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Abstract
The aims of the study were to investigate: (1) elementary schools' patterns of selecting textbooks, (2) teachers' attitudes to the importance of different evaluation criteria, and (3) the effectiveness of the current English textbooks with respect to the principles of CLT. A self-developed checklist was used to assess the textbooks used in the fifth grades in the public elementary schools in Tainan City in the first semester of the academic year 2003, all together 10 versions. On the other hand, a questionnaire was employed to survey schools' selection patterns, and teachers' attitude to different evaluation criteria. The subjects in this study were the English teachers teaching in the fifth grades in Tainan City, all together 65 teachers in 44 schools. The findings could provide school English teachers, the selection committees, teacher educators, textbook publishers, and cram school teachers some reference for future textbook selection and compilation. The main findings were summarized as follows:
1. The published textbooks generally provided the four components of communicative competence, and they also fitted in with the requirements of the guidelines.
2. Most of the books were not actually topic-based although they provided authentic language use and authentic activities.
3. Schools had a complete system of selecting textbooks in general.
4. Concerning the importance of different evaluation criteria in textbook selection, almost all of the teachers strongly agreed on the importance of content of the textbook. Regarding the contents, teachers generally valued highly the items listed in the checklist drawn up by the MOE.
5. Most of the teachers agreed on the importance of licensing, but the percentage of choosing licensed textbooks was low.
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