “processes through which humans construct minds in interaction with the external world of nature and with other humans, changing in the process both themselves and nature” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 196). In other words, internalization means how a person internalizes, transmits, or transforms unfamiliar knowledge to familiar knowledge in formal and informal learning settings, which is a focus of the sociocultural approach.

Donato and McCormick (1994) argued that sociocultural theory implies that social interaction and cultural institutions (e.g., schools and classrooms) have important roles to play in an individual’s academic achievement, cognitive
development and growth. Researchers (Gee, 1991; Heath; 1983, Purcell-Gates, 1995) identified sociocultural explanations of school failure: a) discontinuities between the culture of the home and school; b) mismatches in communicative practices between nonmainstream children and mainstream teachers, which lead to miscommunication and misjudgments; and c) the internalization of negative stereotypes by minority groups who have been marginalized and often see school as a site for opposition and resistance. Donato and McCormick (1994) believe that sociocultural theory can provide an explanatory framework for understanding and refining our notions of how learners become or do not become competent members of a language learning community.

Based on the statements discussed above, Figure 2.1 (Yen, 2000) has been developed to explain identity and second language teaching and learning. In this theoretical framework, textbooks are used as a tool to identify the representations of identity issues, and language and literacy interact with each other to impact the development of textbooks and identity within socio-cultural contexts. However, identity impacts teachers' perspectives as they interpret the content in textbooks, as well as students' motivations to learn the content in textbooks. Therefore, there is interaction among teachers' interpretations, students' second language learning and the content in textbooks across different contexts. Kantor et al. (1993) argue that the classroom can be viewed as a culture where life is "patterned, constructed over time by members interacting with, and reacting to, each other" (p. 125). Chandler (1994) has a similar view that classroom behavior can be interpreted as socially constructed cultures with patterned ways of acting, perceiving, believing, and evaluating through
the interactions occurring in a particular setting.

Teachers’ identities inform their practice by serving as a kind of interpretive framework through which they make sense of their classrooms as they recount their experiences and make this knowledge explicit. Their sense-making processes are dynamic; teachers’ practices at any point represent a nonlinear configuration of their lived experience as teachers, students, and people, in which competing goals, emotions, and values influence classroom strategies. Thus, identities inform practice, first, in that they guide teachers’ sense-making processes; that is, as part of a teacher’s interpretive framework, it filters experience so that teachers reconstruct it and respond to the exigencies of a teaching situation. Second, identities inform practice by giving physical form to practice; practice is teachers’ identities in action. Because teachers use these identities in response to a particular context, each context reshapes the identities. Thus, teachers’ identities shape and are shaped by understandings of teaching and learning. It is important for teachers who adopt the Communication Language Teaching approach to better understand the important roles sociocultural perspectives play in learning processes, interactions, contexts, and activity/task in teaching.

Second Language
↓
Identity
↓
Teacher
Textbooks
↓
Literacy

Sociocultural Context

Figure 2.1
2.2 Language and culture

Robert Politzer (1959) said in the Georgetown University Report of the Fifth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Teaching:

As language teachers we must be interested in the study of culture not because we necessarily want to teach the culture of the other country but because we have to teach it. If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning; for unless he is warned, unless he receives cultural instruction, he will associate American concepts or objects with the foreign symbols. (Cited by Brooks, 1986, p. 100-101)

From a sociocultural perspective, language, culture, literacy, and identity are interwoven within a social context. Thus, it is difficult to view language learning as isolated and decontextualized. Researchers have started to view language, culture, and literacy from a sociocultural perspective; these include Foster, 1992; Gee, 1992; Kantor et al., 1993; and Pierce, 1995. Alptekin (1993) claimed, “Language and culture are inextricably tied together, and that it is impossible to teach a foreign language without its culture base” (p. 139).

In Nelson’s (1993) opinion, “languages are social constructs and thus belong to the larger culture, which is learned, shared, and passed on through interaction with others” (p. 327). Duff and Uchida (1997) also insisted that language and culture are, to some extent, inseparable. Furthermore, culture relates not only to the cultural content of courses that second language teachers teach, but also to the subtle practices that are characteristic of teaching. Basham, Ray, and Whalley (1993) claimed that cultural and institutional factors are silent but they powerfully influence students’ reading and writing behaviors. If language learners are guided to recognition of the cultural base of their own attitudes and behaviors when learning foreign languages,
they are ready to consider others in a more favorable light. Through this process, the
language learner comes to understand the behavior of the speakers of the target
language and it becomes more reasonable and acceptable. The task of adding the
language also becomes far simpler both through acceptance of the speakers of the
language and through increased knowledge of what the language means, as well as
what it says (Valdes, 1986). In other words, “language learners must have knowledge
of the cultural and social background and behavioral styles of the members of the

It is impossible to teach a foreign language without its culture base; language
and culture should be taught together. Alptekin and Alptekin (1984) and Alptekin
(1993) suggested that EFL teachers should try to build conceptual bridges between
the culturally familiar and the unfamiliar in order not to give rise to conflicts as
learners acquire English. Schumann (1976) cites as a specific example of a good
language-learning situation the case of American Jewish immigrants living in Israel.
Schumann’s hypothesis is that the greater the social distance between two cultures,
the greater the difficulty the learner will have in learning the second language, and
conversely, the smaller the social distance, the better will be the language learning
situation. Hence, the topic and the content of EFL textbooks should be something
reachable by the learner. That is, local and international contexts familiar and relevant
to students’ lives should be used rather than unfamiliar and irrelevant contexts from
the English-speaking world.

Learners should be provided with opportunities to use English both in relation
to local situations and to international circumstances in which they are interested
(Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984). For example, Rosowsky (2000) examined the effect of a minimal culturally based modification of a text on comprehension. He changed all the original proper nouns in the text to the proper nouns that are much more familiar to the bilingual students. The results showed that bilingual students who read the modified text performed better than those read the original text. This is an indication that there is a strong link between reading comprehension performance and cultural bias. It also suggests that, with very little modification, texts can be made more meaningful for readers.

Culture-oriented classrooms not only require that students learn the formal grammatical structure of the target language, but also a cultural accommodation (studying and coming to understanding of the culture of the target language). “Goals of an EFL program become not only culturally centered but also culturally indoctrinating” (Ziad, 1999, p. 119). Presentation of a culture in a program must not encourage cultural stereotypes; students must become aware that human beings are cultural beings; they must be taught the notion of the relativity of cultural values; and they must accept some cultural discomfort when the values of the target language culture conflict with their native language culture. Therefore, it is important for language learners to maintain their cultural identity while learning the target language. Hyde (1994) proposes the “Nativization Solution” as seen in India and Singapore, where English has become independent of the culture -Great Britain- where it developed and has been made to reflect the local culture instead. English, no longer perceived as inseparable from its originating culture, adapts to its new culture. Language learners also acquire their second identity.
Second language learning in some respects involves the acquisition of a second identity. As Morgan (1997) said: “Identity work in an ESL classroom is not just descriptive or interpretive but fundamentally transformative. Wherever and however meanings are expressed, shared, challenged, or distorted, language practices are always implicated in how people define who they are and how they subsequently act upon the possibilities such meanings convey” (p. 432). Each ESL classroom is a resource for community development, where students (re)evaluate the past (i.e., the rules of identity) in the context of the present and, through classroom reflections and interactions, forge new cultural traditions, histories, and solidarities that potentially make their identity change. For example, the female EFL learners in Japan, who were participants in McMahill’s (1997) study, view English learning as an empowering experience. As one woman said “When speaking Japanese, it takes a lot of courage to express my convictions or insist upon my beliefs, but in English I can do so with a sense of being equal to the person I am talking to” (p.617). Therefore, language learning affects learners’ identities to some degree.

2.3 Social-cultural identity and language learning

There is growing interest in language and identity in the field of language learning, and L2 educators are also getting interested in the negotiated, constructed, and conflicted nature of identity. Some researchers in language learning and identity have studies in this area, too, e.g., Canagarajah, 1993; Corson, 1993; Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996; May 1994; Morgan, 1995/1996. However, different researchers have brought diverse perspectives to this relationship and define “identity” differently. Here, I use the term, identity, to refer to “how people understand their relationship to
the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future” (Norton, 1997, p. 410). I also consider identity “as a cover term for a range of social personae, including social statuses, roles, positions, relationships, and institutional and other relevant community identities one may attempt to claim or assign in the course of social life” (Ochs, 1993, p. 288).

Cultural identity and social identity have been found to have an impact on language learning (Ogbu, 1987; Pierce, 1995). Drawing on her data, Pierce (1995) found that immigrant women’s investments in a target language are closely connected to the ongoing production of their social identities. As they speak English more fluently, their social identities become multiple in different social contexts and change over time. For example, Martina, one of the participants in this study, was dependent on her children to perform the public and domestic tasks when she first came to Canada. It was important that she learn English so that she could take over the parental tasks of the home from her children. Therefore, Martina’s investment in English was largely structured by an identity as primary caregiver in the family (Pierce, 1995, pp. 20-21).

In their social-psychological model, Lambert and Lambert (1973) described the changes in the learner’s self-identity as she or he becomes proficient in the second language. They discussed the social implications for the individual and the fact that the learner must adopt aspects of behaviors, including verbal behavior, in order to connect to L2 speakers. Clement (1980) also discussed about the degree to which the learner will integrate with the L2 community and the fact that this integration will
cause changes in the learner's identity in his social context model. Gardner (1985), too, in his socio-educational model talked about an overall integrative motivation towards the learning situation and possible changes in the learner’s identity (i.e., cultural values and beliefs) as part of the non-linguistic outcomes.

In ESL situations, immigrant parents usually react to their children’s learning of English with a sense of pride mingled with a sense of loss. Their sense of loss concerns children’s shifting social identities, including shifts in their relationship to their parents as well as transformations of family values that often accompany children’s adoption of another language (Ochs, 1993). “Ethnic identities are not inheritances or preservations but are, rather, ongoing active constructions that emerge out of interactions among groups within sociopolitical and symbolic contexts” (Olneck, 1995, p. 318). Schools play an important role in the construction of evolving identities. For example, the Hmong students in the U.S. studied by Bosher (1997) and Trueba (1988) developed a distinctive sense of themselves, while they learned English as a second language, as a separate category, and as a marginal and inferior group, which was not simply the projection forward of premigration identities nor was it inconsistent with adoption of mainstream cultural symbols and behavioral norms. Minority students construct their ethnic identity through both transforming their own identities within their families and communities, and negotiating the mainstream practices.

The situation of Hmong students reconstructing their identities in the United States has happened all around the world because most of the world’s languages are not confined to their own exclusive areas. There are only 200 countries in the world,
but there are over 5000 languages (Baker & Jones, 1997). This means that the majority of all the world’s languages are spoken in places in which another language is officially recognized and favored over exclusively local languages. Because the resources of the state chiefly support the official language, any other languages that happen to be spoken within the same country get less support and less respect.

This has consequences for all the unofficial languages, because the social standing of a group of people carries over to the language they speak. If the more powerful, more prestigious, and wealthier people in a country or a region speak one or two languages, those languages will become the desirable languages, the ones people who were not born to them want to learn to speak. Therefore, social and economic opportunity go mainly to speakers of the state-sponsored language; people who grew up speaking less favored languages at home, then learned an official language through schooling, military service, or work experience may not want to admit knowing their original home language (Dorian, 1999). This is the situation in Taiwan, too. Kubler (1988) warned, “within the great emphasis on Mandarin in education and the influence of Mandarin from radio, television, and the printed word, Taiwanese and other local languages in Taiwan are indeed in danger of slowly disappearing—if not day by day, then certainly year by year” (p. 264).

Groups whose languages have no official standing may be actively trying to blur the lines between themselves and certain other groups slightly above them in the social hierarchy by shifting to the use of other languages and by marrying into other groups if they can. Wherever such a process is underway, some people in a particular district may call themselves by one ethnic name while their neighbors call them by
another. Bradley (1989, cited by Dorian, 1999), in his study of Ugong in Thailand, found that the Ugong people did not always admit to being Ugong. They preferred to claim Thai identities and had come to be seen as Thai because moving into the ethnic mainstream (Thai identity) brought social and political advantages that some people of Ugong descent were eager to have. In this case, learning Thai language had made Ugong people change their identities.

Starr and Wilson (1980) claimed that “since language codifies a good deal of cultural information, speaking the language becomes one dimension of identification with the community and a sound basis for discovering important nuances of the natives’ conceptual organization of their behavior” (p. 147). In her study, Saville-Troike (1984) concluded that the relationship between language and identity is very complex; and important clues to its nature may be used to explain the changing patterns of language distribution and use through time. If most attitudes toward language and identity are positive, then people tend to maintain their identity; if negative, then they tend to lose it (p. 197). There is some evidence that feelings about ethnic identity play a role in second language acquisition. For example, Taylor, Meynard and Rheault (1977) demonstrated that personal contact and perceived threat to ethnic identity were the best two predictors of achievement in English among French speaking university students in their study, that learning English posed a threat to ethnic identity was associated with poor self-ratings of English skill.

Language learning has to do with the negotiating of cultural and social identity learning. Writing about Black minorities, Ogbu (1987) says: “one-way or linear acculturation--defined as attitudes and behaviors which learners adopt in order
to acquire literacy and academic respect—would force Black minorities to give up part of their own identity, culture, and language” (p. 167). To avoid this kind of problem, Obgu suggests that school personnel need to understand how minority students’ sense of social identity and cultural frame of reference influence their school attitudes and behaviors. As Saville-Troike (1984) pointed out, bilingual teachers should demonstrate their ability to respond positively to the diverse cross-cultural environment; develop awareness in the learner of the value of diverse cultures; interact successfully in a cross-cultural setting; recognize and accept the different patterns children have in formulating realistic goals. These responsibilities of language teachers define the key components of culture teaching and learning for better understanding of language. These include cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, intercultural communication competence and language awareness.

2.4 Culture and language awareness and language learning

“Literacy practices are almost always fully integrated with, interwoven into, constituted part of, the very texture of wider practices that involve talk, interaction, values, and beliefs” (Gee, 1992, p. 32). Language learning is not only grammar or vocabulary, but also how to use language to “accomplish authentic, human purposes” (Andrews, 1998, p. 6) and how to use language properly in the context. Language learning is much more than identifying the parts of speech in a sentence. The study of the structure and semantics of a language raise students’ awareness of its relationship to the culture it expresses (Byram & Cain, 1998). It is a social activity; we use language differently depending on whom we talk to, when we talk, where we talk and the most important—who we are. Including culture and language awareness in
curriculum can raise students’ awareness of language and culture and also assist them to communicate appropriately in social contexts. At the same time, culture and language awareness helps students maintain their identity when they are learning another language.

Language awareness programs first appeared in Great Britain. Children who were from non-English language backgrounds or who spoke non-standard dialects at home failed in schools, which caused anxiety in British society in the 1970s. Hawkins (1987) argued children came into schools without the tools for verbal learning which the schools required, and British society had attitudes of “linguistic parochialism and prejudice” (p. 2). The children who came to school without the essential verbal skills were seen to fail at learning to read, and to fall further behind with every year that they stayed at school. Hawkins (1987) suggested that including the introduction of “awareness of language” to integrate language experience across the curriculum and other curricular boundaries would help to give every child a chance to “sharpen the tools for verbal learning” in English and foreign languages (p. 3).

Andrews (1998) explained that “language exploration and awareness is an approach to the study of several aspects of languages students learn in schools—not just spelling, usage, and traditional grammar—that enhance students’ sensitivity to and awareness of language as it is used in diverse contexts by real people for different purposes in day-to-day life” (p. 12). The British National Council for Language in Education Working Party on Language Awareness emphasized Language Awareness as “a person’s sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life” (Donmall, 1985, p. 7, cited by Hawkins, 1987, p. 3). Hawkins
(1987) also explained that Language Awareness is “intended to facilitate discussion of linguistic diversity; to develop listening skills as a prerequisite for efficient foreign language study, along with confidence in reading and motivation for writing” (p. 4).

Awareness programs emphasize context in discussions of language diversity or of literature. Including language awareness in curriculum helps students from different language backgrounds, or dialect background to share their language experiences, and helps teachers integrate students’ language experiences across the curriculum. The principles of language awareness programs are: emphasizing meaning, using authentic language found in genuine social circumstances, providing for a developmental view, and developing awareness of several aspects of language (Andrews, 1998). The better language awareness programs will be those that naturally emerge and evolve in the regular lessons and course of language study. Correct language use is determined by its context; as contexts change, so do the standards and criteria for judging correctness. L2 learners have learned that there is no single standard for what is considered correct in real-time language usage, but there are options within the sociolinguistic system. Language Awareness recognizes that the languages people use vary not only from situation to situation, but also in whom they talk to and how they identify themselves.

One of the primary goals of a language exploration and awareness program of language study is to enable L2 learners to develop their reflective or metalinguistic awareness of a wider, more complete range of language features and principles. As L2 learners become more aware of the totality of language and its varying human characteristics and meaning-making uses, they will attain metalinguistic awareness,
and they will, consequently, be more sensitive to and competent in using language confidently, deliberately, and intentionally (Andrews, 1998).

However, the main goals of awareness programs are to promote “bilingualism or bidialectalism—helping students to acquire the standard language (or official language) while maintaining their own way of speaking and thus their linguistic self-respect” (Siegel, 1999a, p. 527), and also provide open discussion and related awareness, which are the best weapons against prejudice (Hawkins, 1987). Moreover, language awareness approaches make L2 learners notice differences between the varieties, which helps them sort out these differences between their mother tongues or dialects and the standard or official languages and help them learn (Siegel, 1999b). “If the classroom is where Language Awareness has to be nurtured, then the first requirement is for teachers to develop their own Language Awareness. Language Awareness begins with teachers’ awareness” (James & Garrett, 1991, p. 5). Without proper teacher education to prepare future teachers, there is no hope for students to build up their language and culture awareness.

2.5 Multiculturalism and multicultural education

Demographic shifts and technological advances make interactions between and among people of different cultures a reality. Students in Taiwan have more opportunities to interact with people of different cultures in English as an international language than their teachers had when they were students. Therefore, how to help students operate successfully in a global village of multiple cultures and nationalities becomes an important issue in English teacher training programs. English teacher education programs are responsible for the preparation of teachers,
who are: “knowledgeable about students’ backgrounds, and abilities as well as their
own (e.g., cultural, linguistic, racial, religious, experiential backgrounds, and learning
abilities); capable of intercultural understanding and communication; willing to
recognize, examine, and become familiar with the learner’s background and home
context; and prepared to understand and address the learner’s educational needs
within the contexts of the classroom, school, neighborhood, district, and community”
(Taylor & Sobel, 2001, p. 489).

However, preservice teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with
theoretical and pedagogical skills; they are individuals who enter teacher education
programs with prior experiences, personal values, and beliefs that inform their
knowledge about teaching and shape what they do in their classrooms. Teacher
educators have thus come to recognize that much of what teachers know about
teaching comes from their memories as students, as language learners, and as students
of language teaching. Preservice teachers’ beliefs about teachers and teaching are
instrumental in shaping how they interpret what goes on in their classrooms, and their
beliefs and past experiences as learners tend to create ways of thinking about teaching
that often conflict with the images of teaching advocated in teacher education
programs. In sum, teacher educators should acknowledge that prior knowledge is a
powerful factor in teacher learning in its own right, one that clearly deserves teacher
educators’ attention and study (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

Thus, it becomes evident that with respect to multicultural education, most
teachers will have limited knowledge. They have limited content knowledge of
multicultural texts and related materials. There is a corresponding lack of knowledge
of how to structure curriculum and instruction for multicultural texts in any subject. These teachers certainly lack prior memories of reading or learning multicultural related texts and models of teachers teaching multicultural related texts.

Research has shown that preservice teachers come with personal concepts of teaching and learning which are difficult to dislodge or modify. Pajares (1993) discovered that it was difficult to change student teachers' personal belief systems. “The process of belief change is difficult and threatening for insiders for they have made a commitment to prior beliefs and see little reason to adjust them” (p. 46).

Realistically, what can we expect to achieve within the preservice education program? The empirical research on the beliefs and attitudes of preservice teachers “challenge the logic of add-on components, quick-fix courses, and cultural sensitivity seminars” (Saha, 2000, p. 43). Santos (1986) believes:

Developing sensitivity to cultural pluralism is not just another subject that college students can master through memorization of facts. Teacher educators are challenged to reach out to more than students' intellect. They must enter the very private and delicate world of the affective domain. (p. 21)

Garcia and Pugh (1992) believe that preservice teachers have to be convinced that multiculturalism is “a valuable concept that will help them become better teachers and be personally relevant because they too are a part of it” (p. 217). Harris and Wingett (1993) believe that “teachers must understand that effective multicultural teaching and education begins with the teacher’s awareness, attitudes, and cultural knowledge and not with the textual material” (p. 5). Making teachers change their view not only involves changes in the content of the curriculum but also in teaching and social practices. Thus, “much work is required to deconstruct some of the
embedded attitudes toward multiculturalism, and to develop curriculum and instruction, methods courses, clinical experiences” (Saha, 2000, p. 45) that will help teachers teach multicultural related texts effectively. Hadaway et al. (1988) have stated, “we are putting students at risk if we expect teachers to be effective in a context for which they are untrained or poorly prepared” (p. 41).

Researchers have studied what has been done and what could be done in teacher preparation programs to best prepare preservice teachers for diverse students. They include six categories: (1) recruitment of teaching profession from minority communities; (2) autobiographical narratives; (3) diversity field experience and community-based service learning (community-based immersion); (4) reflection journals; (5) culturally relevant pedagogy; and 6) systematic and self-critical inquiry.

2.5.1 Recruitment of teaching profession from minority communities

This recruitment includes not only the preservice teachers, but also minority teacher educators, who have knowledge of multicultural education and are intent to know the latest discoveries and theories. In addition to passing on that knowledge, teacher educators must use their teaching opportunities to model that same pedagogy so that preservice teachers have an opportunity to not only consider a culturally relevant pedagogy, but to experience it as well (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1995).

“Preservice teacher education programs use at least two strategies to alter the mix of who becomes a teacher. One strategy is to recruit and prepare many more prospective teachers of color” (Sleeter, 2001, p. 96). According to Sleeter’s research review, most literature contains descriptions of such programs (e.g., Becket, 1998;
Dillard, 1994; Littleton, 1998) but no literature about the impact of recruited teachers of color on schools. Another strategy to alter the mix of who becomes teacher is to recruit and select only those who bring experiences, knowledge, and dispositions that will enable them to teach well in culturally diverse urban schools. Haberman (1996) argued that urban teachers succeed or fail based on what they bring to teaching more than on what they learn in a preservice program. He identified seven main attributes of successful urban teachers through his observations of star urban teachers and argued that the best way to prepare successful urban teachers is to select candidates who bring those attributes, then prepare them pedagogically in urban schools. Therefore, more research should be done on the impact of alternative selection and recruitment processes of preservice teachers who bring knowledge, experiences, commitments, and dispositions that enable them to learn to teach culturally diverse student populations well.

2.5.2 Autobiographical narratives

Banks (1994) mentioned that one important aspect of becoming a multicultural teacher is the need to examine one’s own ideologies (p. 86). The process of becoming multicultural is to question a person’s beliefs, a process that begins with the self. Reading and writing autobiographical narratives might be a valuable way for teachers to begin this process of becoming multicultural. By reading and sharing stories, teachers can develop a better understanding of the complexities of their identities and their students’ identities. Research shows that narratives can be powerful tools in understanding literacy, multiculturalism, one another, and ourselves in a diverse society (Dyson & Genishi, 1994). Narrative opens up the possibility for
multiple meanings and perspectives.

2.5.3 Diversity field experience and community-based service learning (Community-based immersion)

Diverse field experiences have proven crucial in moving prospective teachers toward greater cultural sensitivity (Finney & Orr, 1995; Jordan, 1995; Pohan, 1996; Wiest, 1998). Activities in the field experience component provide teachers with numerous opportunities to interact with students of diversity, which will create a better teacher-student relationship in the classroom and in the school setting. This, in turn, will help students to feel that the educational setting is a safe zone in which they are understood and accepted for who they are, regardless of race or ethnic group. Having developed a solid base of understanding between groups of people, the teaching and learning processes should become more favorable to the success of all students. Moreover, when preservice teachers are student teaching in schools, they "need to be placed with cooperative teachers who have a thorough knowledge of multicultural education, accept a multicultural focus as a classroom need, and advocate multicultural education throughout their teaching" (Grant, 1994, p. 11). Then, prospective teachers can gain support for implementing multicultural education as advocated in their teacher preparation.

"Service learning is a form of experiential education deeply rooted in cognitive and developmental psychology, pragmatic philosophy, and democratic theory…it begins with the assumption that experience is the foundation for learning; and various forms of community services are employed as the experiential basis for learning" (Bonar, Buchanan, Fisher & Wechesler, 1996, p. 1). Community-based
experience can lead preservice teachers to positive insights and perspectives. Critical reflection on first hand experience is crucial for “learning to mesh behavior and beliefs to achieve the important goal of acting with understanding” (Wiest, 1998, p. 358). The experiences in community settings also help teachers become more adept at identifying, locating, and using community resources.

2.5.4 Reflection journals

Richardson (1990) notes that teacher cognitions may be influenced by experience, but that experience is educative only with time for reflection. “When those experiences are in unfamiliar settings with diverse student populations, without structured reflection, teachers’ negative stereotypes can be reinforced rather than challenged (Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000, p. 35). Researchers (Gormley, Hammer, McDermott, & Rothenberg, 1993; Lampert & Clark, 1990) have found that field experiences with guided reflection have promoted greater reflection and help new teachers to process information about teaching and children’s learning more like the processing of expert teachers.

The results in Willard-Holt and Bottomley’s study (2000) also indicated a clear difference in reflections of preservice teachers related to their effectiveness; “the more reflective preservice teachers were the most effective, and appeared to welcome the opportunities for growth afforded by this experience--they sought feedback, problem-solved difficulties, tried out potential solutions, and learned from the children more effectively than did the less reflective groups” (p. 77). Reflective practice is interactive; it often requires working in a reflective way and talking about it with others. Collaborative reflection cannot occur without conversation. Because
collaborative reflection requires communication, culture affects it in a way individual reflection does not (Buckley, 2000). Differences in how teachers reflect collaboratively may depend on their culture. Discussion is a powerful tool for constructing new insights. When teachers learn to collaborate in their reflection, they gain a powerful tool for solving problems.

2.5.5 Culturally relevant pedagogy

Robinson (1985) concluded, based on her experience as a foreign language teacher in Memphis State University, that "the more culturally diverse the teaching strategies and her own interactional style, the more students from diverse backgrounds participated, the quicker their language acquisition, the greater their affinity to the target cultural group, and the more interaction between the class members, both inside and outside class" (p.15). Peecook (2000) also found teacher instructional practices to have more influence on language achievement and on student perceptions of content meaningfulness in mathematics and science than did home educational support; although home educational support had a greater influence on academic achievement than did teacher instructional practices in mathematics, science, and social studies.

"For more than a decade, anthropologists have examined ways that teaching can better match the home and community cultures of students of color who have previously not had academic success in schools" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 466). Au and Jordan (1981) incorporated aspects of students' cultural backgrounds into their reading instruction. By permitting students to use talk-story, a language interaction style common among Native Hawaiian children, teachers were able to help students
achieve at higher than predicted levels on standardized reading tests. Mohatt and Erickson (1981) also found teachers who used language interaction patterns that approximated Native American students’ home cultural patterns were more successful in improving student academic performance. In order to match culture of home/community with culture of school, by observing the students in their community/community environment, teachers are able to include aspects of the students’ cultural environment in the organization and instruction of the classroom.

The next step for positing effective pedagogical practice is a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools perpetuate, so that all students can become productive and contributing members of an ever more complex society.

2.5.6 Systematic and self-critical inquiry

The cognitive and affective power of multicultural education is more effective if teachers directly confront their own values and beliefs on a daily basis. For example, doing ethnography-like research in the communities in which they work, doing studies with researchers to continue professional development, and making diversity an integral part of the classroom environment. Moreover, teachers should continue their narrative writing and reflection journals to develop a consciousness of diversity inside and outside the classroom so they will learn to listen and learn from the students of diversity. Engaging in listening, learning and dialog can help move education beyond simplistic conceptions of multicultural education or tugs of war over political issues and toward the creation of school practices that better serve a
diverse society.

The major goal of integrating multicultural education into teacher preparation programs is to help students develop the ability to make reflective decisions on personal and public issues and to take successful action, and enable students to view events, concepts and issues from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives. Globalization of the world's economic, political, technological and environmental systems has altered the knowledge and skills young people need to become effective global citizens in the future. Our future rests upon the abilities of young people to interact effectively with people different from themselves and transform structures of local and global oppression and inequity into ones that can bring about social and economic justice (Merryfield, 2000). Schools are a major instructional participant in the development of individuals who understand human beings of different cultures and languages. Thus, English teachers play an important role in how students develop stable identities as well as sensitivity to cultural perspectives and language awareness.

2.6 The role of teacher's sociocultural identity in EFL teaching

"Language conveys culture, so the language teacher is also of necessity a teacher of culture" (Stern, 1983, p. 25, cited in Zaid, 1999, p. 117). EFL teachers play a therapeutic role in helping learners through the schizophrenic period of culture shock during language learning. When learning a second culture becomes a negative experience for learners, teachers transform that experience into one of increased cultural awareness and self-awareness for learners. If a learner is aided in this process by sensitive and perceptive teachers, he or she can perhaps more smoothly pass through the second stage (survivor—the degree of acculturation, the stage of functional
language and functional understanding of the culture) and into the third stage (immigrant-the degree of acculturation of an educated learner, one who is literate in his or her own language) of culture learning, and thereby increase the chances of succeeding in both second language learning and second culture learning.

Teachers are agents, or representatives, of the language they teach and the culture it represents. To be effective in this role, they must have a profound sense of how this language fits into the lives and experiences of the learners with whom they engage. Besides this, language teachers are the agents, or originators, of pedagogical activity; they are also, often perforce, agents in the sense of being advocates for the learners with whom they work. Therefore, language instructors must constantly balance the demands of their roles as teachers, their grasp of the language they teach, the learners they serve, and the social context in which they teach (McGroarty, 1995). EFL teachers have to know that English learners have the need to express their own culture and ideas in English. Cultural indigenous materials can facilitate learners’ fluent and grammatical use of the target language (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984).

Dunnett et al. (1998) stated that teachers who are not sensitive to an intercultural approach would probably not be successful using instructional materials. They suggested that in addition to training students for appropriate linguistic performance, EFL teachers must also make their students aware of the proper linguistic performance in diverse types of intercultural settings. And they concluded that an EFL teacher, while introducing some aspects of foreign culture to students, must also encourage them to maintain their own cultural identity. While expanding the student’s cultural identity to promote an intercultural perspective, EFL teachers
need to encourage a positive attitude toward the learner's own cultural heritage. As Hyde (1994) said “to be able to select, accept, or reject ideas, concepts, and pressures, especially those emanating from other and dominant cultures, people have to be equipped with good knowledge of their own culture and history” (p. 303). Therefore, developing culture and language awareness in students should be included in the curriculum.

Globalization and technological development, such as increased tourism, international business travel and the use of telecommunications to farm out routine work, have resulted in the spread of English as an international language. EFL learners have more chances to communicate with people from different countries. English is shared among many groups of nonnative speakers rather than dominated by the British or Americans. There are different varieties of English spoken by people who have different cultures as well, for example, in Singapore, Malaysia, Nigeria, and the Philippines. English is spoken as a L2, that is, an additional language of communication among citizens of these countries (Warschauer, 2000). Hence, it is very important for any English language teacher training program to include culture and language awareness programs and multicultural education in the curriculum. These teacher training programs should “help individuals gain greater self-understanding by viewing themselves from the perspectives of other cultures, ... and providing all students with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed to function within their ethnic culture, the mainstream culture, and within and across other ethnic cultures” (Banks, 1999, p. 3).

The teacher is the primary and most powerful tool of instruction in schools,
especially in Asian countries like Taiwan, where the teacher is seen as an authoritative source of knowledge. If teachers do not have positive attitudes toward their own cultural heritages, how will they teach their students? If teachers do not have clear cultural identities themselves, how will they help their students maintain their own cultural identities? Educators’ responses to ethnic and cultural diversity have a direct effect on students’ academic performances, because teachers’ knowledge, experience and beliefs about ethnicity, culture, and social classes influence how they teach. When developing English teacher education that includes acquisition of intercultural competence, it is necessary to make preservice teachers acknowledge that “the innovation at hand requires changes in their self-concept, in their professional qualifications, in their attitudes, and skills” (Sercu, 1998, p. 256). But first, teachers need to understand their own levels of social identity development in order to be the role and function of a social and intercultural interpreter of the target language.

Thus, it becomes a highly personal and individual matter in which teachers start seeing themselves not only as trainers, but also as trainees. Edelhoff (1987, cited by Sercu, 1998) summarized the main points of teacher qualifications for intercultural foreign language teaching as follows:

1) Attitudes
   - Teachers who are meant to educate learners towards international and intercultural learning must be international and intercultural learners themselves.
   - Teachers should be prepared to consider how others see them and be curious about themselves and others.
   - Teachers should be prepared to experiment and negotiate in order to achieve understanding on both sides.
   - Teachers should be prepared to share meanings, experience and affects with both people from other countries and their own learners in the
• Teachers should be prepared to take an active part in the search for the modern language contribution to international understanding and peacemaking at home and abroad.
• Teacher should aim to adopt the role and function of a social and intercultural interpreter, not an ambassador.

2) Knowledge

• Teachers should have and seek knowledge about the sociocultural environment and background of the target language communities or countries.
• Teachers should have and seek knowledge about their own country and community and how others see them.
• Teachers’ knowledge should be active knowledge ready to apply and interpret and to make accessible to the learning situation and styles of their learners.
• Teachers should know how language works in communication and how it is used successfully for understanding. They should know about the shortcomings of language and foreign language users and how misunderstandings can be avoided.

3) Skills

• Teachers should have and develop further appropriate communication skills in the foreign language suitable for negotiation both in the classroom and in international communication situations at home and abroad.
• Teachers should have and develop further text skills, i.e. the ability to deal with authentic data in all media (print, audio, audio-visual) and in face-to-face interaction.
• Teachers should have and develop further the necessary skills objects outside their direct reach and to create learning environments, which lend themselves to experiential learning, negotiation and experiment. (p. 256-257)

Since teachers transmit textbooks, how they interpret the textbooks will affect students’ learning. Norton (1997) demonstrated convincingly that “culture relates to not only the cultural content of the courses L2 educators teach but also the subtle practices that are characteristic of their teaching the way they arrange seating in their classrooms, the questions they ask, the stories they tell, the exercises they set” (p. 415). The classroom relationships and interactions both consciously and
unconsciously define what is desirable and possible for learners. The influential role of the teacher is determined not only by the explicit content of the lessons but by the type of materials incorporated into a lesson and the methods used by the teacher. Each teacher would have different social-cultural identities; each one would define them differently.

"Culture is not just a body of knowledge; it comprises implicit assumptions, dynamic processes, and negotiated relationships" (Duff & Uchida, 1997, p. 476). The two Japanese teachers in Duff and Uchida's study (1997), for example, although sharing a similar cultural history, had different understandings of language and culture, which were implicated in their identities and practices as teachers. Miki saw herself as a teacher of language, and not culture, and she believed that the transmission of culture was best left to native speakers of English. Kimiko, on the other hand, believed that language and culture were inseparable and dedicated her teaching to raising learners' cross-cultural awareness. Such data highlight interesting disparities among teachers and it also brings out the issue of what teacher educators and teacher preparation programs should do to prepare future English teachers in Taiwan.

2.7 Non-native speaking teachers in TESOL

In the world today, the spread of the use of English in education, informational technologies, travel and politics motivates more people to learn the English language. While this great demand for English has increased the number of English users to almost 2 billion (Crystal, 1997), the situation has also alarmed TESOL professionals. The need and interest which rose with the globalization of
English and the recognition of world English (Crystal, 1997) has stimulated considerable growth in the number of English language teachers, since the solution to world ESL/EFL needs is found to lie in providing language teachers with a high degree of training (Kachru, 2001). However, even the combined resources of all the English-speaking countries are inadequate to provide the materials, texts and teachers needed to meet worldwide demands. Since the number of native English-speaking teachers (NETs) has not been sufficient to supply the world demand, a need for nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNETs) has grown more, and so has the concern regarding their roles and effectiveness in the profession.

NNETs' concerns, perceptions, identities, and the examination of the categorization of "nonnative English-speaking professionals" in TESOL have generated a great interest since the 1960s. In fact, the issue of native speaker (NS) versus nonnative-speaker (NNS) has been controversial for quite some time (Medgyes, 1992, 1994; Phillipson, 1992, 1992). For example, Chomsky defined a native speaker of English as an "ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly" (cited in Braine, 1999, p. xv). According to the Chomskyan notion, linguistic competence is based on intuitive knowledge of what is grammatical and ungrammatical in a language, and that is what gives the native speaking teacher superiority.

Medgyes (1992) also examined the question of linguistic acceptability among NS and NNS teachers of English. Taking language competence as a variable of teaching skill, he considered NNETs as inferior and handicapped. He concentrated on the differences between NETs and NNETs in term of their teaching practice. He
argued that NETs and NNETs teach English differently because they use English differently; thus a NNS could never achieve a NS’s competence. However, he suggested that NNETs have some other strength. For example, they can (a) serve as successful “imitable models” for language learners, (b) teach learning strategies more effectively, (c) provide more information about the English language, (d) can better anticipate language difficulties, (e) be more empathetic to the needs and problems of language learners, and (f) take the advantage of sharing the learner’s mother tongue.

However, in recent years, nativeness has no longer been seen as a key element in effective second language teaching. As Kachru (2001) stated:

Those privileged constructs of “nativeness” in English studies are debatable. On the cross-cultural, functional and pragmatic grounds. In other words pedagogy and “nativeness” are clearly not related, and well-trained English language educators from any circle have the credential for teaching English. This myth has over the years developed into linguistic apartheid or racism. (p.3)

Other ELT professionals and scholars unraveled the causes and consequences of the NS-NNS dichotomy and made the nonnative English-speaking teachers’ voices heard regarding their profession.

Phillipson (1992) addressed the relationship between the native and nonnative-speaking professionals labeling the issue the “native speaker fallacy.” He tried to falsify the notion that the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker. He pointed to a number of weaknesses and contradictions in the fallacy. He also claimed that the knowledge of how the English language worked, insights into the language learning process, and the ability to analyze and explain the language were within the reach of nonnative teachers as well. The features ascribed to native speakers of
English could be attained through training, he claimed. He underlined the importance of teacher training in ELT, emphasizing the fact that professionalism required "creation and legitimation" of a certain type of knowledge or expertise. Phillipson (1992) argued that the untrained or unqualified native speaker is a "menace because of ignorance of the structure of the mother tongue" (p. 14) and that those who are not certified as professionals do not have same competence and should be "prevented from practicing."

Similarly, Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999) directed attention to the issue of raising "collective consciousness" (p. 127) of teacher trainees in the present TESOL programs. They drew attention to the fact that successful teaching does not depend on nativeness, but rather on the teacher's knowledge, skills, training, experience, and personality. For Samimy and Brutt-Griffler, in effective teacher education programs, there needs to be a stronger emphasis on the issues of multidimensionality and expertise, rather than nativeness and authenticity. They also suggested the teachers of English as a second or foreign language should have proven experience and success in learning and using a second/foreign language themselves, and that they should have profound familiarity with the language and culture of the learners they are responsible for. In their study, Samimy and Brutt-Griffler also shed light on the beliefs and perceptions of nonnative professionals. Their study revealed that NNS teachers perceived themselves as having certain strengths by the very nature of their being nonnative-speakers of English. They did not feel "inferior" or "less competent" than NS teachers in teaching, but rather perceived themselves as "advantaged" as a result of (a) having empathy, (b) being able to understand the needs of L2 learners,
being a role model, and (d) having acquired immense knowledge of English grammar. However, they admitted they felt “disadvantaged” in comparison to NS teachers due to perceived language needs, a lack of role models, and/or perceived prejudice based on ethnicity, accent, or nonnative status.

Regarding the issue of the race and ethnicity of nonnative English-speaking teachers, Amin (1997) underlined the fact that there is a need to define the terms native and nonnative to emphasize that there is no intrinsic connection between race and ability in English. In her study, she examined the connection between the attitude of ESL students to non-White teachers and their investments in learning English. She argued that students who had negative perceptions of their teacher as a minority and a nonnative-speaker of English had a negative impact on their teacher’s identity formation. Like Kachru (2001), Amin also claimed that such conceptualizations of NNS teachers were constructed on the basis of racism, and “this association of the native speaker with ownership of English and good pedagogy disempowers the non-White teacher” (p.582).

Like Amin, Tang (1997) also focused on the professional identity of NNS teachers in terms of their power and status in TESOL. Based on the results of a survey conducted in a teacher retraining course for NNS teachers in Hong Kong, she reported that NNS teachers perceived that NS teachers were more respected models in English language learning. However, she underlined the fact that perceptions regarding the “threatened” (p. 578) confidence and authority of NNS teachers vary form one country to another. For example, in some countries, like China, NNS teachers do not feel themselves inferior or less able than NS teachers. On the
contrary, in their classes, the shared mother tongue is seen as a useful tool in teacher-student interaction. Also, the teachers' previous L2 learning experience offers them a better understanding of the problems and weaknesses of their students. Finally, the NNS teachers perceived themselves more advantaged than their counterparts since they favor error correction, and better prepare students for tests and examinations.

In sum, in the field of TESOL, the questions rose about whether English belongs to native speakers of English, to speakers of standard English, to White people, or to those who speak it regardless of their linguistic and cultural histories have had a direct impact on our perception of the relationship between language, identity, and the ownership of English.

2.8 Preservice English teacher education

English teachers are often aware that communicative L2 teaching emphasizes a student-centered classroom. However, without past teaching experience and knowledge of learner-centered teaching, preservice teachers lack an established set of practical responses to problems and may, instead, base their teaching on their own learning experiences (Duff & Uchida, 1997). The decisions that teachers make in their classrooms are based and shaped by their prior experiences as students, their personal practical knowledge, their values and beliefs as well as principles of learning and teaching. Teacher educators have to know that what teachers know about teaching is largely socially constructed out of the experiences and classrooms from which teachers have come. Furthermore, how teachers actually use their knowledge in classrooms is highly interpretive, socially negotiated, and continually restructured within the classrooms, the schools and the societies where teachers work (Freeman &
The political climate of Taiwan has changed dramatically since the mid 1980s. The accompanying cultural and political changes in Taiwan’s society are evident in all institutions, but especially in education. Taiwan faces a challenge of the reconstruction of the education system. Reconstructing the educational system means reeducating not only students but also teachers. The education given to teachers is still dominated by North Chinese culture which promotes monolingualism and ignores local cultures and languages. Therefore, it is important to prepare preservice teachers with the knowledge, attitude and skills to integrate the curriculum with the local culture or interpret the content of materials from an indigenous perspective, and also be “responsive to local needs, to ensure such assistance opportunities to the people it purports to help, and to promote ownership and local responsibility in the long-term sustainability of endeavors” (Dimmitt, 1998, p. 164).

The goal of a reformulated education system is to “develop teachers who can be more critical of the educational ideologies they promote; who are more flexible about the methodologies and approaches used in their classrooms (i.e., who can justify their actions both theoretically and practically; and who can challenge previously demarcated boundaries of race, culture, and language” (Samuel, 1998, p. 580). In short, the system should develop critical, reflective practitioners and acknowledge the following focuses:

1) the reexamination of the philosophical basis of education, teachers and students;
2) the reexamination of the conceptions of self-identity developed by teachers and students; of the ideological basis of racial, linguistic, and cultural boundaries, and of
the realm of possibilities for alternate and wider views of self-identity within a changing sociopolitical context; 3) the development of alternate curricular practices within preservice teacher education institutions with the purpose of raising the quality of teachers’ critical reflection and action research skills in a way that will fuel the process of active intervention through research (this will enable teachers to see themselves as agents of change.); and 4) the development of system of collaborative partnerships within schools and between schools and teacher education institutions to address the curriculum policy intentions of the new system (Samual, 1998).

Through this literature review, it is clear that language, culture, literacy and identity are interwoven within a social context, in which teachers and learners try to balance each component in their classrooms. Teachers have to consider the culture learners bring to the classroom and its relationship to the target culture in order to help students acquire knowledge of a target culture and the intercultural skills in relation to target culture peoples. Teachers also have to be aware of their own cultures because it is a significant factor in how teachers and students perceive language learning and how they evaluate each other’s roles and classroom performance.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

The major purpose of this study was to investigate English teachers' identities and the relationship with their teaching in Taiwan. This research intended to answer:

1) how did teachers' cultural awareness and intercultural understanding affect their teaching? 2) how did the teachers believe their cultural and linguistic backgrounds affected their teaching? 3) how did the teachers' previous education in Taiwan and overseas affect their teaching? 4) how did the teachers encourage students to have a positive attitude toward their own cultural heritage when they promoted intercultural perspectives? 5) how did the teachers integrate language learning into meaningful student tasks or activities to help students maintain their identities? 6) how did the teachers facilitate their students' mother languages in English classes?

3.1 Case study

The research methodology used in this study is a form of case study analysis. A case study, according to Yin (1989) and Stake (1995), is a comprehensive research strategy for understanding complex social phenomena and the detailed interaction within its contexts. It is an especially useful research technique for examining "how" or "why" questions, events over which researchers have little control, and phenomena within real-life contexts. In general, it allows an investigator to retain "the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events-such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries" (Yin, 1989, p. 3).

Case study research is not sampling research; that is a fact asserted by all the major researchers in the field, including Yin, Stake, Feagin and others. However,
selecting cases must be done so as to maximize what can be learned in the period of
time available for the study. Case studies are multi-perspective analyses. This means
that the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of the actors, but also
of the relevant groups of actors and the interactions among them. This one aspect is a
salient point among the characteristics that case studies possess. They give a voice to
the powerless and voiceless. When sociological investigations present many studies
of the homeless and powerless, they do so from the viewpoint of the “elite” (Feagin,

Case study is known as a triangulated research strategy. Snow and Anderson
(cited in Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991) asserted that triangulation can occur with
data, investigators, theories, and even methodologies. Stake (1995) stated that the
protocols that are used to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations are called
triangulation. The need for triangulation arises from the ethical need to confirm the
validity of the processes. In case studies, this could be done by using multiple sources
of data (Yin, 1984), usually involving interview, observing, and analyzing
documents. The unique strength of case study is, according to Yin (1989, p. 8), “its
ability to deal with a full variety of evidence” including documents, archival records,
interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts.
Interview, observation, and interpretation are the three distinctive methodological
characteristics of case study research (Yin, 1989; Stake, 1995).

The case study may involve the issues of reliability, validity, and
generalizability as it presents a part of the society not whole. But researchers always
can use triangulation to have more valid data to strengthen the study. The technique is
one of trying to arrive at the same meaning by at least three independent approaches. 

In this study, for example, a finding--exam-oriented teaching which has been 
triangulated with several independent data-holdings like interviews, reflection 
journals and classroom observation.

Central to qualitative case study is for the researcher to gain the emic, or 
insider’s perspective, this is, the perspective of the participants in the research study. 
The emphasis on understanding the emic perspective is not incompatible with 
inclusion of the etic, or outsider’s perspective. The perspective of the researcher helps 
him/her to make conceptual and theoretical sense of the phenomenon in terms of the 
researcher’s professional experience. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981), the 
researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are 
mediated primarily through the human instrument as distinct from an inventory or 
questionnaire. The human researcher is characterized by responsiveness to context 
and sensitivity to non-verbal cues, and by the ability to consider the total context, 
adapt techniques to the circumstances, process data immediately, clarify and 
summarize as the study evolves, and explore anomalous responses.

This research was conducted to gain understanding of the EFL teachers’ 
identities and their teaching in Taiwan. In this study, participants are from three 
different ethnic categories and three different schools. Therefore, this research is a 
multiple case study. A single case will contain data, often voluminous, from a 
multiplicity of sources, and this data may be incompatible or even contradictory. 
Multiple cases will involve all of these variations times the number of cases in the 
study, involving considerable attention to data management. A multiple case study
requires two stages of analysis, the within-case and the cross-case analysis. In the former, each case is first treated as a comprehensive unit in and of itself, and the data analyzed and triangulated within the integrity of that case. The cross-case analysis then seeks to build abstractions across the cases (Merriam, 1998). Yin (1984) describes this as an attempt “...to build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details” (p. 57).

As a research method, multiple case studies are like single case studies except multiple case studies are more robust than a single case study, making them more compelling (Yin, 1989). The validity of multiple case study methodology is grounded in the idea that the macro and the micro issues are not separate and that the cases do not exist in isolation: “The micro is viewed an expression of the macro, the particular an expression of the General. It is as if the whole lodges itself in each part in the form of a genetic code” (Burawoy, 1991, p. 272).

This study does not intend to generalize from its findings, but, following Guba and Lincoln (1989), it will aim for transferability. The uniqueness of the bounded systems, the cases, the English language teachers in my study, can reveal knowledge about a phenomenon we would not otherwise have access to. As Stake (1995) said, the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does. There is emphasis on uniqueness, and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself (p. 8).
3.2 Sample selection

The subjects in my study were five English instructors teaching at three senior high schools each located, in Taipei City Taipei province and Kee-long (northern Taiwan). As mentioned in Chapter One, ethnic identity differs regionally in Taiwan because the diverse ethnic and cultural composition is to some extent regionalized. Therefore, I chose participants located in different provinces of Taiwan. The three school sites were chosen on the basis of personal relationship with each instructor, each of whom is a dear friend from when I was an undergraduate student, and each helped me get access to the research site and other English teachers. Therefore, the subjects were selected using convenience and snowball sampling. One of the schools is a private senior high school; the other two are public senior high schools. I chose English teachers from different ethnic categories to be the samples in my study in order to investigate their identities. English teachers from different ethnic categories served as the samples in my study in order to investigate identity dynamics.

I selected these samples based on time, location, duration of stay in Taiwan (four months), access, and subjects’ willingness. I had communicated and explained my study through e-mail, and gotten their agreements before I went back to Taiwan to collect data. The subjects’ information was strictly confidential and all data were collected anonymously. The following section outlines some basic information about each study participant, including place of birth, educational background, post-college work experience and teaching philosophy.

Penny was born and raised in Kushung, the largest city in southern Taiwan. Both of her parents are Taiwanese. She said she is a very typical Taiwanese because
her immediate surrounding was completely Taiwanese and she can speak Taiwanese very well. Then, she went to National Cheng-kung University for her undergraduate degree in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. The university is a 40 minute-drive north of Kushung, the oldest city in Taiwan. She enrolled in many English literature and drama courses that influenced how she teaches English. She said: "How to know and understand the meanings behind the language is very important in teaching foreign languages. We have to know the culture of the language to really know how to use the language." She graduated in 1992 and worked for an import-company as a secretary for one year after graduation. Then, she started teaching in private high schools in Kushung, Taipei City and Keelung. Although she did not study abroad, her one-month stay with a British family in London and other travel experiences, gave her some new opinions about teaching English.

Florence was born and raised in Taipei province and attended the same college as Penny, in the same department as well. After receiving a Bachelor's degree in 1992, she studied for a Master's degree in the United Kingdom for one year. Then, she taught at a private high school in Taipei province for 5 years and got her teaching license at the same time. Then, she transferred to a new public high school in Taipei province. She has been there ever since. She believes that the main goal of her English class is to let her students like to come to her class and become interested in English. Even though some students may have bad grades in English, they may still want to pick up English again later in their lives. But once they dislike English, they will not want to touch English again. During her college career, she tutored junior high students, and foreign students learning Mandarin at a program sponsored by her
university. Her father is from Mainland China and her mother is Taiwanese. Her Taiwanese is not good as she wants. She said she feels closer to the people when they speak Taiwanese to her.

**Jenny** was born in Taipei city, but moved to Los Angeles and lived there for three years when she was twelve. Then, she moved back to Taiwan and lived in Chan-hua while attending high school, which is located in central Taiwan. She attended the same college and enrolled in the same department as the first two participants. After she earned her bachelor’s degree in 1992, she worked in the government Department of Tourism for a year; then, she worked for a local trade company the following year. Then, she started teaching at a private high school in Taipei province and got her teaching license at the same time. She transferred to another private high school in Taipei City and has been teaching there ever since. Both her parents are Taiwanese. Because she had lived in different places during her school years, she said that this experience helped her to adjust to different cultures and also become more aware of her identities. According to her interview she feels that she has a clear sense of her identities.

**Flora** was born and raised in Taipei city. Although her parents are both Taiwanese, she is a typical Taipei Taiwanese in that she cannot speak Taiwanese. She attended National Chanhua Normal Teacher University, which is located in central Taiwan. She graduated in 2001. She started teaching at a public high school after she graduated. When I interviewed her, she had gotten admitted into Edinburgh University to study for a Masters degree beginning September 2002. She said that she wanted to be an English teacher because one of her English teachers in high
school had inspired her. She said that she wants to be different from her teachers, especially in the way they teach. However, she found that she is teaching her students the way she had been taught. It is hard to get rid of her own learning experience. She also tries to inspire students' interest in her teaching, for example, by using popular songs and TV programs.

Wendy has been teaching for eight years. She was born and raised in Taipei city. Her parents are from Mainland China. She graduated from a private university. Then, she completed a Masters degree in Kansas, where she met her husband and got married. After receiving their degrees, they lived and worked in the US for several years. But they felt that they could not fit into mainstream American society, so they came back to Taiwan. However, Wendy cannot speak Taiwanese and she feels that she is losing her right to live in Taiwan, ever since President Lee, a Taiwanese, became the leader of Taiwan. She feels that she is no longer able to fit into mainstream Taiwanese society as well. In the classroom, she respects each student's willingness to learn and each student's sense of identity. That is why she avoids mentioning politics, news and social issues in the classroom, so as not to confuse the students' identities with her own. She does not communicate messages in textbooks hidden below the surface.

3.3 Data collection

One of two methods of data collection predominates; the other (s) plays a supporting role in gaining an in-depth understanding of the case (Merriam, 1998, p. 137). No one can attend to all things in an observation or think of all possible questions that could be asked in an interview. At best, the researcher is guided by the
focus of the study and by being open and sensitive to new ideas and insights as they emerge during the process (Merriam, 1998, p. 139). As Patton (1990) pointed out, “multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective... by using a combination of observations, interviewing, and document analysis, the fieldworker is able to use different data sources to validate and cross-check findings” (p. 244).

3.3.1 Interview

In this multiple case study, three major sources of data were used to collect information needed to answer the research questions of this investigation. They are interview, participant autobiography and teaching journal. Interviewing has become a widely used means for data generation in qualitative research. The main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information (Merriam, 1998). The researcher wants to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind (Patton, 1990). As Patton explains:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe.... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective (p. 196).

Van Manen (1990) described the study of culture, the study of individual’s perceptions of interactions in certain experiences, the study of people’s feelings about particular issues, and the conversational interview that includes personal life histories. Because dialogue encourages a reflective attitude from the participant, there is a
richer understanding of the lived experience. It is of utmost importance that interviews be conducted with great respect for human dignity and well within the comfort of the interviewee (Ritcher, Shulman, Kirkendall, & Birdwhistell, 1991). Weber (1986) wrote of the element of trust and hope between researcher and participants, who hope the research will be of value and that the interviewer will not misinterpret the intentions of the story. "...In the very invitation there is a sense of trust and a confirmation of the participant as a human being of importance" (Weber, 1986, p. 67) but being interviewed is "like taking your clothes off in public" (p. 66).

Each participant was interviewed three times for periods of 60 to 90 minutes over spring semester 2002 (from middle of February to the end of June). The interview questions were developed from the conceptual framework and literature reviews, and were revised during the interviews when additional sources or ideas emerge from the process (See Appendix A). They were designed to obtain demographic information and substantive content. Each individual participant was asked to provide background information, such as ethnic group membership, gender, age, years of teaching and language speaking and listening abilities. The interview questions are open-ended questions. Each of the interviews was tape-recorded. Each of the interview audiotapes was transcribed by me and stored in computer files.

I also conducted interviews with one student of each participant after classroom observation to gain a deeper understanding of the cases as a supporting role. My intent was to see how students felt about their teachers’ teaching; to what level they understood their teachers, why they had trouble with English or why they did not. The interviews with teachers and students were semi-structured; initial
questions had been prepared and are included in the Appendix A and B. However, based on responses, the interview may follow different tacks. “This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). The informal conversations among the participants and me, the participants with their colleagues, and the participants with their students or with me during break or after school also were used in an attempt to gain more of an emic perspective, as well as confirm the results of observations. The field notes of the informal conversations were also included in the data. The subjects’ information was strictly confidential and all data was collected anonymously.

3.3.2 Autobiographical narratives

Autobiographies are one kind of personal document, and they are “a reliable source of data concerning a person’s attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world” (Merriam, 1998, p. 116). Obviously personal documents are not representative or necessarily reliable accounts of what actually may have occurred, since the material is highly subjective in that the writer is the only one to select what he or she considers important to record. However, they do reflect the participant’s perspective, which is what most qualitative research is seeking (Merriam, 1998). Autobiography, which is the primary way through which humans organize their experiences into meaningful episodes (Richardson, 1995), is created by noting the connections between events and the causality of events. Connelly and Clandinin (1995) discuss three desires: the desire to tell stories, the desire for relationship, and the desire to reflect. The argument for the use of autobiography is based on the premise that humans are
storytelling creatures who lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives. We begin to know our own stories better by hearing others' stories in which we hear echoes or in which we see new shades of meaning, causing us to change practices or to value the knowing. There are multiple possible meanings to an autobiography depending on the secular, personal, or institutional frame placed around the story. There are common marks such as the search for the voice of the participants, the voice of the place, the voice not heard by outer audiences, and the voice of theory (Brown & Gilligan, 1991; Randall, 1985; Seidman, 1991).

During the spring break (at the beginning of April), I asked participants to write their autobiographies of their language and culture learning experiences, for example, how they learned to use languages and interact appropriately in real-life situations, how they solved the problems and communication difficulties they encountered and how their learning experiences impacted their teaching and so on. From the experience of doing a pilot study, I learned it would be easier for the participants and practical for collecting good data if I gave them an open-ended questionnaire as a guide for them to write their autobiography.

3.3.3 Journal reflection

Reflection is considered to be a special form of problem solving, thinking to resolve an issue that involves active chaining, and a careful ordering of ideas linking each with its predecessors. Within the process, consideration is given to any form of knowledge or belief and the grounds for its support (Adler, 1991). Therefore, reflection may be seen as an active and deliberative cognitive process, involving sequences of interconnected ideas that take account of underlying beliefs and
knowledge (Calderhead, 1989; Gilson, 1989). Reflective thinking generally addresses practical problems, allowing for doubt and perplexity before possible solutions are reached.

According to Gore and Zeichner (1991), there are four key issues with regard to reflection. The first one is whether reflection is limited to thought processes about action, or is more inextricably bound up in action. The second relates to the time frames within which reflection takes place, and whether it is relatively immediate and short term, or rather more extended and systematic. The third has to do with whether reflection is by its very nature problem-centered or not. The fourth is how consciously the one reflecting takes account of wider historic, cultural and political values or beliefs in framing and reframing practical problems to which solutions are being sought, a process which I will particularly look for in this study.

I envision the reflection journal as a way to seek answers to the questions we have about how teachers live, the choices teachers are asked to make, and how they adopt their knowledge, experience, beliefs, and identities inside and outside of their classrooms. Reflection journals also help writers locate a sense of self that would have relevance to their professional lives. Writing a journal does not necessitate disclosure of intimate matters or personal secrets. There is a sense of discovery in writing journals. Introspective writing questions who we are, what we do, how and why we do it. We discover ourselves in writing. The value of introspective writing comes from bringing back awareness of the complex social contexts we situate; the writings are reflections of the way we live our lives. Validation of the personal voice can open avenues of expression and potential for change and stimulate an
empowering image of an inner self. When writing introspectively, writers frequently turn to the task of shaping and reshaping the relationship between who they are as private persons and their public professional selves, their sociocultural identities.

I encouraged my participants to write their own reflection journals by giving them good examples of teachers’ reflection journals or similar works. Moreover, I gave participants rewards (about US $35 gift certificate) for letting me use their journals as data for my study. Each participant gave me at least three of her reflection journals. Only one teacher wrote her reflection journals in Mandarin, the other teachers all wrote theirs in English. Therefore, I translated the content of the one teacher's reflection journal that I cited in my report to English.

3.3.4 Observation

Participant observation will play a supporting role in gaining an in-depth understanding of the cases. An observer as an outsider will be able to notice things that have become routine to the participants themselves. Observation is also useful for triangulating emerging findings. The participant observer sees things first hand and uses his or her own knowledge and expertise in interpreting what is observed rather than relying on other data. Observation makes it possible to recode behavior as it is happening. Another purpose of conducting observation is to provide some knowledge of the context or to provide specific incidents, behaviors, and so on that can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews. This is a particularly helpful strategy for understanding ill-defined phenomena (Merriam, 1998). However, a good deal of time and rapport-building is usually necessary before informants stop noticing the novelty of the researcher’s presence and participation, and go about their daily routine.
as they would normally.

I observed the participants’ classes every week (starting from the end of
February to the middle of April) after the first interview (at the end of February) and
wrote field notes to compare what participants said in the interview to what occurred
in the classroom. It meant that I observed every participant’s classes for two hours
every week. The primary site of observation was at the classes where the participants
taught. Each observation included two classes which lasted between ninety minutes to
one hundred minutes. Each of the observations was tape-recorded and was labeled by
name, date of recording, number of the observation and by cassette number
(Name/Date/#1 (of7). My research questions and the conceptual framework
determined what was to be observed and a follow-up interview with participants’
students was held in order to discuss the observation and clarify impressions.

I sat at the back of the class and start recording the events, activities and
discussions the moment class began. I tried to describe and not evaluate. I usually
discussed lesson plans, the materials, methods and theories during the interview.
There were informal discussions regarding these issues at the school. These
discussions found their way into my critical memos. I wove any concern or question
that arose as a result into my interviews. I tried to be descriptive rather than
interpretive. I chiefly concentrated on the participants I was observing, but I paid
attention to the class as a whole as well, especially the discussions, the structure of
the class, the content of the class. Russell H. Bernard (1988) adds, "Whatever data
collection method you choose, participant observation maximizes your chances for
making valid statements" (p. 151). This was true in general of the observations but

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especially true of the school observations. The observation transcriptions have been used extensively in the case studies.

3.3.5 Questionnaire for students

Because the interview data with one of each participant’s students could not help me gain a sufficient understanding of the relationship between participants’ teaching and their identities, I gave every student of the five participants an open format questionnaire (see Appendix C and D) to see how students felt about their teachers’ teaching, to what level they understood their teachers, why they had trouble with English or why they did not, and opinions about their teachers’ teaching. Open format questions are good for soliciting subjective data or when the range of responses is not tightly defined. An obvious advantage is that the variety of responses should be wider and more truly reflect the opinions of the respondents. The open-ended questions were developed from the questions that I asked the students, therefore, the data from the interviews and questionnaires would result in the merger of patterns and category formation.

3.4 Data coding and analysis

Bryman and Burgess (1994) have noted that much of the work of data analysis is implicit. As qualitative researchers, we engage in a somewhat unsystematic process of following up certain leads and seeing where they take us. In deciding which ideas to follow up we are undoubtedly influenced, whether consciously or not, by our own personal, political and theoretical biographies. It is now well recognized within work associated with postmodernism that all research contains biases and values, and that knowledge and understanding are contextually and historically grounded, as well as
linguistically constituted. In other words, in analyzing data we are confronted with ourselves, and with our own central role in shaping the outcome. The early phases of data analysis can therefore feel messy, confusing and uncertain because we are at a stage where we simply do not know what to think yet. Indeed, this is the whole point of data analysis - to learn from and about the data, to learn something new about a question by listening to other people (Bryman and Burgess 1994). Thus, data analysis presents researchers with the challenge of keeping respondents' voices and perspectives alive, while at the same time recognizing the researcher's role in shaping the research process and product.

"Scanning of data from field notes and supplementary sources results in the emergence of patterns and category formation" (LeCompte & Presissle, 1993, p. 237). Distinctive to case study is the ongoing analysis of data while it is being collected, so that feedback from the study can inform decisions about what studies should be. This process involves comparing, contrasting, the development of linkages and relationships in the categories and constructs, and making speculative inferences that are tested as the research continues (LeCompte & Presissle, 1993).

I first transcribed the interview audiotapes in their entirety and stored them in computer files. One hard copy which included all interviews for a participant became the master copy. The interview data in the text is indicated by interview number and page (for example, I: 2). The same process of coding was followed for the classroom observation fieldnotes, reflection journals, and autobiography. I created one folder for each of the subjects' interviews, one for classroom observations and students' questionnaire, one for the reflection journals and one for the autobiographies. Then, I
used constant comparison to facilitate the coding of tentative categories. As Miles and Huberman (1994) state: "coding is analysis" (p.55). They argue that reviewing a set of data and making meaning of the parts while keeping the relations between the parts is the "stuff of analysis." Coding is the "tags or labels" for assigning meaning to the data collected. My coding scheme followed the conceptual framework and literature reviews laid out in my study.

First, my analysis involved observing, examining field notes and transcripts from interviews, and returning for more interviews and observations to provide verification and detail. I traced my identification of patterns by sequentially observing characteristics of an event, identifying the type of event, coming to understand relations between various types of events, and determining the types of those relations, which are understood sequentially and as patterns. Some themes had begun to emerge while I was still collecting data, which helped to refine the focus of the interviews and the observations. I also shared transcripts of interviews with participants so they could correct inaccuracies. The themes of interviews were categorized according to the research questions. In addition, regularities that emerged from observations, autobiographies, and reflection journals were noted as data collection continues.

Miles and Huberman (1994) write that "codes are retrieval and organizing devices that allow the analyst to spot quickly, pull out, then cluster all the segments relating to the particular question, hypothesis, concept, or theme" (p.56). I read Florence's interviews first and started to code the interview by theme. I named the theme according to the topic of the paragraph or the sentence. For example, Florence
said that her travel experience provide good cultural comparison examples to talk to
her students about like "table manners." As I found data that sounded a similar theme,
I wrote "cultural comparison" in the margins of the data sheets (See Table 1). I
worked through all the interviews for each of the participants, reading and coding by
theme. Once I had gone through all the data for each of the participants, I started to
cut up the data by theme and put them into a cluster. All the data in a cluster had to
speak to a specific theme (See Table 2). Clustering is a critical process and care has to
be taken to ensure that the data were causally linked; I sorted through it, searching for
similarities and differences or variations. The cluster was coded, revised, and
regrouped many times before it became final.

Table 1: Emerging categories in Florence' interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparing two culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different ways of teaching from her own teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of using students’ mother languages in classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varieties of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum related to local culture or teenage culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s own learning language experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of studying abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-certificated program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s teaching philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ attitude toward the culture of target language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Non-native teacher identity

Florence: “I cannot say that I am a successful language learner. But I can share with them my own learning experience and support their learning with my professional knowledge and my personal experience.”

“a successful example of learning English”

Penny: “a NNET could see the problems and difficulties of learning foreign language from the inside. I don’t think a NET could see it in more objectively.”

Jenny: “I might know their errors or mistakes, what their needs are better than NETs, and in terms of maybe grammar, they can use the certain points of grammar, but they might not explain better than we can....I can share my experience as a language learner as well as a language teacher.”

Wen: “I don’t want my students to see me as their model because I have Taiwanese accent.”

I used data matrices to turn the clusters into final categories. Miles and Huberman (1994) state:

Valid analysis is immensely aided by data displays that are focused enough to permit viewing of a full data set in one location and are systematically arranged to answer the research questions at hand. The "full" data set is at hand, albeit in a condensed mode, and can be interrogated....Displays beget analyses, which then beget more powerful, suggestive displays. (p.433)

The matrices were useful in analyzing and interpreting each category and to
see their relationship to other categories and if they answered the questions of the study. Later, the data matrices were useful with the cross-case analyses. I used huge sheets of paper for the matrices. They were developed by participant, theme, and section of the case study. The coded data were then cut and pasted from the interview transcripts, journals, and observation on to the matrix corresponding to the relevant theme. Sometimes I handwrote the data in the appropriate thematic category. Eventually, I had the large themes as well as the sub-themes. As the analyses proceeded, I found the process of winnowing the data and redefining categories a highly recursive process.

Once the categories were formed, I found it useful to check that the category was logical and consistent, even if only one participant reflected that thematic category. In such instances, I especially looked at research and theory to understand the response. This is the case for Flora, who is the only one who graduated from “Normal Teacher University.” When the themes were stabilized, I organized the presentation of the findings in a chapter for each participant. I outlined the themes on one side. On the other side, I cut and pasted the appropriated sections from the data. After a few drafts, it was time to write the case studies.

3.5 Cross-case analysis

I used the same inductive tools for the cross-case analysis as I had for the case studies. The cross-case analysis was easier to do in a way because the case studies already outlined the major themes. The difficulty was in extrapolating from these themes, the metatheses and their implications. I first read over each case study. I took notes and wrote observations looking for themes. Next, I took each participant's
interview section, cut it, and pasted it side by side on huge sheets of paper. I examined
this section for, (1) the common themes and (2) the exceptions or the variations to the
common themes. I looked for connections between the themes. I followed this
method for every section except background and the final notes. Next, I made clusters
by theme, for example, "exam-oriented teaching" I ensured that all the participants
had addressed this issue. I entered the emerging theme in a data matrix along with the
relevant data. For the cross-case analyses, the matrix was set up by themes, with the
view or practice tagged by the name of the respective participants.

The cross-case analysis compared and contrasted the five cases for an
understanding of the range and variations in interpretations and provides a more
comprehensive picture of the issues involved in teaching English in Taiwan. It was
thus possible to discuss areas of further research and educational implications.

Data collection and analysis is an ongoing process that can go on forever.
Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest researchers use four specific criteria to decide when
to stop gathering data. One criterion is the exhaustion of resources. A second criterion
is saturation of categories, which is reached at the point that continuing data
collection only produces insignificant amounts of new information. A third criterion
is the emergence of regularities, data continually generating similar results. The final
criterion is over-extension, which new information no longer applies to the categories
that have emerged, nor does the new information contribute to any viable new
categories. In this study, saturation of categories and emergence of regularities were
signals for me to end the data collection.
3.6 Limitations of the study

The aim of this research is to study how the identities of English teachers in Taiwan impact their teaching. This study would certainly have greater validity if a larger number of participants selected from a variety of high schools, ethnic backgrounds, age and regions had been studied. In terms of focus, it would be useful to study students' learning as well. Such a focus would allow us to understand better how the identities of English teachers impact their teaching and students' learning. Further, it would enrich the study if the insights of teacher educators along with interview and other classes in English teacher education were included in the study. These additions would make the study three-dimensional and therefore of greater utility to educators and policy makers. In addition, a review of English teacher education at undergraduate levels would also help to understand the steps necessary to develop a cohesive program in English teaching. This study demonstrates clearly the importance of studying further the areas which are its limitations. Such studies would help to develop teacher education programs that successfully prepare teachers for a culturally plural classroom and curriculum.
CHAPTER IV

FLORENCE AND FLORA AND A NEW SCHOOL IN TAIPEI PROVINCE

This study satisfies the requirement for "thick description" in qualitative studies, by presenting through a finite narrative, the essential contextual, analytic, descriptive and interpretive material required for the reader to experience the case holistically. Its chief purpose is to provide the reader with an understanding of how each participant views teaching English as a second language in Taiwan from a specific cognitive, ethical and emotional position, as expressed in the unique narrative of each participant. Each case study is an interpretation of the set of research questions. First, the context of the schools where these five participants teach will be introduced to the reader. The five case studies profile the five participants at three schools.

4.1 Context of the school

Florence and Flora both teach at National Scsh Senior High School, located on the outskirts of Taipei City. Scsh Senior High School was newly established in 1997 to meet the needs of the increasing community population of lower- to middle-class families who had immigrated from other provinces of Taiwan. Moreover, this school provides students from the community similar opportunities and choices as those of people from Taipei City, namely, to be educated after graduating from junior high school. In the 2001-2002 school year, the school enrolled 2,200 students (90% Taiwanese, 7% Mainlander, 3% Hakkanese and less than 1% Aboriginal). However, only a small percentage of the students can speak their heritage language.
4.2 Interviews with Florence

4.2.1 Her passion for English and her teaching philosophy

In 1998, Florence started teaching at Scsh Senior High School. She had previously taught at a private school for four years. In Taiwan, teachers in private schools have to compete with each other in terms of students’ grades. Thus, private school teachers tend to be eager to improve their teaching. In contrast, public school teachers are under less pressure to make progress in their teaching. As Florence mentioned in her first interview, teachers graduating from National Normal Teacher Universities are still very traditional in their teaching style and approach. They hardly change the ways they teach. Also, in contrast, Florence's passion for English seems to far exceed that of other English teachers. As she wrote in her autobiographical essay (p. 2),

I would say that English plays a very important role on my career and my whole life. To me, English is not only the tool I make a living for but the origin of my pleasure as well. It goes without saying that English has long before become a language rather than only an academic subject.

Florence's passion for English shows in her teaching philosophy also. In her first interview, she said that she wants to make her students think of English as an interesting subject whether or not they are good at it.

I want them to have good impression in English classes and feel happy in classes and looking forward to English classes, too. Because I think learning English is life-long experience. If they have good feeling about English in their school day, they might pick it up later in their live even they did not do great in English in school. I always tell my student teachers that the most important thing in one class is to make students feel good and comfortable in English. So they would not dislike it and reject to learn it. And they will also find it pleasure to learn it when they are out of school system. Because if one had bad impression on one thing, it is really hard for him/her to appreciate it and has the motivation to learn it. (I: 10)
Hence, Florence said that she always begins a new lesson with an activity that would inspire the students' interest. She thinks that inspiring a love of learning is more important than teaching specific skills. Moreover, she seeks also to be more than a teacher—that is, not just a person who administers knowledge, but also a friend, teacher and hopeful mother, someone who can touch lives. So she said that she honestly shares her opinions about life, society or politics with her students. She recalled a certain incident when President Bush's speech about September 11th would be televised on TV, so she turned on the TV and watched it with her students. She said that she discussed the issues with her students, starting with how precious life is. However, some students criticized her behind her back because they felt she was on the American side, and that she did not even consider why the terrorists attacked America. She said that students seldom opposed her in front of the whole class. They still think of teachers as authority figures, and that teachers are always right. Therefore, sometimes Florence is afraid that her opinion would influence those of her students, so she avoids discussing certain issues with them, for example, politics especially during election periods.

4.2.2 Comparing the culture of English and local culture

When I interviewed Florence, she said that she usually starts a new lesson by explaining what students are going to learn and by asking some interesting questions and narrating some personal experiences related to the topic. She also showed me several lesson activities. For example, the topic of one lesson she taught last semester was “superstitions.” She copied articles from the book, "One Hundred and One American Superstitions," and she had her students read and present the articles in
class as a group project. She said that the students all felt surprised to discover the differences and similarities between the two cultures. For instance, one of the articles mentions the superstition concerning opening an umbrella indoors. Students said that in their culture, if you open an umbrella indoors, you would become shorter. However, in American culture, people believe if you open an umbrella indoors that means you do not respect the god of the sun. Students thought this kind of activity was helpful for learning the target language, and learning about the culture of the target language.

Another incident that Florence told her students about was concerning an experience in graduate school. The example was helpful for comparing the target culture of English and the local culture. In one of her classes in graduate school in England, her professor asked all the students in the class what they thought a white candle symbolizes. Her classmates all said the white candle symbolizes a romantic dinner, love. So when she said that the white candle symbolizes a funeral, everyone was very surprised. Florence mentioned several times in interviews and casual chatting that students are very interested in her study abroad experience because it was first-hand information, told by a teacher with a cultural background similar to their own. She said since culture is abstract, sometimes it is hard to explain in words. Therefore, she sometimes shows her students films, songs or other learning aids to help students understand the content of the text. For example, she said that "Mother Theresa" is a boring lesson to students. So she allowed her students to watch the movie based on the biography of Mother Theresa.
4.2.3 Study abroad and traveling experience

Two of the most important topics in EFL are "body language" and "table manners." Florence told her students about her experience escorting a group of teenagers during the summer of 2001. As the group was eating pizza in London, one of the teenagers felt thirsty and wanted to order a drink. So he clicked his finger to get the waitress' attention. However, his gesture offended the waitress. Florence used this example to tell her students that gestures have different meanings depending on the culture, and that the same is true for table manners while dining in restaurants.

Another example that Florence mentioned took both of us by surprise. It was concerning opinions about law. When Florence taught the topic of "asking and giving directions," she mentioned her trip from Cambridge to London. The teenagers she was escorting thought it was not necessary to buy tickets, since there was no one to check their tickets, they thought why bother to buy them. Florence told those teenagers if everyone cheated like that, then there would be guard bars everywhere and it would not be so convenient to enter and exit. Florence wanted to show her students how people obey law differently in different cultures. It seems that there were always moral lessons in Florence's classes. Florence once said in an interview that there are a lot of things she thinks that the Taiwanese ought to learn from English speaking countries. She said learning a language is not only learning the language, but that it also means learning the best features of another culture. It seems that Florence became acculturated to the culture of English during the process of learning the language. What she shared with her students is the positive side of the West. She thinks that English symbolizes values, beliefs, and norms of a much more civilized
culture and believes that knowing the language has brought her to the level where she can join those who are speaking the language and whose culture is believed to be superior to her own.

Living in London and traveling provided Florence with a quotidian perspective on English culture and a comparative standpoint to view both her own culture and English culture. However, Florence seldom referred to local culture or teenage culture in her classes. When I asked her if she provided opportunities for students to use English in relation to local situations or the students' own lives, she answered that she seldom did it. She only provided local news written in English to senior students because they are actively preparing for college entrance exams. Sometimes she would put local news written in English in mid-term or final exams to test reading comprehension. For example, once she put news about Typhoon Nina, which caused a lot of damage in Taiwan in 2000. She said that since students already had the background information, they did well on this part of the test. One of the reasons that she did not use materials related to local culture is because there is no material in textbooks about local culture or situations. Although based on her study abroad experience Florence thought there is a need for students to learn how to introduce their own culture, there was never enough time for her to give students the chance to learn and practice materials related to local situations or their own lives.

According to Florence, high school students only have four to six hours of English classes a week. Most of the time she would spend the class period covering grammar, vocabulary, comprehension texts and reviewing quiz answers in preparation for college entrance exams. Therefore, she said it is difficult to spend
extra time on materials not directly related to textbooks and exams. However,
Florence said that compared to other teachers and her own teachers in high school,
who would give students extra grammar, idioms, phrases, and vocabulary, she would
only give her students the basic things they need to know. And she felt that if they
were really interested in English, they could look for more information themselves.

From Florence's interviews, it is clear that her intention in English teaching is
to inspire the student’s interest and curiosity in the English language and its culture,
by sharing her study abroad and travel experience. She hopes that her students will
feel inspired after each class no matter how much they learn. In her autobiography,
she said, "One time my English teacher complimented me in front of all the class.
Only then did I start to really like English as a language and feel proud and confident
when I used it. Since then, learning English has been a real pleasure and the origin of
my sense of achievement." Moreover, as she wrote in her autobiography (p.1),
watching American serials and comedy on TV also made her more interested in
English. She wrote:

After I went into senior high school, I did not feel much proud or particularly
interested in learning English because many of my classmates did much better
than me on the English grades. However, I still liked English a lot, especially
the people and culture of it. I enjoyed watching American serials and comedy
every night for one hour to release my pressure on preparing for loads of
complicated studies. It had been my habit to watch TV when I came home
from the cram school since my second year in junior high. At that time I
watched different serials every night. There were serials about detective
stories, comedy, laws, and romance. I was deeply obsessed with the ups and
downs of each character and completely lost in the joy of watching each
episode. I think that is one of the main reasons why I majored in English later
on....I was told to have beautiful Pronunciation. I own these to my years of
watching American serials.

She also stated that it was the most wonderful year of her life when she
studied in England. So she wants her students to think learning English is pleasure not pressure. Therefore, I asked her if she ever had teachers who shared their study abroad or travel experience when she was a student in high school and college. She said that no one did that because most of her English teachers in high school had graduated from Normal Teacher College, and so they did not study abroad. Even if they had traveled, they traveled with a tour guide. They did not have the chance to live in a foreign country like she did to experience a different way of living.

4.2.4 Florence’s own learning experience as an EFL student

Florence remarked that her own learning experience as an EFL student would come to impact her teaching in some ways. For instance, she said that her teachers in high school used to require students to take notes and write down everything they wrote on the blackboard, which is the traditional grammar-based teaching approach. However, as a teacher, she thinks that listening and speaking are more important than remembering grammar, forms of different words and word syntax. In her journal, she wrote,

I always put a lot of emphasis on speaking English instead of stressing my students' reading and writing abilities merely. I always make sure to my students that they have to learn to speak before they try to use it. I still watch a lot of English serials and read English newspapers to stop my English abilities from degrading. I listen to half hour of English news every morning on my way to school. And the school even hires a native speaker of English to help strengthen our English skills. (April 11th)

As Florence mentioned in her autobiography, she had liked to watch English drama serials as a high school student. She did not feel it was hard to accept the culture of the English. Although there were English lessons in her high school textbooks, she did not really know what the contents were about. She just tried to
master the grammar, vocabulary, and phrases without understanding the content of the lessons. However, she said that since the government began to open the textbook market, textbooks have come to reflect daily lives more closely. Now, that her students have become more aware of the importance of English as an international language and the access to educational, social and economic success, their attitude towards learning is more positive than those of her students from five years ago. There is almost no one who would reject learning English or its culture, except those who had had a bad experience in the very beginning. She also points out that most of her students think that learning about English culture is fun and they are curious about it. They may feel the culture is foreign, but they do not reject it. Learning English is important and necessary in various social and educational contexts.

Florence's students had a native-speaker teacher who taught them conversation when they were freshmen. They met the teacher one hour a week. However, Florence said that it is important for beginning and intermediate learners to have non-native teachers of English. Florence pointed out some advantages of non-native teachers of English. For example, because they went through the same process of language acquisition that their students are experiencing, they have a better understanding of the struggles in learning a foreign language. In other words, they are more likely to notice the weaknesses of their students than native speakers of English because they share the similar experience of spending a great amount of time mastering English. In addition, when the EFL teachers share the first language with their students, they can have more interactions with their students and can have a better grasp of each student's needs in the classroom. In short, non-native speakers of
English can be empathetic teachers and can better meet the needs of their students in some cases.

4.2.5 The influence of college entrance exams on teaching

Although Florence emphasized speaking and listening skills instead of reading, in order to improve her students' grades, most of her time teaching was still grammar-based, which made her very frustrated. She explained in her journal,

....I turned directly into teaching them new words. I asked my students to repeat the new words and the their example sentences after me and wrote down some derivatives and other usage about the new words on the blackboard. I usually don't go through every new vocabulary in this lesson and afterwards go on to the reading part because vocabulary learning bores the students very easily. After teaching six new words, I turned to the first two paragraphs of the reading. To start with, I read the first paragraph alone in a slow speed and asked the students to try to comprehend each sentence. Second, I asked them to read the whole paragraph again and then I could put emphasis on some difficult words and sentence structures. For the second paragraph, I asked the students to repeat after me for each sentence and then gave them two minutes to review this paragraph before I asked them some questions. Usually if the reading is not difficult, I asked them questions to check their comprehension. However, I found my students could only answer the questions right if I used exactly the same words in the sentences. If I rephrased the sentences by using my own words, they had difficulty understanding my questions. So there was a long pause before they could answer my questions. The bell rang right after I could go through each sentence in the second paragraph again to make sure they understood it fully. Then I dismissed the class. I did not think this was a successful language-learning class, but this class was typical of our everyday learning. I have been thinking how I can upgrade my teaching from teaching this basic language drills. But as sad as it is, the students can't go on to the advanced level without being competent with these basic language skills. (March 21st)

It seems that Florence struggled with putting her ideal of teaching into practice, in the face of the reality of students' low abilities in English and the importance of basic language drills. Her journal reflection not only shows her concern, but it also shows the concern of other teachers. Florence remarked that ever
since the Communicative Language Teaching approach replaced grammar-based teaching, English teachers have faced some dilemmas. Since most teachers were taught by the traditional grammar-based teaching approach and have hardly had the chance to learn the CLT approach, they do not really know what the CLT and student-centered teaching approaches are. Some teachers may change the way they teach, but they do not have any idea how to make real changes. As Florence said in the third interview:

We have teachers' teaching demonstration every semester. But it is like a show; every teacher just shows others the activities they never use in their classroom, which are not practical. The activities and lesson plans may have lots of interaction and communication, but they are not what students need. The teachers teaching demonstrations are like a fair, not workshop. Every participant tried to make their lessons look fancy, but not useful. (III: 3)

Florence mentioned that she knew about a certain teacher who did not want to teach English traditionally. He practiced a lot of activities in his classes, but his students complained that they learned nothing in his classes because he never really taught them grammar, sentence structure, or explained the content of each lesson.

Florence said that she found herself lost in promoting the Communicative Language Teaching approach. She thinks that the grammar-translation methods are still important for preparing students to take college entrance exams and also helpful for building the students' foundational skills of learning English. However, Florence said restricted by the limited time, it is hard to always have activities in each class with which to inspire the students' interests. Nevertheless, she said that she tries to impart to her students four skills that they need for taking exams and for real-life communication.
Florence’s identity as an English instructor

Florence mentioned in her interview that it took her a while to get used to British English when she was studying in England. Therefore, I asked if her students could distinguish the different types of English spoken by different people who come from different places. She said not really. Since the English taught in Taiwan is American English, students hardly had experience talking to foreigners in Taiwan. The communication teachers at Florence's school are from U.S.A or England. Students may sometimes feel strange about some of the pronunciation of their native or non-native teachers, but they seldom pose questions. Although they had questioned Florence's pronunciation once, Florence thought that her students' English listening ability was not good enough to tell the difference. Moreover, Florence said that teachers still have authority over students in classrooms. Students believe that whatever the teacher says is true.

I asked Florence if she would honestly discuss political conflicts and disputes or social events in the classroom. She said that she would discuss her own opinions with her students honestly, but she was careful with sharing her opinions with her students, because she could not tell them whatever she wanted to. She said that high school students are old enough to tell what is wrong and right. However, she said that recently she seldom discusses political issues with students because she thinks that her opinions dominate her students' opinions. She thinks that her own ideas and perspectives should not be a focus of the classroom activities. Then, I asked if students would argue with her publicly if they did not agree with her. She answered that they would not do it publicly, but they would do it privately, for example, by
writing to her or talking to her after classes. She said when she discussed the event of
9-11, one of her students wrote to her and said that she was on the side of the
Americans, and the student told her what he thought about Osama Bin Laden. But
Florence said that most students still keep their opinions to themselves and would not
share their opinions in the classroom.

4.3 Classroom observation

As a peripheral member (Adler & Adler, 1994) of the classroom, I sat in the
back of the room and unobtrusively documented the people, the setting, and the
activities that surrounded me. This peripheral role has also been described as that of
an observer-participant, in so far as both the students and the teacher in the room
knew about my activities. I was introduced in the class and described as Florence's
college classmate who was writing a dissertation and would like to see how high
school English teachers teach in Taiwan. I began the observations by sketching the
room and counting the number of students. This process led to an informal chart that
documented each instance of culturally relevant teaching that I observed.

Each observation occurred in the single class that Florence taught that
semester. Before and after each observation, Florence and I would often informally
talk about the lessons and general teaching questions for an additional 20 to 30
minutes. This debriefing time was captured in my field notes. The following are some
instances that I observed during field research.

4.3.1 Using mother languages

In the interviews, Florence said that she almost never used Taiwanese in classes
because most of the students cannot understand it. But she prefers to talk to students'
parents in Taiwanese because it feels intimate. However, in my observation, Florence used
Taiwanese sometimes in classes and her students seemed to understand her very well. On
my first day of observation, she said a joke in Taiwanese and English; similar-sounding
English renders the translation of pronunciation into the Taiwanese syllables. The joke is
that a Taiwanese (T) was questioned by an officer (O) in United States Customs. Although
the Taiwanese did not understand English, he gave the right answers to the officer. The
following is the conversation between them.

O: Who is the first president in United States?
T: Wa si tong. (The Taiwanese thought he asked his last name.)
O: What are you going to do here?
T: Sho ping. (The Taiwanese thought he asked his first name.)
O: What kind of car do you drive?
T: Vol vo. (The Taiwanese thought he asked if he has a wife.)
O: Who is the best basketball player?
T: Mi chle Jordan. (The Taiwanese was impatient, so he said he did not want to wait
anymore in Taiwanese.)

In her classes, Florence used the translation of pronunciation several times to help
students remember the vocabulary, either English translated into Taiwanese or Mandarin.

4.3.2 Grammar-translation teaching approach

From my observation, most of Florence's classes were focused on helping students
learn vocabulary, grammatical paradigms and apply this knowledge to translation exercises
both out of and into English. Florence always started a lesson with an activity related to the
topic of the lesson. Then, she would encourage students to infer meaning from pictures and
gestures of that lesson. After that, she asked students to follow her reading the new words and example sentences before she went through them. Next class, she would test students on the new vocabulary of the lesson, then, ask students to follow her reading the text of that lesson. She asked some questions to test students’ reading comprehension before she went through the content of the text. And she explained the texts in English most of the time. She related the text to the students’ life by asking questions in English or Mandarin. The students answered these questions with their own thoughts in English or Mandarin. Florence connected the content with her study abroad experience whenever there was a chance. For a large portion of the class time, Florence was talking and explaining. But there were still some interactions between teacher and students; for example, the students would correct Florence’s Mandarin, and Florence asked some students to answer questions. However, since English is the main subject in the high school curriculum, Florence still pays more attention to having students memorize the language form and expecting students to produce errorless translation. Little time or attention was given to developing students’ abilities to express their own thoughts in normal conversation. In one of the classes I observed (March 28th), Florence spent 35 minutes going through every question of the English mid-term exam. Then, she lectured her students for the rest of the class on how hard they should study and compared their grades with other colleagues’ classes.

4.3.3 Reflection of news articles

Florence remarked how much she loves to watch English movies and drama serials in the research interviews. This also shows in her classroom teaching. One of the news articles Florence chose to share with her students was about the movie
"Lord of the Rings," which was very popular at the time I was observing the class. However, when Florence asked students to raise their hands if they had seen this movie, only seven out of 45 students had watched it. Florence was surprised to learn this because she had thought that almost everyone had seen it since it was popular among teenagers. But students became very excited and happy when Florence translated and explained the article to them. As she went through the article and pointed out some vocabulary, one word that she mentioned was "trilogy." Then, she asked students which movies also formed a trilogy, but no one answered. She answered herself that it is the series "Star Wars." Florence also mentioned other English movies and drama series. For example, when Florence taught Lesson 4 "Water, Water Everywhere", which is about the Thai Water Festival, she said that Thailand became famous in western countries because of the movie “The King and I”.

It is easy to see that Florence is really fascinated by English culture. Although she went through the news article about "Lord of the Rings" using traditional grammar-based and translation approaches, students did not get bored because they were interested in the text. It seems that students' integrative motivation, a desire to integrate and identify with the target language group, drives their learning.

4.4 Questionnaire for students

There were 45 students in Florence’s classroom when I observed in Spring 2002. I told the students that Florence would not be able to see what they wrote in the questionnaire, so they could write down anything without any concern. I received 44 questionnaires back because one student was absent the day when I gave them the
questionnaire (Appendix C and D).

In the questionnaire, students wrote that the differences between Florence and their previous teachers were: a) she asked students questions in English; b) the activities she included in the lessons were very helpful and motivational for their learning; c) her pronunciation is very good and she corrects the students’ pronunciation which is very helpful; d) her study abroad experience and traveling experience are helpful to students, and they were interested in knowing the English culture; and e) she was a good model of an EFL learner. Students also indicated in the questionnaire that they did not think what Florence said in the classes conflicted with their own values and claimed that Florence and they share common social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. When students were asked what they thought was most helpful in Florence’s teaching, most of them answered her study abroad experience.

4.5 Interviews with Flora

Flora completed her bachelor’s degree in 2001, so she was a novice teacher in her school and the youngest participant in this study. Moreover, she graduated from one of the National Normal Teacher University campuses in Taiwan, which produces most of the qualified high school teachers in Taiwan. Therefore, Flora’s experience is quite unique compared with those of the other participants.

4.5.1 Flora’s teaching philosophy

Flora had been very interested in English ever since she was in senior high school. She said that she had admired an English teacher who taught her in a “cram school” that she attended while in high school, and she had wanted to be like him ever since. She said in the interview,
I think that he is an inspired teacher, not only in teaching, but also in life. He knew how to make students remember vocabulary and grammar easily. Although his teaching is still traditional grammar-based approaches, at least it was the ways that we could accept. Moreover, he was enthusiastic about his teaching and his attitude was sincere. Even he scolded students, they could not complain. (I: 5)

Her journal also reflected how she likes teaching English,

I think being a successful language teacher is a tough task, which means you not only have to master the language but also have to be acquainted with the teaching skills. However, I think I am lucky to be in this field. I am interested in teaching English and it did bring me great sense of achievement sometimes. I know I still have a lot of room for improvement, and I will work hard to make my teaching and myself better. (March 19th)

She thinks that her students are looking for intellectual models and personal models in the same way that she was searching when she was a student. They want someone with whom they can identify. They can say, "This is somebody that I want to be like." And that is Flora's case. She wants to be an English teacher who could encourage and inspire students in the academic setting and in life. Her purpose in teaching English is to help students at least not to be afraid of English. Because Flora has heard a lot from her friends and has met a lot of people who are afraid of English and feel frustrated about their English, she feels that the most important thing in her teaching is to make students comfortable with English. Then, maybe they can become interested in it later on.

4.5.2 Normal Teacher Education

Flora graduated from the Department of English of National Chang-Hua Normal University. Her college education is different from that of the other participants. Students who graduated from Normal Universities were the main resource for teachers in junior and senior high schools in Taiwan. The main goals of Flora's department are, (1) emphasizing
the theory and practice of English teaching, (2) enhancing pragmatical and professional English, and (3) training students' abilities in academic studies (see, www.changhua.edu).

In contrast, the English departments at other universities focus on English literature and linguistics (see, www.nck.edu).

In the interviews, I asked her if she ever had classes focused on English culture. She said no. Since all her teachers got their Ph. D. degrees overseas, however, they frequently mentioned their study abroad experiences in classes, such as interesting events of cultural differences or culture shock and some thoughts about differences in life styles between the two cultures. Since Flora's department was focused on preparing English teachers, most of the courses she took were about how to teach the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of mastering English for high school students.

I also asked her if there were any classes that she thinks were helpful to her teaching now. She thinks that the "speech" course is very helpful to her teaching because it is very important for a teacher to be able to express his/her ideas and opinions in an articulate manner. However, she said that although she took classes like "curriculum design," "educational psychology," and "measurement," most of the time she teaches in the way she was taught. For example, she produced a lot of teaching materials when she was doing her student teaching. But she said that she seldom spends extra time on making teaching materials now because she does not have the time or the energy, and most importantly, she has to prepare her students for exams. What she had learned in college is not practical to her now. Once she mentioned that she did a case study with a teacher in her junior year in college, about "writing," one of the “four skills.” During the time she did the case study with her professor, they read a lot of journal articles about "writing", and she also helped
him collect data from junior high students. But she said that, in fact, the case study could not be applied to reality because exams lead teaching. She said that being a teacher made her think differently than when she was a student; there are some theories that she cannot apply in her classrooms. In her reflection journals, she mentioned how different she has become since her student days.

"Today I have read the book again, "Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching" by Diana Larsen-Freeman. Larsen-Freeman introduced eight different kinds of teaching methods and their characteristics. When I was in the college, this book is nothing but a textbook for me. I just tried hard to memorize all of the teaching methods. However, since I have almost two-year teaching experience now, I have a different opinion toward all of these methods. And sometimes I do need to refresh my teaching by reading all this stuff."(March 12th)

Therefore, the education Flora received at Normal University did prepare her to be a language teacher in some ways, although she did not mention it in the interview.

4.5.3 Comparing the culture of English and local culture

Flora said that ever since the government opened the textbook market, there are varieties of textbooks you can choose from and they are more practical than before, such as books dealing with, "telephone conversation," "asking for directions," and "body language". The textbooks she uses are more interesting than the ones published by the government. She thinks that the practicality of textbooks also depends on how students apply what they learn to their lives.

Flora mentioned that the textbooks she has in her schools have lots of lessons about the culture of the target language. For instance, there are lessons about American holidays, like Halloween and Thanksgiving, with which her students are unfamiliar. When Flora taught the lesson on "Halloween," the main focus of her lesson plan was to give students the background information about this holiday, like its origin, the meaning of the Jack O'
Lantern, and how Americans celebrate it. The reflections of her students indicated that they felt the story of Jack O' Lantern was so boring that they were not able to think about the context of the story. They said that they thought that the story of Chi-yu in the Dragon Boat Festival was more interesting than the story about Halloween, and they felt that they were more sympathetic with Chi-yu than with the Jack O' Lantern.

Then, I asked her whether she found that her students feel uncomfortable about English culture. She said that it is normal for students to feel that English culture is foreign and that they can tell the differences between the two cultures when they learn a foreign language. And she thinks that her students feel comfortable with English culture, because most of her students are interested in English pop culture, like movies, pop songs, and fashion. They also have a one-hour English conversation class every week with a native-speaking teacher. Most of the students who did not like learning English were frustrated with their grades, or when they started learning English they had bad experiences. She also said that her students usually have a strong instrumental motivation, which means such goals as getting into college, getting a good job, and so on. Although Flora thinks that they have an integrative motivation as well, there is a constant tension between the desire to acquire English as a matter of practical necessity and the desire to reject it as an expression of foreign hegemony.

4.5.4 Flora’s own learning experience as an EFL student

Several times during the interview, Flora said that it is hard to get rid of the habit of teaching students the way she was taught. For example, she would teach students how to remember the tense of a verb the same way her teacher taught her. She said that although she is a teacher now, it does not mean that she was a successful language learner. The way
she was taught was founded on the traditional grammar-based teaching approach. She thought it was useful to her although it was boring and emphasized reading. She still teaches the way she was taught. However, in her teaching, Flora tries to add some listening and speaking activities in her lesson plan. For example, she said if the reading part of a new lesson were easy, she would ask students to listen to the CD and fill out the blanks in the reading, or let students listen to a song and fill out the blanks in the lyrics, or ask for student opinions about the textbook readings. She said that she can only pick several students to share their opinions, and usually not everyone will have a chance to speak in class. It is really hard for Flora to do the activities with 45 students within the limited class time. From my observation in her classes, Flora's teaching approach was grammar-based most of the time.

I asked her if she ever feels lacking in confidence when explaining some of the contents of the textbooks. She answered that she definitely has difficulties sometimes when explaining some of the contents of the lessons. Since she is not a native speaker of English and a language can involve specific perspectives on certain phenomena and situations, there will certainly be things that she will not be able to explain to her students. For example, there was a lesson on "eating out" last semester, and she did not know the vocabulary "lazy Susan." She asked some of her colleagues who had studied abroad, but no one knew for sure. Then, she found the answer on the Internet. That is what she does when she has difficulties in understanding and explaining the contents of the lessons.

I also asked her if she has noted to her students the fact that English is the official language spoken by many people, who may not be from America, Canada, Australia, or England, and that their spoken English may sound quite different from what they learn in
class. She said students have challenged her pronunciation before, because her pronunciation was different from that of their previous teacher. Some students would even ask her questions about their pen pals' letters. For example, some had thought that their pen pals' grammar was different from what they had learned, and some could not understand the meaning of certain phrases in the letters. Flora said she believes that her students, compared to her when she was a student herself, have a better sense of how English may be used differently by people from different places because they have more chances now to meet people who speak English through the internet, pen pals, traveling, or having native speaking English teachers in schools or "crammer" schools. Students are better informed than before because of the Internet, television, and movies. However, she said that even though students can get information through the Internet or through other types of media, they would be more impressed and interested in the information if received through their teachers. Flora explained that it is more persuasive if teachers share their own experience with learning English, culture conflicts or studying abroad. That is why she wants to study abroad, not only to improve her teaching, but also to experience English culture. Then, she would be able to offer her experience with living in England and her acquired knowledge of English.

4.5.5 Using mother language and local culture in teaching

When I shared my opinion about one of the purposes of learning English is to share our culture with foreigners, Flora agreed with me, but she noted that she never sees any lessons about Taiwan in any textbooks. She also seldom uses materials related to local news or culture in her classes. Although she recently asked students to read local English newspapers like Taipei Times or China Post themselves, she never gave them copies to
read. However, she gave students a few English news articles about 9-11 from CNN or other magazines and newspapers. She said that it seems when teaching English she would only notice events happening in English-speaking countries. But she mentioned that she did like to use Taiwanese occasionally when she teaches, especially when she finds that there are only Taiwanese phrases that can explain the content of the lesson. She said that although her Taiwanese is very poor, she would speak Taiwanese when given the opportunity and that she is not afraid to be laughed at by students or others. She also thinks that when students use their mother language they learn better. For example, she would help students to memorize vocabulary by using Taiwanese phrases that sound like English but which would have different meanings, like “de-tail,” for example. The pronunciation of "de" means, "pig" in Taiwanese. So she told her students to remember "detail" as “pig’s tail.” Another example is a lesson she remembers from a Chinese literature class that she took when she was a junior high school student. The writer translated the sound of "inspiration" into "yen shih p’in ming ts’un", which helped her remember the word "inspiration", the translation of pronunciation (i.e., transliteration), in which similar-sounding Chinese characters render the English syllables. Flora said she usually tries to help students remember vocabulary in some interesting way, like using their mother language as a support. She thinks that the language skills of the first language can be transferable into the second language.

Although Flora seldom uses material related to local culture, when she explained new vocabulary and used the new words to make sentences, she usually chose sentences that were familiar to her students. For example, when she made a sentence using the phrase “rich in”, she wrote, “Pei-tou is rich in hot spring” on the blackboard. Pei-tou is a place,
which is located in Taipei and famous for its hot spring. When she explained the word "safe", she asked her students to translate a slogan--which is on the back of almost every bus in Taipei--into English, "Safety is the only way to get home." Therefore, in her classes, Flora still uses examples that her students are familiar with to help them learn how to use English in daily life.

4.5.6 Flora’s identity as an English instructor

Caring is a quality that all teachers consider as very important for teaching, on the whole. In her journal, Flora wrote,

Sometimes I do think it is necessary for me to get a TESOL degree. The main purpose for this further study aims to better my teaching. Because sometimes I really feel frustrated when some of my students do not improve at all. I know that I should not take the grades seriously, and I should not view it as my own responsibility. However, to those who study hard enough but with poor grades, I do hope that I can help them improve remarkably. (April 9th)

Flora tries to make her classes interesting to motivate students' learning. She once said that a close relationship between a teacher and student generates motivation for the student to study hard. Even students, who may not initially like a certain subject, may study the subject harder once they like their teacher. Therefore, promoting a good learning environment for students is also important to Flora. When I asked Flora if she would talk about political conflicts and disputes in her classes, she answered that she prefers not to because she had bad experiences in her junior high school. One of her teachers had always talked about politics and the teacher’s opinion dominated the students' own opinions, a situation which Flora thought was not good. So she tries to avoid announcing her opinions on controversial issue such as which political party she favors or which mayoral candidate she would like to vote for. She thinks that her own ideas and perspectives should not be a focus of the classroom
activities. She does not want her classroom to be presented as a one-dimensional space where the teacher exercises authority over the students. In contrast, she thinks that the classroom should be regarded as a site where various cultural and social interests that students bring to the classroom can coexist in order to bring about a more just and democratic society. However, Flora said that her classrooms are not suitable for discussing political issues because they are for focusing on language skills and competence.

4.6 Classroom observation

I was introduced in the class and described as a Ph. D. student who is studying in Hawaii and writing a dissertation about how high school English teachers teach in Taiwan. I sat in the back of the room and unobtrusively documented what the teacher said and the interaction between teacher and students.

4.6.1 Using mother languages

During the time I observed Flora’s classes, I found that she used a lot of Taiwanese adjectives in a Mandarin sentence. For example, when she explained the new word “sour”, she translated the following sentence into Mandarin: “If you put milk out of refrigerator, it will become sour”, however used the Taiwanese adjective to replace Mandarin when she translated “sour.” Once her students complained that some of questions in the grammar exercise were difficult to understand. She replied in Mandarin that she knew some questions were very tricky. She replaced “tricky” with a Taiwanese adjective. In her interviews, she said that she did not mind people laugh at her poor Taiwanese; she likes to practice when there is chance. She also said that the reason that she used Taiwanese adjectives was because she felt it was more suitable and expressive.
4.6.2 Critical awareness teaching

When Flora taught the lesson, “Milton S. Hershey: King of Candy”, the text mentioned Mr. Hershey started a school for orphan boys in 1909. Then, students in the class asked Flora why Mr. Hershey did not include girls in his school, what girls did at that time, and did they goof around on the street? However, Flora did not answer the questions and kept the text-analysis going. I think it was a good chance to discuss students' concern about girls' education at that time. Perhaps Flora did not have enough knowledge about the educational history of United States, or she did not think it is necessary to waste time on something not related to English learning.

4.7 Questionnaire for students

There were 45 students in Flora’s classroom, when I observed in Spring 2002. I told the students that Flora would not be able to see what they wrote in the questionnaire, so they could write down anything. I received 42 questionnaires back. There were three students who did not give the questionnaire back to me.

Six students wrote that they and Flora have the same ethnic background, so there is no difference between them. However, two students wrote that Flora and they are Taiwanese, and the other four wrote that Flora and they are Chinese. The rest of the students did not refer to ethnic background, but they all said that Flora and they do not differ in culture. The students also wrote that Flora always gave them examples that they were familiar with when she explained new words or texts. They thought it was because Flora is much younger than their prior English teachers. Students also wrote that they think that English syllables rendered by similar-sounding Taiwanese or Mandarin are helpful to them to memorize new words. They also wrote that Flora showed sincere care and respect
to them, so they felt they enjoyed the English classes and were motivated to learn.

4.7 Discussion

From the case of Florence we know that English is not Florence’s only interest, but also provides her social and economic success and a higher standard of living. I think to some degree she admired English culture. Because Florence was exposed to English media like television programs and movies a lot, English cultural messages and values were transmitted to her. These popular texts are not only expressive, but also informative, in that they can influence how we see others and ourselves and thus affect the way in which we interact with one another. Moreover, Florence provides this information of English media to her students without examining it, which affects how her students construct their identities. For example, during my observation in Florence’s classes, I also observed her students’ rehearsal of a play for the drama competition in her school. In the play, there was Rap, street English, James Barn, and Snoopy. The play had the touch of fairy tale and action movie, the latter an important part of American pop culture. Florence told me that students wrote the play by themselves and she was very satisfied with their work. I think that students were impacted by Florence while they were learning English.

Flora is a caring teacher, which also showed in her interactions with her students. Students respect Flora as a teacher, but they think she is more like a big sister to them than a teacher with authority. Flora’s students were not shy about speaking to her in the class and Flora even ate lunch with her students by turn to know them personally. Flora identifies herself as a caring teacher, who is concerned with students’ academic and personal learning, and her identities appear in her teaching. She used examples that students are familiar with and students’ mother languages to support their learning in the
English classroom, and students responded positively.
CHAPTER V

JENNY AND THE PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL

5.1 Context of the school

Yen Ping High School was established in 1946. It formerly was a university established by a scholar who was educated in Japan and determined to educate the youth of Taiwan. However, the KMT government closed the school because of the 228 Incident of the KMT in 1947. Yen Ping was reopened as a high school in 1959, and it is said that the Yen Ping High School hired only faculty members who are Taiwanese. It is one of the best private high schools in Taipei; only one graduate did not pass the College Entrance Exam last year.

Teachers in private high schools have more pressure than teachers in public schools in helping students make progress in their academic work. Classes are divided according to students' grades; for example, the top 50 students of the same grade are in class A and the next 50 students in class B and etc. Therefore, teachers teach classes differently. Jenny said that if she taught the top 50 students, she would speak more English than when teaching other classes because the top 50 students' English listening ability is supposed to be better. And she would also ask them to give their opinions more often than the other classes or have more lesson activities with them because they tended to study harder and be more autonomous than other students.

In Yen Ping High School, students have two hours of conversation classes with native English speaking teachers, which mean that they have more chance to speak English with native English speakers than students in the public schools. Thus, students in Yen Ping High School were in a privileged position to learn English.
5.2 Interviews with Jenny

5.2.1 Jenny’s teaching philosophy

Jenny thought that being an English teacher was not only to teach students how to use English as a tool, but was also to teach them something about our culture, such as the way one treats people and the ways of doing things, or values. She wanted to teach so that she could inspire others to actions and thoughts one might not know otherwise. She wanted to be a mentor, coach, therapist, friend, parent, teacher and reader to the students. But as Jenny pointed out, there was no escaping the canon in high school; because of the exams there was not much time for teachers to talk about something not related to the textbooks. Jenny thought that students spent hardly any time understanding the meaning under the surface. They usually studied vocabulary and grammar without understanding the content of each lesson. Therefore, Jenny said that she tried to explain the content by giving the students examples that are related to their daily lives. As we all know, students learn best and are most excited by learning when the content is directly related to their everyday lives.

Jenny said that although she taught English, she did not want to adapt the cultural values of English-speaking countries to her teaching. She thought one of her responsibilities of being an English teacher was to help the students to evaluate English media such as movies, videos, television and pop songs; because ideology, values and beliefs of English culture may be not considered as norms in our culture. Jenny thought that we could not deny that English was in an unprecedentedly powerful position in the current world. Jenny said: “We have to learn English as a survival skill, but we also have to be careful to not lose our own identity, values and
beliefs in the process of mastering the language and its culture.”

In other words, she thought that English language teaching of beliefs, practices, and materials were never neutral, and that they represented a particular view and knowledge of social and educational practices. Therefore, she raised more concern about the spread of certain forms of culture and knowledge in curriculum practices of English.

5.2.2 Jenny’s identity as an English instructor

As an English teacher, Jenny thought it was important to teach students both written English and spoken English. She acknowledged that Standard English indicated a quality education and was acceptable in a formal public setting. She said that the main goal of her English classes was to prepare students to get high scores in entrance exams, which focused on students’ reading and comprehension ability. The students’ listening and speaking skills would not be tested and graded in exams. Besides, students could always learn and practice spoken English with native English speaking teachers in conversation classes. She said as a nonnative English speaking teacher she doubted she could explain colloquial expressions or slang to them. However, Jenny said that she was luckier than other native teachers as her pronunciation was much closer to American English and she had almost no Taiwanese accent; no student challenged her pronunciation. Therefore, she had the advantage of not working on pronunciation.

Jenny was aware of the tremendous power of U.S. culture and English over her students, she had a critical understanding of English in the broader range of social, historical, cultural and political relationships. However, she was still not
confident with her credentials for being an English teacher when compared with native English speaking teachers. She thinks that non-native teachers could never achieve a native English speaking teacher’s language competency. But she thought that she taught learning strategies more effectively, provided more information about the English language, and better prepared students for tests and exams.

I asked Jenny if she would honestly share her opinions about social issues such as a presidential election. Jenny answered that she would share her opinions with her students, but she would tell them that her opinions were not always right; they had to judge by themselves. Jenny thought it was important to share opinions with students. When you heard that someone else had an experience similar to yours, it validated your own growing-up process. Teaching English is not just teaching the language, but the ideology, values and beliefs of the language. Jenny said that although we have benefited from the culture of English such as technology. On the other hand, we have lost something of value that we do not even know. She thought it was important to teach students how to maintain their identities, beliefs and values while teaching them English and the culture of English.

Jenny’s ideas of English teaching are like Tsuda (1986) (p. 49, cited in Smolicz, 1995, p. 236) who affirmed in his study that, “Language is far from neutral, but it is actually a system of beliefs, values and interpretations emphasized and handed down in a certain culture.” A role of English language education in the process of socialization of Taiwanese youth, therefore, needs to be critically examined with regard to its impact on the construction of knowledge about self, others, society and the world.

5.2.3 Jenny’s own language learning experience as an ESL student

Jenny said that her language learning experience is quite different from her students
and other teachers because she began to learn English as a second language (ESL) in Irvine, California when she moved to U.S.A. at the age of twelve. She remembered her teachers seldom talked about grammar in English classes. As she said: “We always talked about themes and structures of the short stories, poetries or plays we read and there were always essay questions in exams.” She said that she never read a grammar book until she was a teacher, and she had to read it to know how to teach. There are no essay questions in the tests and exams, only multiple choices, fill-in blanks or sentence making. Meanwhile, Jenny said that the main goal of her classes was to prepare her students to get higher scores in English at exams, not to teach them to appreciate the language of English.

Jenny received her high school education in Taiwan. She said that the teaching methods in her high school English classes were traditional, drawing on grammar-translation, audio-lingual methods and the text-analysis method. However, Jenny admitted that these teaching methods did help her get a high score on the college entrance exam, which consisted mostly of multiple-choice questions devoid of meaningful context and mainly measured the students’ ability to memorize and recognize grammatical structures and patterns. Thus, students who could not communicate could pass the exam and even get high scores. Since Jenny taught in a private high school, the exams had a powerful effect on English-teaching practices and were usually regarded as the only criterion for evaluating teaching. Therefore, she adopted these teaching methods in her classes most of the time because she thought it was very important to her that her students got high scores in English on the college entrance exam. Jenny realized the importance of training students’ communication ability. She used the communicative-language teaching approach once in a while when she thought that her classes were ahead of the syllabus.
5.2.4 Comparing the culture of English and the local culture

In the interviews, I asked Jenny if she would teach the culture of the target language. Jenny said that if it were something she knew, she would mention it to the class. She did not want her students to have the wrong impression about English culture. Therefore, she wanted to make sure that she knew it. When Jenny taught the new word “locker”, she mentioned about the junior high school she attended in the U.S.A. She said that every student owned a locker in her school, so students put their stuff in their lockers and did not have to carry their stuff around the campus. The students even had their own lockers in the gym, so they changed their clothes when they had gym classes. Compared to Jenny’s experience, Jenny’s students did not have the luxury. However, Jenny’s experience only told about some of the high schools in the U.S.A. What she said may have misled her students to believe that every high school student in the U.S.A had his/her own locker. She also mentioned that the reason for students to have a locker was because they were not like her students who stayed in the same classroom and sat in the same seat all the time. The U.S. students went to different classrooms for different classes.

When I observed Jenny’s classes, most of the time her classes were focused on checking student homework, teaching new words, analyzing texts and explaining grammar. Jenny did not spend time on talking about the culture of English, not comparing the culture of English and the local idiom. She usually gave students example sentences that were related to teen culture like pop songs, stars and sports.

5.2.5 Using the mother languages and the local culture in the classroom

I asked Jenny if she would use local culture and the mother languages in the class. Jenny said that she intended to be familiar with teen culture like sports, pop songs and
fashion in order to include those topics in her classes and inspire her students’ learning motivation. For example, she said that she mentioned a lot of information about NBA. In one class, Jenny shared her hobbies with her students, then, asked students to say what their hobbies were. Most students answered that they liked to watch sports, play video games, surf the Internet, and sleep. Once Jenny asked students who was their idol. She knew what her students were interested in. Once, she put “Harry Potter” in the test. She also shared with her students some English songs that were sung by popular Taiwanese stars. In one of the classes that I observed, Jenny shared the song “Hey, Jude”, which was sung by a pop singer from Singapore who was very popular in Taiwan. She said that students tended to pay more attention in class if she gave them examples related to their interests. Meanwhile, Jenny would include social events or hot topics from the news in her classes. For example, at the time I observed her classes, one of the lessons was “the Internet”. Jenny mentioned how irresponsible people were when they spread fake news in the Internet and told students how to select accurate information. Jenny was very aware of the information that students could get access to and tried to teach them how to be critical of the information they got.

Jenny used Mandarin most of time in her classes because she thought that her students’ English listening ability was not good enough. Jenny sometimes used Taiwanese expressions to explain the content of the lessons when she felt it was more suitable to the context of the lessons. She also thought that it was necessary to use Taiwanese and Mandarin in the class to help students learn.

5.3 Classroom observation

I sat in the back of the room and unobtrusively documented the people, the
setting, and the activities that surrounded me. I was introduced to the class and described as Jenny's college classmate who was writing a dissertation about how high school English teachers taught in Taiwan.

Each observation occurred in one class that Jenny taught that semester. Before and after each observation, Jenny and I would often talk informally about the lessons and general teaching questions for an additional 20 to 30 minutes. This debriefing time was described in my field notes. The following were some instances that I observed during field research.

5.3.1 Live in private high school

Jenny often shared her experience with me about teaching in a private school during our talks after school. I think she was explaining why she taught her classes using the grammar-translation approach because I was bored and sleepy when I observed her classes. She said that her school was like a company, who judged the employees by their working efficiency. If a teacher could teach her/his students to get a higher grade in a short time to show their parents, then, she/he was good employee. Jenny thinks that the best way to improve her students' grades is to ask them to practice the grammar exercises and give them quizzes every class to push them to memorize new vocabulary. As she wrote in her reflection journals:

My ninth grade' girls' class had two sections of English today. During the first hour, I gave them a Pre-joint High School Exam. Later, in the second hour I asked the students to exchange their test papers and correct their partners'. The questions on the test were all multiple-choice. After each student had her test back, I asked them to look at their test and ask me questions. Test-oriented teaching is really boring, but I need to get them ready for the real Joint High School Exam. The students were learning passively, and they learned mostly the skill to take the test instead of learning the language. (March 15th)
The classroom atmosphere was very tense in Jenny’s class. Nearly all the students in Jenny’s class buried their heads in their books and wrote what she said in their notebooks. Jenny talked most of time. In some of her classes, she asked students to talk about their idols, what they do in their free time, and their wishes. But her students were not eager to talk about their opinions, so Jenny always had to pick students to stand up and speak. It seemed that students were passive in their own learning and were not motivated. However, she said because they had pressure from their parents and teachers, and they did not want to lose face, her students still studied hard to get good grades. Jenny said that they had more pressure from parents and school than teachers in public high schools. That is why she was not able to joke in her classes and the classroom atmosphere was always so tense.

5.4 Questionnaire for students

There were 56 students in Jenny’s class, which I observed during Spring 2002. I told the students that Jenny would not be able to see what they wrote in the questionnaire, so they could write down anything without concern. I received 56 questionnaires back. Jenny’s students wrote in the questionnaires that Jenny always related their daily lives to her lectures in the class. Moreover, she used body language, pictures, or other media to let them better understand the texts of the lessons. As Jenny also wrote in her journal:

“The lesson was about non-verbal expression. First, I explained what non-verbal expression was and showed them some examples by acting them out myself. Later, I invited four students to the front and had them express four situations non-verbally. Next, I asked the whole class whether they thought the non-verbal expressions were important or not. Finally, I led the class to read the text.” (March 28th)

Jenny’s students also wrote that Jenny’s experience in learning English as a second language helped their own learning because she knew what kind of difficulties they would
encounter. For example, lacking English vocabulary is one of the students’ weaknesses. Jenny suggested her students read more magazines and short stories to help them expand the amount of vocabulary they knew, and her students thought it was helpful. As Jenny wrote in her autobiography (p. 2):

I started to learn and teach grammar at the same time. Due to my personal experience, I often encouraged students who do not care for grammar to read more and learn more vocabulary. I am willing to share experiences and adjust my ways of teaching.

They also referred to Jenny’s ability to explain grammar rules very clearly compared to those teachers they had before. However, the students also reflected that Jenny was too tense in the class and too strict, too. Because she was able to keep the class quiet, the students also said that they were able to listen to what she said and to learn. Even so, they felt uncomfortable in learning under the tense atmosphere.

5.5 Discussion

As Jenny worked in a private school, her identity as an English teacher was different from the other teachers, who worked in public schools. She was only evaluated by her students’ exam results and the percentage of her students who got into the top universities in Taiwan. Jenny wrote in her autobiography that she spoke more Mandarin than English, for she not only had to motivate her students to learn English, but to help them prepare for the entrance exams. She felt she had no alternative but to teach her students in the test-oriented approach. However, her identity was still revealed in her teaching. She shared her own learning experience in English as the mainstream language context (U.S.A) and in English as second language context (Taiwan), her awareness of English culture dominates in her students’ lives, and her heritage culture with her students.
Except when preparing her students for the exams, Jenny still found a chance to use the Communicative Language Teaching approach in her class. Hence, she also thought that it was necessary to use the CLT approach in the classroom to promote the students' listening and speaking abilities.
CHAPTER VI

PENNY AND WEN AND A HIGH SCHOOL IN KEELUNG CITY

6.1. Context of the School

National Keelung Senior High School was established in 1927 when Taiwan was colonized by Japan. It is a regional high school for boys serving students who live in the community around Keelung. It recently added art and music programs, and now accepts girl students. Compared to schools in Taipei, National Keelung Senior High School is more conservative in teaching and disciplining students, and the average age of the faculty is older. The students' academic achievement is not as good as the students at the other two schools in this study. Therefore, the teachers' teaching approaches are different from the ones in the other two schools.

6.2 Interviews with Penny

6.2.1 Penny's teaching philosophy

Penny said in her first interview that the purpose of learning a language is to use it. So she tried to put more attention on the students' ability to listen and speak. She thought that it was very important to help students overcome the fear of speaking English. Therefore, she always gave students opportunities to talk about something related to their daily lives in class. According to Penny:

"Students are going to learn best and be most excited by learning when it is directly related to their everyday lives. So if you allow a student to write and talk about the pop culture and you validate that as a writing experience, then from that you can extract one or two thing that you can teach them about spelling or grammar rather than teach them rules in isolation. It does not seem to me that you can teach students rules in isolation. It has to come from their own personal expressions." (I: 1)
Penny said that English was a major part of the school curriculum and was viewed as a significant instrument for access to educational, social and economic success in society. There has been a marked increase in international trade in Taiwan. Besides, English has become a global language in the current world. Students will have to use English to communicate with foreigners when they go to work in the future. She did not expect them to speak perfect English, but at least they would not be afraid to speak English. In other words, Penny hoped that her students were interested in English and would feel a sense of achievement and motivation in learning English. The purpose of her English teaching was to help students become interested in English and thus be able to speak English fluently when they walked out of her classes. She thought that for beginning and intermediate learners oral English is more important than written English. From my observation, Penny did start every class with a small conversation with her students to encourage them to talk in English. For example, the first time I observed her class she talked about the Lottery, which was very popular in Taiwan at that time. Hence, students talked about it excitedly. Then, Penny mentioned about a traditional fireworks activity during the Lantern Festival, which also stimulated the students' discussion.

In her reflection journal, she also wrote:

“To improve students' speaking, listening and reading skills, I asked students to preview the reading of Lesson Two before this class. In these two periods, I gave students 10 minutes to skim the article. Then, I asked them 24 questions; half of them could have a chance to answer my questions and get extra scores. Students were very nervous to be asked but also very excited to get extra scores if they were able to answer the questions correctly. I think it is a good activity to know more about students' listening and speaking abilities; meanwhile, the students took part in class activities more actively. Students do need to be encouraged to speak up in class so their fear of speaking English maybe lessened gradually. (February 20th)
Penny believed that one of the English teacher's responsibilities was to teach students how to apply what they learned to their daily lives. She did not think that there was a great distance between the textbooks and the students' daily lives, only that students did not know how to apply what they learned in English classes to their lives. Thus, it was important for English teachers to get more information about current events that were approachable to students and put it into their lessons. She thought that English teachers played an important role in students' learning. If he/she were enthusiastic about English, students would be more eager to learn English. The attitude of teachers determined an environment for language learning.

However, Penny said that there was a limit in language learning because most teachers taught according to textbooks, which covered limited topics, culture of the target language, vocabulary and so on. Besides, English was a foreign language to students in Taiwan, not a second language. Even teachers would not be able to explain the culture of English if she/he had never lived in countries where people spoke English. So there was a limit to language learning. Penny said that fortunately teachers had more choices on selecting textbooks that were practical and fitted into students' daily lives since the government opened the market of publishing textbooks two years ago.

6.2.2 Penny's identity as an English instructor

I asked Penny if she would honestly share her opinions about political issues, social events or other controversial topics with her students she said she definitely would tell her students what her identity was and what her opinions were. For example, she said that she thought that China and Taiwan were very different in
culture. She did not think there was a possibility for them to become one nation. She clearly wanted her students to know that we had to know Taiwan more from her history and other aspects to be real Taiwanese. However, she said that she preferred not to talk about politics in class. But as she wrote in her autobiography (p.1):

"I think people define their English classroom as however they want to but I do not look at my classroom as just reading and writing. I look at it as a study of life. Really, that is what English has been for me. It is not just words on a page it is history, it is sociology, it is psychology, it is religion, and it is politics. I think it is up to the teacher to determine what duties they are going to take on. I think it becomes a personal issue because even though a curriculum is mandated by a school, it is still going to be interpreting that mandate so I will bring in my views subconsciously or unconsciously."

Penny said that she would like to keep her classes as English classes and nothing more.

Penny said that Taiwan actually is a multicultural country. Things have changed dramatically these past years. She said that she cannot possibly teach her students the ways she was taught. The reason that she preferred not to talk about politics was because she did not want to influence what students thought. She said that students should have their own opinions about social justice or politics. Then, I asked her if there were students who did not agree with what she said and who challenged her in the classes. She said never. She heard about one case in her school in which a teacher, whose idea of Taiwan was still monolingual and monocultural, had attempted to impose his view on students. He was challenged by his students in the classroom. Penny said the role of teacher had changed, what the teacher said was not always right; the teacher and students had to respect each other. She said:

"Mutual respect is needed to secure free and active interaction between a teacher and students. Respect is the quality that students and a teacher embrace. By all accounts, without having respect for others' opinions, there
cannot be a good learning experience. In other words, reciprocal interactions between a teacher and students generate the space where dialogs become fruitful” (II: 6).

Penny also revealed her ideas on multiculturalism. She said that globalization increases international business travel, and the use of telecommunication has farmed out routine work and has resulted in the spread of English as an international language. English is shared among nonnative speakers. She said that she once accompanied her husband to Thailand for a business trip. Her husband had no problem communicating with people there. In contrast, Penny could not understand what they said because she said their English is not Standard English, so she could not understand it. Even though she was English major and her English is supposed to be better than her husband’s. But when she could not communicate with her English, it did not matter if her English was better. From that experience, Penny thinks that teaching students to be able to use English as a language is more important than teaching them to memorize vocabulary that they may not use in daily conversation.

Meanwhile, she also thinks that it is important for her to have knowledge of her own culture and multicultural issues in order to make students aware of the proper linguistic performance in diverse types of intercultural settings.

As a nonnative teacher, students sometimes would challenge her pronunciation. Penny thinks that students do not feel at ease unless the teachers present the credentials and qualities of teaching that satisfy their minimum expectations. She said that she really has to work hard on pronunciation, but there is no right or wrong pronunciation. She thinks it is one of the disadvantages of being a nonnative English-speaking teacher. Native Speakers of English have the advantage
of not working on pronunciation. Even if teachers have a regional accent, their English is quite acceptable and legitimized as far as their English is understandable.

6.2.3 Penny’s own language learning experience

When I interviewed Penny, I mentioned to her about my own experience in learning Mandarin. Then, she told me about her own experience, which impacted her until now. Penny only spoke Taiwanese at home before attending elementary school and had a hard time learning Mandarin in the first grade. She said that she hardly understood what her teacher said in the school, so she often misunderstood what her teacher said. For example, when her teacher asked her to practice new words by writing each word three times in her notebook, she misunderstood "three times" to "three rows." Since there were so many new words, she was not able to finish the homework. She woke up early every morning to finish, and she was always late for school. Every time she was late for classes, her teacher would glare at her, which made her feel very frustrated and scared. She did not solve her frustration until she was a teacher herself. One of her students stared at her every time she walked into the classroom because she had caught him cheating during the mid-term exam. Ever since then, Penny had a hard time going into that student's classroom. She asked help from a professional counselor, who helped her remember her experience in elementary school and overcome the fear.

Penny said the frustration that she experienced in learning Mandarin made her more aware of her students' learning. She is more understanding about students' difficulties in learning English and the limited support students' parents can give. She said it is impossible for parents who have limited knowledge of English to teach their
children at home. English is considered the language of power and prestige in our society. Only the parents of the middle to the high economic class can afford to send their children to private language institutes or hire a private English tutor for their children. She knows that the communities her students come from are not in the middle to high economic class. Besides, the students in her school have limited access to native speakers in their communities and do not have native speaking English teachers like the other schools in this study. Therefore, it is important for English teachers to have empathy for their students.

This hegemonic power of English has been promoted through social and educational institutions that view language as neutral and thus, ignore the relationship between English and social and economic inequality in society. English has become one of the most powerful means of inclusion or exclusion from further education, employment, or social positions. However, not all English teachers are aware of it.

Penny also revealed that what she learned in college impacts how she teaches now. When I asked her which courses or teachers impacted her teaching, she said "Shakespeare" and "Movies and Literature." She thought those two classes put a lot of emphasis on the context of the language, for example, culture and background information (history). Language is used as a tool for writers to communicate with readers. She said that she tried to tell her students there were different thinking processes when you used different languages. And since the cultures of languages are different from each other, there are different ways to communicate and that is what we have to learn. Penny said that when she had conversation classes with students at her previous school, she would ask students to perform a play to learn the context of
spoken English. She thinks students learn more when they really use the language. Performing a play also gave her students a chance to practice speaking English and overcome their fear of speaking.

6.2.4 Comparing the culture of English and local culture

Penny admitted that she learned very little or practically no culture in her inservice teacher-education courses. What she learned in American literature and English Literature seemed far from everyday things. Interpreting literature may have something to do with studying a culture, but it only offered an indirect approach to cultural studies; and some literature reflected very little culture. Penny thinks the cultural information comes from many sources, including one’s own observation of things and people’s behavior, either by associating with native English speaker residents in Taiwan or through the teacher’s own experiences in a country where English is spoken as a native language. Since she did not have much experience, she seldom explains the cultural aspects behind English. She only said what she knew about and what information she could collect.

In the interviews, Penny mentioned many times about a language carrying a certain culture, ways of thinking and ways of doing things. She said that she definitely would present some examples to her students, in order to help them avoid Taiwanese English expressions or Taiwanese English speech behavior. For example, one of the common Taiwanese greeting expressions is “tse ba muai” which literally means, “Have you eaten yet?” This Taiwanese expression is not really a question. You do not have to give an exact answer. Just like the English greeting, “How are you?”, usually is not a serious question. Another example is Taiwanese people prefer
to look or sound modest with other people. So when people compliment them, they use modest expressions, such as, “Ohm, no, no. It is not true.” Taiwanese people hesitate to accept complimentary remarks about themselves.

In Penny’s journal, she also wrote an example of how she presented the culture of English and the local culture.

“Since Lesson One was nearly finished, I prepared to give each student one handout which introduced the legend of Chinese Valentine’s Day. I hoped students did not only know the origins of Western Valentine’s Day but should also know about Chinese Valentine’s Day. Some day they may tell our story about Valentine’s Day to their western friends. I wished students could have had time to express their impressions on the legends of Western and Chinese Valentine’s Day. But there was not time. (February 27th)

6.2.5 Using local culture and mother language in classroom

When I asked Penny if she would use the students’ mother languages or local culture in the classroom, Penny said that she would use them if they were helpful in improving students’ learning. Although, teachers mainly spoke Mandarin and some teachers discriminated against Taiwanese or other mother languages when they taught in her school, Penny thought it was necessary to use mother languages to support student learning. She also believed that teachers should recognize the importance of acknowledging the different cultures that their students come from and the value systems that they carry with them. To be good educators, we need to be aware of those things as much as possible to avoid offending the students and their parents unintentionally. Yet, the classroom should be regarded as a site where various cultural and social interests that students bring to the classroom combine for a more just and democratic society.

Penny said that once a while, she would have a small conversation with her
students about holidays in Taiwan. For example, she talked about moon cake and the origin of the Moon Festival with her students in English when the Moon Festival was coming. There was no material related to local culture in the textbooks, and she did not have time to spend on any material related to local culture or teenage culture. Therefore, she spent most of the classes on materials related to the textbooks in order to prepare the students for their exams. But when I interviewed her, she thought it was very important for students to know how to introduce their own culture to foreigners. She mentioned that her husband had lots of customers from different countries, and he had trouble explaining local culture to his customers when they visited Taiwan. Hence, Penny thought it was important to prepare students to be able to use English to introduce their own culture.

6.3 Classroom observation

I sat in the back of the room and unobtrusively documented the people, the setting, and the activities that surrounded me. I was introduced to the class and described as Penny's college classmate who was writing a dissertation and would like to see how high school English teachers teach in Taiwan.

Each observation occurred in one class that Penny taught that semester. Before and after each observation, Penny and I would often talk informally about the lessons and general teaching questions for an additional five to ten minutes because she had class after the ten-minute break. This debriefing time was captured in my field notes. The following are some instances that I observed during field research.

6.3.1 Chinese or Taiwanese

In the interviews, Penny clearly defined her identity as a Taiwanese and her...
fluence in Taiwanese. However, when I observed Penny’s classes, she seldom mentioned Taiwan. If it was necessary to refer to a culture that the students were familiar with, she always used Chinese culture. For example, when she introduced the legend of Chinese Valentine’s Day to her students, she said that she thought that “Chinese” mythology was more interesting than western mythology. And when she explained the text of Lesson 3 “American Manners”, she said: “We Chinese are too polite, so we say no when people ask us if we are hungry.” I think it maybe because of the education she had. The other participants also appeared to be like Penny, who referred to Chinese culture when they meant “the culture they are familiar with.” Due to the promotion of Chinese culture and Mandarin in the educational system, Northern Chinese social values, norms and knowledge were familiar to the five participants. It had been rooted in them for so many years that part of them thought they were Chinese. Although Penny claimed her Taiwanese identity, she referred to herself as Chinese, also.

6.3.2 Practicing English speaking

Penny always provided her students an opportunity to practice their English speaking. In one class, at the end of Lesson 1, she asked her students to practice tongue twisters. She asked volunteers to come up to the front of the classroom to practice, and she would give anyone who volunteered to practice extra points. At the beginning, her students were hesitant to come to the front. After Penny encouraged them, the students were anxious to volunteer, and it seemed that they were having fun, too. I think it was a very successful class because Penny achieved her goal as an English teacher who wanted her students not to be afraid of speaking English. The
students not only had fun, but also got the courage to speak English in front of people.

6.4 Questionnaire for students

There were 42 students in Penny’s class that I observed in the Spring 2002. I told the students that Penny would not be able to see what they wrote in the questionnaire, so they could write anything. I received back 38 questionnaires. Six questionnaires specifically said they had the same cultural identity as Penny because they were all Taiwanese. Only one questionnaire said that Penny and he had the same cultural identities because they were Chinese. The rest of the questionnaires did not reveal the ethnic issue. Most of students thought that the examples that Penny gave to them in order to explain how to use new words were easy to understand and related to their daily lives. They also mentioned that Penny always compared the culture of English and their own culture in the classes, whenever it was necessary. For example, she mentioned about the Ghost festival in Taiwan when she introduced Halloween. However, three students mentioned about how their history teacher’s identity was different from theirs in the questionnaires. They wrote that this teacher especially liked to talk about which political party she preferred and criticized other political parties. The students and their families thought it was not proper for a teacher to talk about politics, especially which party she favored.

6.5 Interviews with Wen

6.5.1 Wen’s teaching philosophy

Wen was the oldest one among the five participants. She had been a teacher for more than 10 years in three high schools. She said that she was not like other teachers in her school. Other teachers liked to refer to their students as their children,
so they treated them like children who needed guidance and rules. Wen said that she
liked to treat her students as independent individuals, who she respected as adults
who knew what they were doing. She believed that if she was well intended, if she
showed her students sincere respect, her students would respect her, too. That would
help students learn in her classes. However, she denied emotional closeness with the
students because she thought it would involve personal events and would affect her
professional role. From my classroom observation, she always said “please” when she
asked her students to answer questions or do written exercises in class. She said that
she did not want to be the teacher with authority. She wanted students to think that
she respected their choice to learn or not to learn in the class. She would not use a
teacher’s authority to force them to do the things she said.

Wen said that when she was a novice teacher, she used to teach with lots of
activities to let students really use English and have fun in classes. But when the
students told her that they had fun in her classes, but did not get high grades in the
tests, she changed her teaching approach. She went back to the grammar-translation
teaching approach because that was how her teachers taught her, and it helped her get
high grades. Besides, the qualities of her teaching are also judged by her students’
grades. Therefore, she cannot teach the way she wants, like having interaction with
students, focusing on listening and speaking. She said:

“We have to face reality---to send students to the university. So I would rather
stick to the traditional way of teaching: otherwise, my students will feel
strange if I change my way, thus influencing their results in the exam.” (I: 12)

However, Wen said that she did not like to lecture all the time. She thought
that it was also important for students to practice to really know how to use a phrase
or new words. And she also intended to let the atmosphere of her classes be relaxing. Although it was a traditional teaching approach, it did not necessarily have to be tense. From my classroom observation, Wen did let her students practice sentence making a lot. She just went through the lesson superficially, for example, translating the text into Mandarin without extra explanation. In the interviews, Wen mentioned several times that she did not want to discuss topics, which were not related to English lessons. She said that there were different topics in the English textbooks, but she would teach the lessons without further discussion. Because she believed that every one had his/her own opinion and value, she did not want to jeopardize her students’ opinion by sharing her own.

In the interviews, Wen said that she always told her students that English was just a tool for the purpose of communication; it cannot be a special skill. Therefore, when some of her students said that they liked English very much and they wanted to major in English, she did not encourage them. She told them it would not do them good if they majored in English because they would not have other special skills to find a good job. It was clear to see that Wen did not think that English was the key to a successful future as did the other participants.

6.5.2 Wen’s identity as an English instructor

When I asked Wen if she would share her opinions about social issues with her students, she said she would prefer not to. She also said that she even avoided talking about anything related to politics and social issues or any controversial issues. First, she thought that her opinions would impact her students’ judgment because they still thought teachers were the ones with authority. Second, what she said would
affect the students’ attitudes toward her. For example, she said that she shared her own opinions about the first Taipei mayoral election seven years ago, which was a bad experience because she debated with her students, and which hurt her and the students. She said that she seldom shared her opinions about social issues with colleagues. She believed that it was hard to change someone’s identities and ideas, which were so deep-rooted. Moreover, she objected to concentrating on social and cultural issues in her English classes. She said that the purpose of her English classes was to help students pass the College entrance exam. She thought it was more important to teach students the four skills than deal with the political and cultural contexts of the texts and their relationship to the lives of the students.

Wen only referred to issues that were in the English newspaper, which was published for high school students. Its topics relating to teen culture and local culture were required reading by her students. For example, she gave students a quiz about one article, “Spring in A Li Mountain”, from the English newspaper. She asked them to fill the blanks in five sentences, which were exactly the same as the ones in the article. After the quiz, she explained and translated the five sentences in Mandarin, then, switched to another task. It seemed that Wen did not connect herself with the context of the text and did not think it was necessary to talk about it some more with her students. I think Wen wanted to protect her identities. Thus, in order to protect her ideologies, she chose not to share them with students and colleagues.

I mentioned that the society in Taiwan was different from the one ten years ago, and education reformation has been in every school. I wondered if there was any difference in her teaching. She said her teaching approach and pedagogy became
more conservative and traditional because the students still had to pass the exams to
get into college. If the format of the exams did not change, it was hard for teachers to
change their teaching approach. As long as the exams tested students’ knowledge of
vocabulary and structure, teachers would not change their ways of teaching. Wen
thought that grammar-translation was still the best way to help students get high
grades in the exams.

When I mentioned that the society in Taiwan became multicultural compared
to the monocultural society under the KTP government, I asked if she would include
local culture in her lessons. Wen answered that she did not accept the idea of
multiculture in Taiwan. She respected the existence of the idea only if it did not affect
her right to survive. However, she would not talk about it in her classes. It was clear
that Wen believed that Taiwan should be a monolingual and monocultural place like
before.

Like the other participants, Wen shared her non-native English teacher’s
identity. She told me that the English in their textbooks was American English. She
usually told her students not to imitate her pronunciation because hers was not
correct. As a non-native English teacher, Wen was not confident with her
pronunciation. She said that her English had a “Taiwanese accent.” However, she was
confident with her knowledge of English grammar. When students came to correct
her grammar, she always told them she was right and there was not only one right
answer. Wen was like other non-native teachers who are not comfortable with their
accent.
6.5.3 Wen’s own learning experience as an EFL student

Wen wrote about her study abroad experience in her autobiography. She wrote that English was a tool for her to communicate, her American classmates and other international students when she studied in Kansas. English was also a tool for her to comprehend her study, to know the community, to have a part-time job and to make friends. At that time, she was curious to learn the American culture like her school’s homecoming and how to eat spaghetti. She also wanted to introduce some customs and culture of Taiwan to her American friends and other international students. Although she did not understand American jokes and terms used in sports, she did not mind that because it did not hinder how she lived in the U.S.A. She also wrote that she did not have an identity problem because she very clearly knew who she was—a Chinese who came from Taiwan.

After she and her husband graduated from graduate school, her husband worked in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Boston, Massachusetts. However, when her husband worked and she stayed at home, she felt it was hard for her to get involved with the community. She did not have much opportunity to meet Americans outside her home. There was a disjuncture between the Anglophile world and her own. She did not care who the mayor was or what the budget of the public library was. She felt that she was an outsider in the U.S.A. She definitely had no problem communicating with people in English. But she said that she lacked the knowledge of American history, art, literature, and popular culture to communicate with people, and she felt that she did not want to know American culture in order to be part of the society. Moreover, her education and experience had little social value in America, and hence gave her little
access to the material resources she desperately sought. This had an important impact
on her access to desirable social networks, her class identities and her opportunities to
speak English. So she and her husband decided to go back to Taiwan for a better life.
Wen’s case is like the immigrant women in Norton’s study (2000), who felt that they
were marginalized by the dominant society. Therefore, Wen’s investment in English
was connected to her identity—a Chinese, not an American. Wen did not try to invest
her effort in English and went back to Taiwan.

6.5.4 Comparing the culture of English and local culture

Wen thought it was important to know the culture when you learn a foreign
language. She mentioned that once she taught a lesson about music like jazz and rock
‘n’ roll. She introduced the background of the origin of rock ‘n’ roll and the singers.
When it was related to the lessons she was teaching, she would refer to her study
abroad experience, too. However, she thought there was a limit to her knowledge of
English culture. As she wrote in her autobiography (p.1):

“English had become the most convenient tool while I studied in the U.S.A. I
found that I could discuss any thing with my classmates and I did my oral
reports in classes without much preparation my last year of study. However,
when my classmates began to talk something that was related to their culture,
I was lost and felt confused. I knew it would be helpful if I knew their history,
pop culture, art and so on. At the same time, I told myself it was o.k. not to
know their culture because I am not American. But I could not deny that to
know the American culture would benefit my English. But how much should I
know?”

Wen believed that English carried its cultural value as well as its ideologies.
In the interviews, she said that she thought American culture had become very
dominant in Taiwan. One of the reasons was because most of the policy makers
received their degrees in the U.S.A. Thus, the curriculum and the language policy
favored the U.S.A instead of other English speaking countries. And the products of
the culture seemed to affect our teenagers, too. She always suggested her students to carefully examine the products of English culture like movies, television news and music, because they shaped our perceptions.

When Wen taught the lesson “Table Manners”, she compared how people ate differently in the U.S.A. and Taiwan. However, she seldom mentioned about local cultural events. Wen lacked the knowledge of the historical, literary, and aesthetic traditions of the local culture and found it hard to involve them in her lessons.

6.5 5 Using teen culture and mother language in the classroom

Wen said that she used Mandarin to teach all the time because she thought that her students’ listening ability was not good; and she did not speak the other students’ mother languages in class because she could speak only Mandarin. When I asked her if she would relate her lessons to teen culture, pop culture or social issues, she answered that she would. However, she would just mention it without time for students to discuss it. As I observed in her classes, Wen never lost her students attention. She was always in control of the classes’ pace, so she usually just used one sentence to mention the pop culture that was related to the lesson. For example, when she introduced the new word “comment”, she asked students, “What is your comment on Chu Mei-feng’s issue?” (Chu Mei-feng was a Legislator, and her sex scandal was hot news in Taiwan at the time I observed Wen’s class.) However, she did not want the students to answer. She just made a sentence using the new word “comment.” Then, she continued to introduce another new word.

Wen talked about the 9/11 event to her students, too. She said that she wrote the headline she saw in CNN “America under Attack” on the blackboard and gave her
students a news article from CNN. But she said that she did not share her opinions with her students. She just simply said what had happened because she did not want to influence the students’ moral and social values. It should not be up to her to tell them what is right and what is wrong.

6.6 Classroom observation

I was introduced by Wen as a Ph. D. student who was doing a study about English teaching in Taiwan. I always sat at the back of the classroom in order to unobtrusively document the people, the setting, and the activities that surrounded me. Each observation occurred in one class that Wen taught that semester. Before and after each observation, Wen and I would often talk informally about the lessons and general teaching questions for an additional five to ten minutes because she had a class after the ten-minute break. This debriefing time was captured in my field notes. The following were some instances that I observed during field research.

6.6.1 Caring and respecting students

Wen respected her students and perceived them as adults. When she asked her students to do something, she always said “would you please….?” or “can you do me a favor….”, which was not seen in the other participants’ classes. In Taiwan, teachers are the authority and usually order their students around. They perceive their students as kids even they are high school students. Therefore, Wen’s students respected her and cooperated with her in the classroom, which promoted their learning motivation, too. Wen always walked around the classroom to see if students had questions when she asked them to practice sentence writing, which made her available to her students.
6.7 Questionnaire for students

There were 43 students in Wen’s class, which I observed during Spring 2002. I told the students that Wen would not be able to see what they wrote on the questionnaires, so they could write down anything without concern. I received 43 questionnaires back, although some questionnaires were not completed. Students wrote that Wen was a caring teacher, who would not pressure them into studying English. The atmosphere in her classroom was relaxing. They did not think their ideas of culture were different from Wen’s because she seldom mentioned or discussed social cultural issues. And three students in particular wrote that Wen and they are all Chinese. Therefore, there is no cultural difference issue. No students wrote that they and Wen are Taiwanese. However, the other three students mentioned that they wished Wen would make examples in Taiwanese, with which they are more familiar. The students all said that they liked to hear Wen tell about her study abroad experience in order to know the culture of English and thought it was helpful. They also thought that practicing writing sentences in the classroom was helpful, too. If they only listened to what Wen said without really practicing, the knowledge would not be theirs. One thing that I found quite different from other students in this study was that Wen’s students blamed themselves for not understanding Wen’s teaching. Several students said that they could only understand 30 percent to 50 percent of Wen’s lecture and they blamed themselves for not having enough vocabulary or not studying hard enough. It seemed that Wen’s students did not have much confidence in themselves.
6.8 Discussion

Wen is similar to Penny, whose identities are also deeply rooted. Wen spoke Mandarin all the time in class. She was also the only participant who wrote her reflection journals and autobiography in Chinese instead of English. Wen did have a strong sense of being Chinese. Her language choice was mainly Mandarin, which gave her access to some social networks in Taiwan. However, this also denied her access to some social networks in Taiwan and in the U.S.A. The choices of language could serve to indicate social relationships based on shared or unshared group memberships, and therefore helped form social identity in specific contexts. Thus, we can see that Wen’s choice of language could indicate that her social relationships were not shared with people who spoke languages other than Mandarin.

About Wen’s teaching, some of her students expressed their feeling of being dissatisfied with the instructional methods that were used in the classes. Although the students thought the instructional methods did help them get high scores on tests and exams, they were deprived of opportunities to develop abilities and skills that were crucial to the acquisition of English. To sum up, Wen’s English teaching was isolated from its content and contexts. Students were mastering linguistic skills mechanically rather than developing knowledge of the social and cultural contexts of English.
CHAPTER VII

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

There are several issues that emerge from the case studies, each worthy of consideration. The six major issues examined below are the most pertinent as they isolate the areas that require the most attention when developing teacher education courses and when teaching students. The first issue examines why the teaching approach is still more focused on grammar-translation; the second looks at the participants' non-native speaker teachers' identity; the third deals with the issue of teachers as the source of authority. The fourth examines the social cultural related curriculum in the participants' classes. The fifth analyzes how the participants' lack of knowledge of multiculturalism impacts their teaching. The sixth analyzes the five participants' culture and language awareness and the relationship with their identities.

7.1 Exam-oriented teaching

The methods of teaching of these five participants were very similar in the way they emphasized commonly used vocabulary, essential grammar rules, and mimicry-memorization. They did not spend much time on the training of their students' communication abilities. This grammar emphasis was due to the high pressure from the national entrance exams that all the students must pass in order to move up to the next academic level. Except for Wen, the other four participants were aware of the importance of improving their students' communication abilities and occasionally did provide opportunities for students to practice listening and speaking skills. They complained about lack of time in class to let students speak due to the college entrance exams. It was stressful to see how limited was the time they had to
cover so many lessons and the extra curriculum in one semester. No wonder the participants constantly said, “Hurry up. Hurry up,” in the classes, when they asked their students to answer questions or turn to a certain page, or when transforming one activity to another one. In order to push students to study, the participants gave their students quizzes in almost every class I observed. They also constantly mentioned the importance of passing the College Entrance Exam for success in the future, which brought pressure on both teachers and students.

In the students’ questionnaires, most students said that they put an extensive degree of effort in studying English. They are all aware of the pressures given to English and felt it was burdensome. They also constantly blamed themselves for not acquiring enough vocabulary and grammar. However, on the other side, they complained about how useless English would be if they just learned vocabulary and grammar without knowing how to really produce the language. Although the students did not like the English curriculum in the schools, they knew that English was a valuable medium in both academic and career success. Most of the students suggested in the questionnaires that they hoped their teachers could emphasize communication skills more and design the English curriculum to develop practical knowledge that fosters communicative competence.

The traditional view of teaching in Taiwan was that “Teachers talk and students listen.” Moreover, teachers did not teach communicative methods, because they themselves were taught English in secondary school and college in the same way as their students were now. In their working experience, they have had little opportunity to learn and try new teaching methods. Flora said in her interviews that it
was hard for her to get rid of the habit of teaching students the way she was taught. The decisions that she made in her classroom were based and shaped by her prior experiences as a student, her personal practical knowledge, and her values and beliefs as well as principles of learning and teaching. Her teaching was largely socially constructed out of the experiences and classrooms from which she has come. Hence, her teaching is still grammar-translation approach and exam-oriented.

Why do our teachers insist on the traditional language teaching and regard the communicative approach as difficult to adopt even though they have realized its importance and necessity? There are many reasons for the maintenance of this pattern: Classes are usually large and therefore difficult to organize in any other way. Teachers are insecure in their own English and so, even if they speak it, are unwilling to allow any unplanned discussion. Furthermore, both colleagues and students exert pressure on teachers to assert their status as sources of authority. There is an exam to be worked for, the demands of which seem incompatible with more communicate styles of teaching. All of these factors combine with natural conservatism to create powerful resistance to change.

I think, for one thing, a communicative approach requires not only highly professional training and teaching strategies, but also solid knowledge of the language. Since most teachers themselves were not trained communicatively when they were studying in high school, it is not so easy for them to get used to the communicative-language teaching without being pretrained and practicing for some time. What teachers know about teaching is largely socially constructed out of the experiences and classrooms from which teachers have come. Thus, teacher training
should be given special attention, and should be placed before everything else to accelerate English teaching in Taiwan.

7.2 Nonnative English-speaking teachers’ identity

There were no native English-speaking teachers (NNETs) in the school systems until years ago when people started to emphasize the importance of communication skills in English. Therefore, English teachers in Taiwan did not have the issues of being identified as nonnative English-speaking teachers and compared with native English-speaking teachers (NETs). It was natural for students to have nonnative English-speaking teachers at school. Students did not question the qualifications of their English teachers. However, things have changed. The identity of Nonnative Speaking English teachers was developed and accentuated by being compared with Native Speaking teachers. “In the audiolingual approach, NNETs, who are perceived to favor error suppression and correction and to stress preparing students for tests and examinations, find themselves in a more useful position. In communicative language teaching, however, there is skepticism about the ability of NNETs to be group process managers in leading the debriefing of activities and assisting groups in self-correction” (Tang, 1997).

Although the teachers in the study appear to be confident teachers, they perceived themselves differently from their native English-speaking colleagues. For example, Jenny said she thought that she was inferior and handicapped in some ways compared with native English-speaking teachers. That was because linguistic competence is based on intuitive knowledge of what is grammatical and ungrammatical in a language, and that is what gives the native speaking teacher
superiority. She and other participants felt disadvantaged in comparison to native speaking teachers due to perceived language needs, a lack of role models, and/or perceived prejudice based on ethnicity, accent, or nonnative status.

However, the teachers in the study also believed that successful teaching does not depend on nativeness, but rather on the teacher’s knowledge, skills, training, experience, and personality. As Flora said in the interviews: “I cannot say that I am a successful language learner. But I can share with them my own learning experience and support their learning with my professional knowledge and my personal experience. For example, I shared with my students those things that helped me memorize vocabulary and what kinds of difficulties I encountered when I learned English. I also had the ability to understand my students’ feelings and problems in learning English because I went through it. I know the frustration and depression when my students could not get good grades. Most important is that my students can talk to me about their problems in their mother languages.”

Florence also revealed that she considered herself as a role model, or as she put it, “a success example of learning English.” She thought being a NNET was “more advantaged” in some ways since NNETs themselves had the experience of learning a foreign language, and therefore, they could feel more empathy towards English language learners. According to Florence, as a NNET, she was aware of the language learning process. She was able to introduce to her students her own learning techniques that she found helpful when she was a student. Like Florence, Penny, also believed that her being a NNET was an “advantage” over a NET because she argued NNETs could see the problems and difficulties of learning a foreign language “from
the inside.” She did not think that “a NET could see it in more objectively.” Thus, NNETs could serve as imitable models of successful language learners, provide learners with more information about language and learning strategies, anticipate more easily the difficulties learners would encounter, and perhaps be better able to assist them through sharing their mother languages. Although Jenny did not feel comfortable as a NNET when compared to NETs, she said there were many advantages of having NNETs:

“I (as a NNET) might know their errors or mistakes, what their needs are better than NETs, and also, in terms of maybe grammar, they, the NETs, can use the certain points of grammar, but they might not explain better than we can....I learned the grammar and so...through that I can explain certain grammar points in different ways than the NETs sometimes....I notice their problems better than NETs. ... I can share my experience as a language learner as well as a language teacher.” (II: 6)

7.3 Teachers as sources of authority

The classes of the five participants in this study are teacher-centered and lecture-oriented. The following descriptions are from the class observations of the five participants’ classes.

Penny’s class (February. 20) The students and teacher spent fifteen minutes learning the rest of the new words from the last class in Lesson One in the textbook. Penny read the words and asked her students to take turns according to their students ID number to read the example sentence for each word and translate it to Mandarin. The teacher corrected the pronunciation of some words that were difficult to pronounce. She was also not satisfied with some of the students’ translations, so she corrected them. Then, she explained the other meanings and usages of the words and wrote them on the blackboard.
**Jenny**’s class (March 15th) Jenny asked her students to take out the handout she gave them the day before as homework. The questions on the handout were all multiple choice and grammar oriented. For example, if you _____ told us about the bad service, we would have eaten there. (a) didn’t (b) wouldn’t have (c) haven’t (d) hadn’t. Then, she went through each question and gave students more example sentences of each question and related (e.g. if I ____ set my alarm clock, I would have gotten up on time).

**Flora**’ class (March 19th): After Flora reviewed and discussed the quiz with the students, she asked students to take out the handout about “relative clauses.” While students were busy finding their handouts, she mentioned that the students had already learned about “relative clauses” in junior high school. However, most of them did not have a clear idea, so she was going to explain “relative clauses” again. She wrote down, “The boy is Tom. The boy wears a jacket.” and then asked students how to make these two sentences as one sentence. Some students said the answer, and Flora wrote down, “The boy who wears a jacket is Tom” on the blackboard. Then, she wrote another two sentences “The boy is Tom. I talked to the boy.” and asked her students to make them as one sentence. As students answered in chorus, Flora wrote, “The boy whom I talked to is Tom. The boy to whom I talked to is Tom.” on the blackboard and explained the structure of these two sentences. After that, she asked students to do the exercise on the handout and walked around the classroom to see how they were doing.

**Wen**’s class (March 20th): The class I observed was vocabulary teaching. It was Lesson 5 “Compliments”. There were altogether 25 new words and expressions in the
list after the text. At beginning of the class, Wen read aloud each new word with correct pronunciation. The students read aloud, imitating the teacher. She explained the definition of the new words in English and then illustrated their usage by taking examples from the dictionary. She gave students several Mandarin sentences in which the equivalent of the new English word was used and asked students to translate. After a few minutes, Wen asked 5 students to write down the sentences on the blackboard, and then she corrected them as she explained why the sentences were wrong.

Florence's class (March 28th): Florence began Lesson 4 by going through the vocabulary list. Students read the new words aloud by imitating the teacher. Florence corrected the pronunciation of some words that were difficult to pronounce. Then, she read the example sentences for each word and translated them to Mandarin. Some students wrote down what Florence said in their textbooks or made marks in their textbooks.

We can see from my description that the students followed the teachers’ instructions and most of the classes were uniformly structured. There was almost no interaction between the students and teachers. The role of teachers seemed to be an information giver with the students as receivers. Moreover, teachers were the sources of authority. The instructional methods used in the class were drilling skills, rote memorization, and cramming. The teaching methods were the same as when the participants were students. The students in the classes were taught abstract knowledge of English, such as grammar and pronunciation, and therefore were allowed little opportunity to develop practical and authentic knowledge of the language.
Brown (1991) stated that with a focus on learners, there was an attempt to capitalize learning English as the means to their empowerment by making efforts to make curricula more content-based and context-based with an emphasis on pressing global issues. By looking inside learners, teachers need to be able to ask how classroom approaches can best serve the learners’ goals in language learning. In an attempt to make education more learner-centered and democratic, it is necessary to redefine the role of teacher, not as an authoritarian figure in a classroom, but a facilitator who respects the subjective role and experience of the students. Teachers who act as facilitators allow their students to explore their learning through the process of questioning and reflecting on the knowledge they gain. Most importantly, teachers and students are able to develop abilities to critically examine and reflect on learning and teaching practices in a broader context through a new lens. Thus, it is necessary for teachers to learn how to negotiate power in classrooms with their students and redefine their identity as teacher.

7.4 Sociocultural related curriculum

It is well known that teaching can better match the home and community cultures of students. In their teaching, the five participants all used examples that were familiar to their students. Their students also wrote in the questionnaire that they understood their teachers well because they always provided examples that were related to their daily lives. Jenny said she intended to know the teenagers’ culture, and Penny discussed the traditional festivals in English with her students. In other words, they used one of Vygotsky’s principles, internalization, to help students internalize, transmit, or transform unfamiliar knowledge to familiar knowledge in formal school
The five participants also gave their students examples of cross-cultural experience in order to develop their communicative competence. They knew it was crucial that foreign language learners should become aware of differing cultural frameworks, both their own and those of others. Otherwise, they will use their own cultural system to interpret target-language messages whose intended meaning may well be predicated on quite different cultural assumptions. Their teaching approach is matched with what Kramsch and Sullivan called “appropriate pedagogy.” English is an international language, spoken by people with different cultural backgrounds. Appropriate pedagogy “revises the authentic and adapts it to local conditions” (Kramsch & Sullivan, p. 200, 1996). Appropriate pedagogy would allow teachers and students either to conform to social norms of English and give the socially expected rejoinders, or create their own context of use according to the values cherished in their national, professional-academic, or institutional culture. However, teachers’ own social and cultural identities would also reflect on what kind of cultural context they would like to create for their students. Wen did not create the context that her students could talk about local issues and events. Thus, her students would not be prepared to communicate their culture with global and local speakers of English.

Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) said that appropriate pedagogy must also be pedagogy of appropriation. The English language will enable students of English to do business with native and nonnative speakers of English in the global world market, and for that they need to master the grammar and vocabulary of standard English. But they also need to retain control of its use, as showed in Kramsch and Sullivan’s study
(1996) of Vietnamese learners and teachers, who acquire correct and idiomatic forms of English at work at the local level of market-place, home, and classroom. By keeping a playful distance from conventional norms of use, these practices keep alive the local educational values associated, for instance, with the culture of the family, the school, and strong oral tradition.

Appropriate pedagogy should therefore prepare learners to be both global and local speakers of English and to feel at home in both international and national cultures. Clifford (1992) has called such cross-cultural individuals “insider-outsiders”, who mediate between the two cultures and draw pleasure from such mediation. The pedagogical challenge is to enable students to adopt the appropriate ways with words of native speakers, all the while giving them the freedom to practice English without the pressure of making mistakes. For example, the small talk that Penny shared with her students to start her every class included topics that were related to her students’ daily lives, local news, local holidays and festivals and also international events, which encompassed both a global, societal, and a local, individual meaning. The use of English in Penny’s classroom was proper, in both sense of the word. It taught the students the proper, i.e. correct use of English. It also allowed them to combine what they learned in English classes in their own unconventional ways, and build their own proper context.

7.5 Knowledge of multiculturalism

Although there is lots of input for shifting from China-centered recognition to homeland cultural recognition, from language unity to authenticity confirmation, from Mandarin-only promotion to mother languages teaching at school, from
punishment for speaking non-Mandarin languages to open acceptance, and from monolingualism to multilingualism, even more effort needs to be undertaken in teacher training programs. None of the five participants in this study mentioned other minority languages and cultures in Taiwan, such as Hakka and the aboriginal people. Florence, Flora, Jenny, Wen and Penny mentioned “Chinese culture”, “Chinese ways of living” several times in classes when I observed their classes. For example, Flora asked her students to translate the following sentence, “Chinese enjoy exchanging gifts with relatives and friends during Chinese New Year,” into Mandarin. Or when Jenny explained the sentence “There must be a cause or reason for this”; she said if we translate this sentence into Mandarin, this is how we Chinese say “wu feng pu ch’i-lang”. In my observation, Penny also mentioned Chinese many times in her classroom: “We Chinese are too polite, so we say no when people ask us if we are hungry.” Although Jenny and Penny revealed their identities as Taiwanese, their formal education experience had impacted their ideas of Taiwan.

Because of the language education policies and practices in Taiwan, the education that the five participants had was Chinese-centered recognition, Mandarin-only promotion and monolingualism. The priority given to the promotion of Mandarin created language disadvantaged groups, including Taiwanese, Hakka, and aboriginal people. Minority identities and cultures have not been appropriately presented in textbooks and other instructional materials, which impact the five participants’ teaching and self-identification. What the five teachers in this study said in their classrooms was still Chinese-centered and promoted monoculturalism. Although, after 1989, more diverse people, organizations, and local groups became
more politically active to promote indigenous Taiwanese culture, and there were 
“Mother languages and Culture Education” in elementary schools, the teacher 
education programs did not prepare preservice teachers to teach mother languages 
and homeland culture. There was a disconnection between teacher education 
curriculum in Normal Teacher Universities and K-12 curriculum Standards. Thus, it 
became evident, most preservice teachers and veteran teachers have limited content 
knowledge of multicultural texts and related materials. There was a corresponding 
lack of knowledge of how to structure curriculum and instruction for multicultural 
texts. These teachers certainly lacked prior memories of reading or learning 
multicultural related texts and models of teachers teaching multicultural related texts. 
This situation definitely does not help Taiwan approach multilingual and 
multicultural maturity.

Taiwan is a multicultural and multilingual society and has become more 
multicultural and multilingual than before. On August 8th, 2002, there was a news 
report in the China Times that mentioned that the number of children of imported 
brides (usually from south Asia like Vietnam, Indonesia) starting school peaked in the 
2002 school year. However, teacher training programs do not prepare teachers to 
teach students whose mothers cannot speak, read or write Mandarin. Therefore, it is 
important for teachers to have knowledge of multiculturalism and know how to apply 
it in their classrooms.

Recent immigrants to Taiwan and other residents have to learn how to 
communicate with each other. As international business flourishes, we must be more 
prepared than ever to work and cooperate both linguistically and technologically with
citizens from other countries in English. According to Pratt (1996):

The communication revolution, worldwide immigrant diasporas, and globalization of capital and markets mean that everyone's reality has diversified culturally and linguistically and that nearly everyone is experiencing increased demands for interaction with other cultures and societies. This is where multiculturalism intersects with international relations, where domestic projects in cultural diversity meet up with a demand for greater global cultural competence, often in the name of economic competitiveness in the global market. (p. 9)

These arguments are persuasive because they are pragmatic. They make us re-imagine the national, political, and moral community. We are forced to take cognizance of different races, ethnicities, religions, and sexual orientations in our classrooms, offices, shops, and streets. It forces us to rethink what we mean when we use the pronoun we or the possessive adjective ours, because the national cultural identity is no longer held by the majority population. People have to develop mutual respect and understanding toward different ethnic and linguistic groups in order to create linguistic harmony, national unity and ethnic identity. Thus, we need teachers who have the knowledge of integrating multiculturalism into their curriculum to help people in Taiwan develop into a genuinely and maturely multicultural and multilingual society.

7.6 Culture and language awareness

Languages are a cultural, ideological medium with the implications for social, cultural, and educational domains. Therefore, the role of English as a global language in a non-native English country, such as Taiwan, needs to be carefully and critically examined. That is, questions should be asked as to the perceptions and attitudes toward the language among its learners and various social and cultural activities that
promote the spread of English in society. This task is important as well as urgent for Taiwanese people because currently English is at the center of education in society. It is important to know that educational practices of the English language for Taiwanese students involve various cultural activities adopted from native-English speaking nations, mostly the U.S. Hence, the relationship between learning English and cultural contact among Taiwanese students becomes another important issue to examine. What are the types of cultural content of the U.S. that the students are exposed to? How do they make meaning of the cultural content presented? How does the cultural content influence the perceptions of the students toward their native culture and language?

Among the five participants, Jenny, Penny and Wen are aware of the hegemonic power of English culture and its impact on the construction of identity and socialization of their students. In the interviews, Jenny and Penny both said that learning English has been promoted through social and educational institutions that view language as neutral. These institutions ignore the relationship between English and social and economic inequality in society, and the danger of identity conflict on Taiwanese culture. Besides, the U.S. media only portrays a certain group of people and part of its culture while excluding the others. It would be better if teachers would encourage students to engage in critical dialogue and reflect on the contents of the U.S. media that they watch in class or outside of the classroom. Thus, students would have the opportunity to learn about and express their own culture and develop cross-cultural understanding, rather than being acculturated to native English speaking cultures.
Florence, who admired English and its culture, delivered the cultural products to her students without being aware of the danger of assimilating her students to the culture of English, or the possibility of cultural conflict among her students. She did not examine English as a cultural and ideological medium in the transmission of values and beliefs of native English countries to Taiwan. Imported text materials from native-English speaking countries, including books, magazines, television programs, and movies were significantly used in Florence’s classroom. I think that educational practices of English language education for students in Taiwan therefore need to be grounded on the knowledge of social, cultural, and educational surroundings that shape the learner’s life and identity. English language education that is more culturally and socially appropriate to students in Taiwan require development of curricula that utilize authentic text materials, teaching methods, and instructional contents that are situated in learners’ reality. English teachers require a critical understanding of how English cultural products are used in the educational practices.

Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) stated that the projection of English as the “world language” par excellence is symptomatic of the globalization process. It leads to Americanization and the homogenization of world culture. Film, pop culture, CNN and fast-food chains, for example, foster the process. English language education is promoted by the exportation of those cultural products from the U.S and other English speaking countries. Therefore, it is imperative to examine the role of cultural products from English speaking countries, particularly the U.S., in the English language education for Taiwanese students with regard to the types of cultural products used as learning materials, contents to be taught, and cultural
messages transmitted to the students. Examining English as a cultural and ideological medium in the transmission of values and beliefs of native English countries to non-native English countries requires a critical understanding of how its cultural products are used in the educational practices. More importantly, learning English needs to provide the students with the opportunity to learn about and express their own culture and develop cross-cultural understanding, rather than being acculturated to native English speaking cultures.

7.7 Discussion

The findings in this chapter showed that the five participants’ identities were constructed across time and space. It also showed that the participants’ education experience including teachers, curriculum standards, teaching materials, and schools also affected the construction of their identities. That is why they lack knowledge and experience of multiculturalism which impact their identities as being a member in a multicultural society like Taiwan. That is also why they may not be able to help their students recognize their culture and maintain their identities while they learn English and its culture. Therefore, ideas of monoculturalism and monolingualism also affect how their students learn to communicate with global and local English speakers. Thus, I think multiculturalism is the most important issue that is essential to teacher education in Taiwan. Preservice and in-service teachers have to see Taiwan as a dynamic society that goes beyond China-centered recognition and normative ethnocentric base. They have to see the potential of Taiwan as a pluralistic society and should be able to contribute to developing a pluralistic society by providing the requisite methodologies to reach its different goals. They should be able to teach
people to live and communicate with those very different from themselves.
This is a qualitative study of five nonnative English teachers' identities and their relationship to their teaching in three high schools of Taiwan. This study is examined the role nonnative English teachers play as interpreters of the culture of the target language. They also serve as a bridge between the students' culture and the target culture, helping students construct their identities and knowledge of two cultures. In this chapter, the implications of the present study for English teacher education are addressed. In addition, recommendations for future research in English teacher education are provided.

Through this study, I found that the five participants constructed their sociocultural identities based on educational and personal experiences and negotiated their role in the classroom in relation to the curriculum and students' needs. This study shows that teachers' sociocultural identities play an important role in shaping teaching practices. Apple (1990) emphasized the role that teacher education institutions play in the distribution and reproduction of social values, norms, and knowledge in a given society. In the same way, Maxine Greene (1986) asserted that education as an integral part of the socialization process is directed by particular beliefs, interests, and thus, ideologies. That is, education is used to expand productivity, and to maintain nation's economic competitiveness and military primacy in the world. It is based on this idea that I think that teachers of any subject play an important role of bringing Taiwan to be what it is, a multicultural society with
its own history and future.

It is important to develop a critical understanding of English language education for Taiwanese teachers in two several aspects. First, teachers and students need to realize the role of language as a social, cultural, and ideological means. Second, teachers need to realize that educational practices are the very process through which knowledge is distributed and constructed. Reflecting on and questioning issues related to the two aspects are very crucial and urgent tasks in developing a culturally appropriate language curriculum based on a critical awareness and understanding of culture and language. Teachers and the decision makers of curriculum have to understand the types of cultural content of the U.S. that the students are exposed to and make meaning of the cultural content presented. They also have to recognize the influences on students’ perceptions toward their native culture and language.

Individual members of society begin a journey of self-exploration and awareness when they interact with people in various social and cultural activities. Teachers play a significant role in providing a medium for the process of socialization by engaging students in various social and cultural events and teaching them certain norms, values and knowledge that are considered worth while. The perception of one’s identity impacts teaching. Although all five participants said in the interviews that they preferred not to talk about political issues or social justice in classes, they consciously or unconsciously mentioned what they think is right and what they value in classes. I think as an educator we have no choice, but to distribute a certain form of social values, norms, and knowledge to our students. We cannot avoid the role of distributing social values, norms and knowledge, but we can choose what we want to
say and what is important to our students.

Much ethnographic research has shown that teachers bring to teaching much more than their professional training. Factors such as beliefs about language, socialization, and appropriate forms of activity are strongly shaped by personal history, unconscious cultural expectations, and professional norms (Heath, 1983). Each participant in this study constructed identities based on educational and personal experiences and knowledge. They negotiated their role in the classroom in relation to the students’ needs and curriculum. Each participant cared about her students’ achievement in English. All considered the main goal of teaching to be helping students pass the entrance exams. It also appeared that the degree of the five participants’ cultural awareness and knowledge of multiculturalism varied because of their different educational and personal experiences, which also showed in their teaching.

Murphy-Lejeune et al. (1996) stated that “foreign language learning confronts learners with the challenge of constructing new representations of other cultures and, in the process, of questioning representations of their own” (p. 51). This situation suggests the difficulties of Taiwan’s EFL teachers and learners are due to the lack of explicit cultural representations and awareness and consciousness of cultural differences. Murphy-Lejeune et al. (1996) suggested that “in order to learn a foreign language, we must first learn how to construct new representations of other cultures, and in the process, we must also learn how to revise our representations of our own culture. “ They stated that textual analysis makes cultural representations more obvious to language learners and increases their cultural awareness through the
analysis of texts. This only occurs if the teachers have enough knowledge of multiculturalism and cultural awareness themselves. Moreover, teachers should focus less on fixed, stable cultural entities and identities on both sides of national borders, and more on the shifting and emerging third place of the language learners themselves. Kramsch (1993) contended that “the texts have to be considered not only as instances of grammatical or lexical enunciation, but as situated utterances, contributing to the construction of particular cultural contexts” (p. 90). Thus, the linguistic relativity principle argues that understanding across cultures and languages does not depend on linguistic structure but on “common conceptual systems, born from the larger context of our experience” (Kramsch, 2000, p. 13), in other words, our identities.

8.1 Education implications

The findings of this study have educational implications in four areas chiefly: multiculturalism and multicultural teacher education, teaching material related to local context, teacher education and inquiry, and critical pedagogy and awareness. While I wrote my dissertation, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan had planned to hire several hundred native speaking teachers to teach at public elementary schools and high schools, starting in the fall 2003. Some Taiwan national universities require students who want to get their degrees to take TOEFL and get at least 550 points. English becomes more and more important in Taiwan and has more impact on people than ever before. The five participants in the study were all aware of the importance of the task they were engaged in. Confronted with the reality of the classroom, they would have to change their identities in order to change the way they
teach. In order to do that, they definitely needed new experiences, for example, multicultural education to reconstruct their identities.

8.1.1 Multiculturalism and multicultural education

For further English teacher education, there is a need to put an emphasis on cultural pluralism and cultural diversity. Cultural awareness and understanding should be the key words in the English teachers' sociocultural identities, their self-image, and their beliefs about teaching EFL and culture. There should be classes in teacher education programs dealing with the issues of cross-cultural and intercultural communication. In these classes the importance of "difference" should be emphasized. That is, the reality we experience is constructed according to variable cultural patterns. These differences play crucial roles in our attempts to understand and communicate cross-culturally. Such cross-cultural analysis will provide a framework or system for understanding the interrelationships of the various facets of cultures and the process of cross-cultural interaction. While emphasizing the idea of cultural differences, it may be effective to stress cross-cultural similarities. The recognition of patterns of similarities will enable the students in a culturally diverse society to find common ground and establish rapport.

However, multiculturalism has to teach people to live and communicate with those very different from themselves. So far multiculturalism has depended on its capacity to bond different cultural groups through their similarities. Often, such similarities have built fragile bridges over critical differences. Whenever differences have not been properly acknowledged and resolved, conflicts have ensued. Those who have sought union through universal similarities have failed to see their
ethnocentric base; the norms used to assess similarities between cultures belong to the dominant culture. It is the minority groups who have to fit into the grids provided for them by the host culture. In time, the similarities among groups get absorbed into bland generalities, thus trivializing the goals of multiculturalism, which are to honor group differences. Therefore, multicultural education and multiculturalism must face the challenge of cultural differences. It has to see the potential that pluralism has for creating a dynamic society that goes beyond bland universalism and its normative ethnocentric base. It should be able to contribute to developing a pluralistic society by providing the requisite methodologies to reach its different goals.

8.1.2 Teacher education and inquiry

The participants often complained that there was no support from administration and most of time they felt frustration with their work. They hoped they could be provided mechanisms that might help sustain them beyond their teacher preparation and into their daily school lives. Darling-Hammond & Sclan (1996) suggested that policymakers could restructure schools to provide teachers with greater administrative support, more decision-making input and control over their work, more useful feedback and opportunities for collegial work, and provision of material resources and supports. At the same time, teacher educators can better prepare teachers to challenge obstacles to quality teaching and learning. One way that has been addressed is by asking teachers to be critical of social and school structures, and at the same time reflect their beliefs and practices. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) suggested that engaging teachers in concrete tasks of assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminate the teaching process helps teachers
perceive themselves as learners and teachers. They argued that this type of professional development could occur only if teachers were grounded in inquiry and experimentation, if it was collaborative, if it involved sharing knowledge among educators and if it was relevant to the teachers’ work with students. These reflective practices among educators must be sustained and ongoing and must be connected to aspects of school change. From this point of view, reflective practices are a form of professional development.

Cochran-Smith (1995) encouraged teacher education programs to teach novice teachers how to reflect: “If we are to prepare teachers to work intelligently and responsibly in a society that is increasingly diverse in race, language, and culture, then we need more teachers who are moved by their own intelligence and are actively involved in communities that engage in ‘the heresy’ of systematic and critical inquiry” (p. 520). She argued that when teachers are initiated into teaching through systematic and self-critical inquiry they have opportunities to reconsider their personal knowledge and experience, locate teaching within the context of the school and the community, and analyze children’s learning opportunities (Cochran-Smith, 1995). It is important that reflection has a critical perspective that critiques school culture and teacher practices. This critical reflection questions personal beliefs about race, language and culture, and is aware of social, historical, and political contexts. Further, inquiry groups that are critical of the conditions that surround the schools also provide teachers with the opportunity to understand injustice and change their environment.

Critical inquiry is supported by strong theoretical and tentative empirical
indications that it helps teachers develop and sustain their efforts to change school structures, as well as their own practices that often stand in the way of students' opportunities to succeed academically.

8.1.3 Critical pedagogy and awareness

The data from the interviews and participant observation elucidate the educational practices of English language education that deprive Taiwanese learners of the opportunity to engage in meaningful and authentic learning. English language education that the participants practiced was based on grammar-oriented methods, and therefore, failed to provide students with appropriate educational experiences necessary to acquire communicative skills and other linguistic knowledge. Traditional teaching methods, such as lecture-oriented and teacher-centered, do not allow the learners to actively participate in the learning. Moreover, imported text materials from native-English speaking countries significantly negate the opportunity for the students to make their learning meaningful. In this light, English language education that appropriately serves the needs and goals of Taiwanese students must take into account social and cultural contexts in which learning takes place. Borrowing curricula materials and educational practices along with teaching philosophy without careful and critical examination or evaluation with regards to the appropriateness to Taiwanese students not only impedes successful learning of English, but also causes cultural conflicts among the youth who are naively exposed to the imported cultural products.

Language teachers are critical educators for their students. Pennycook (1999) stressed the importance of practicing crucial approaches to TESOL. He argued that
teaching English embraces more than teaching and language, but rather more crucial issues of education, culture, and politics of our time (p. 346). Understanding English language education in the broader contexts of culture and society helps us to look more attentively at the learning environment that the social and cultural contexts created and therefore, at the learners in relation to the environment. Educational practices of English language education for Taiwanese students therefore need to be grounded on the knowledge of social, cultural, and educational surroundings that shapes the learners’ lives and identities.

Critical pedagogy has the potential to teach students about structural inequalities that affect their daily lives: “When teachers use a critical pedagogy, they ask students to examine historical and contemporary events, institutions and relationships in order to expose various mechanisms of oppression that are invisible within the official versions of school knowledge and culture” (Oakes & Lipton, 1999, p.260). That is, teachers who respect and use the reality, history, and perspectives of students as an integral part of educational practice and provide students opportunities to become autonomous, conscious, active, critical, and subjective beings. Critical pedagogy has informed us about the significance of being critically conscious of ourselves in social, political, cultural, and historical contests of our lives in order to engage in the process of transformation locally and internationally. Critical pedagogy would also help educate students to become democratic citizens in Taiwan and in the world.

8.1.4 Teaching materials related to local context

The five participants in this study all revealed that there are very few teaching
materials related to local culture. In Yen's study (2000), she said that in the EFL textbooks in Taiwan, cultural content related to Western European American culture occupied most (76%) of the content. Local culture comprised only 8%, and 16% of the content was not related to culture. On the contrary, in the ESL textbooks, local U.S. culture occupied 81%, other world cultures occupied 17% of the content, and 2% were not related to culture. This finding shows that ESL textbook authors put more emphasis on immigrant ESL students and tried to help these students connect to their local cultural context. But the EFL students did not have sufficient opportunities to connect their language learning to their local cultures in that local culture occupied only a small proportion of the reading passages.

Cultural knowledge is important to the construction of meaning by language learners. To gain mutual understanding, learners have to learn the culture of the target language while they are learning the language. Kramsch (1995) proposed that knowledge of a person’s language is no guarantee of mutual understanding if one does not, at the same time, gain an understanding of that person’s culture. Language learning may impact one’s identity because we are “socially constituted, historically situated, and more changeable” (Kramsch, 1995). The authors claimed that “representations are both created and perpetuated or changed through language and they are constitutive of personal, group and national identities” (p.106). They suggested that “language study is knowledge and performance, awareness and experience;” and “it is the recognition of the boundary between the familiar and the unfamiliar and the actual crossing of that boundary” (p.105). To implement this goal, English teachers have to teach their students how to recognize both the cultural voice
of a socially dominant group and the unique voice of a particular person. This view implies that the learners’ cultural heritage should not be excluded from the content of language materials. Thus, language teaching is made to “serve more democratic social goals” and to “meet the local needs of local speakers and listeners in locally situated contexts of communication” (Kramsch, 1995, p. 87).

8.2 Areas for further research

This study identifies three areas for further research: English teacher education, multicultural education, and nonnative English-speaking teachers’ identities.

This study itself can be extended and redesigned for a larger population of inservice English teachers in high schools across the country. This would help in assessing the validity of the results of this study as well as providing an understanding of its variations and reasons for them.

A longitudinal empirical study of experienced teachers teaching English would be useful. Such a study would help to understand the role of multiple factors that impact teachers’ identities and their relationship with their teaching. In my study, the teachers’ identities were influenced by their education, experience, and family background. However, it did not show how English education impacted the construction of their identities. Further there is a need for more empirical evidence on how English education impacts students’ cultural identity and social identity learning and what English teachers can do to help them maintain their cultural and social identities. This research would help in constructing curricula for English teacher education in Normal Teacher Universities as well as teacher certificated programs in
Another complementary area of research and development is multicultural teacher education programs themselves. The findings from this study indicate that China-centered education, which was not the reflection of reality, affected how the participants constructed their identities. Teacher education has to reveal the situation of multicultural and multilingual society in Taiwan. Therefore, it is important to include multicultural education in teacher preparation programs. Teacher education should provide the model for the kinds of learning it would want to encourage about cultures. If teacher education fails to examine its knowledge base for its suitability to teach cultures, it cannot hope to teach teachers adequately. However, teacher education can be a leader in shaping the education required in a pluralistic society by educating for it.

There is a need for empirical studies of multicultural education programs and their impact on both minority and majority educational achievement. Since teacher education programs just adopted multicultural education less than ten years ago in Taiwan, it is necessary to evaluate teacher programs that are implementing multicultural education and the factors that contribute to their success or failure. Inaccessibility to independent empirical scrutiny prevents these programs from improving themselves. Teacher education should provide the model for the kinds of learning it would want to encourage about cultures. Multiculturalism provides the moral imperative to every citizen of a pluralistic democracy to know the diverse groups of people who make up their society, to guard their rights, and to ensure their participation as equal members in the society. Multiculturalism aims to help every
citizen to comprehend the necessity for and to value the vitality of cultural diversity, and to acknowledge that without the interdependence of different communities and cultures the wealth of any nation is threatened.

The participants all stated there were times when a Native speaking teacher would address the language learner’s needs better by explaining the cultural information. Nonnative speaking teachers were more advantaged than the native speaking teachers because they would: a) bring rich teaching experience from a different context (i.e., their own learning experience); b) emphasize cultural awareness among students as they have similar cultural background; c) present a good role model; and d) have an insider’s viewpoint into the matter of English language learning (e.g., empathy). Although NNETs’ concerns, perceptions, identities, and the examination of the categorization of “nonnative English-speaking professionals” in TESOL have generated a great interest since the 1960s, nonnative English-speaking teachers in Taiwan have just faced the controversy recently. However, they are going to face more controversy in their teaching because the Ministry of Education in Taiwan is going to hire native English-speaking teachers to teach in elementary schools and high schools to improve the students’ communication abilities. Thus, future research should include explorations of how NNETs overcome the controversy, how they improve themselves professionally, what support English teacher training programs should provide to NNETs, and in which way that NETs and NNETs can collaborate to better serve pedagogy and benefit student language learning.

I hope that this study portrayed the five nonnative English teachers of various
experience fairly and provided enough evidence to support that their perceptions of identities played a significant role in the educating of students in Taiwan. I would encourage further research to reveal the relationship between the presentation of a teacher's identity and the classroom-learning environment. How does the manifestation of a teacher's identity shape his or her relationship with the subject that he or she teaches and with the subculture created in the classroom? How does a teacher's identity impact the subject, curriculum, school, and education? We typically assume that a teacher is an individual with professional training. What is customarily missing in our understanding is that the way in which different aspects of teaching identity become visible depends on educational contexts, including the teaching subject, textbooks, curriculum, and experiences with students, and understanding of subcultures in the classroom. I hope that additional research will further illuminate the issues relevant to the impact of identity on teaching.
Appendix A: Interview questions for teachers

1. Please talk about your first year in elementary school when you started to learn Mandarin.

2. Please talk about your first year in junior high school when you started to learn English.

3. Please talk about your experience of learning second foreign language in college.

4. How did you perceive the cultures of the languages you learned?

5. Have you ever felt foreign to the content of the textbooks when you were learning English or other foreign languages? If yes, how did you feel and how did the experience affect your teaching?

6. Have you had a good language teacher (no matter which language he/she taught) that you think you benefited from his/her teaching a lot? If no, why?

7. What is the objective of being an English teacher to you?

8. Do you provide opportunities for students to use English in relation to local situations, their lives and to international circumstances in which they are interested? And how? If not, why haven’t you done so?

9. Have you ever intended to teach the culture of English speaking people? If yes, how? If not, why not?

10. Is your professional knowledge and training useful to help you deal with cultural issues in your English classes?
Appendix B: Interview questions for students

1. What do you think about English classes in school?

2. Do you think English is an easy subject? If yes, why? If no, why?

3. How do you feel about your English teacher’s teaching?

4. When your English teacher tries to explain something, do you think he/she provides examples that you are familiar with? Please explain them.

5. If you have problems with the subject of English, how do you solve the problems?

6. When you do not understand what your English teacher says in the class, what do you do?

7. Is there anything your English teacher could do that would help you learn English better?
Appendix C: 問卷調查 (Chinese Version)

1. 和以前的英文老師比較, 現在的英文老師有哪些特色讓你覺得學習英文比較容易, 或比較困難?

2. 現在的英文老師上課講解的方式你是否都了解? 了解幾成?


4. 你是否感覺有文化上的差異或覺得某些老師講課的內容和你家人的信念不同? 請舉例說明.

5. 你覺得現在的英文老師能做什麼來幫助你學習英文? 請舉例說明.

6. 當現在的英文老師在課堂上解釋某些事, 她是否提供你熟悉的例子? 請舉例說明.

7. 如果你在英文這個科目上有問題, 你如何解決?

8. 如果你不了解現在的英文老師在課堂上講解的東西, 你如何解決這個問題?
Appendix D: Questionnaire for Students (English version)

1. Comparing the English teachers you had before, how do you think the English teacher you now have makes your learning easier or more difficult?

2. What percentage of the time do you understand your English teacher? Which part that you do not understand? Please give examples.

3. How do you think the English teacher you now have made your learning easier or more difficult? Please give examples.

4. What can your English teacher do to help you learn better? Please give examples.

5. When your English teacher explains the texts, does she provide examples that you are familiar with? Please give examples.

6. When you have any problems in English, what do you do? Please give examples.

7. Do you think what your English teacher has said in class is different from your own family's cultural values? Please give examples.

8. When you do not understand what your teacher says in class, what do you do? Please give examples.
References:


