Teaching Young Children English: Experiences of Native and Nonnative English Speaking Teachers

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Abstract
As a contribution to the existing literature dedicated to the differences between native and non-native English speaking teachers, the primary purpose of this study is to provide a different perspective that explores English teachers’ common experiences working in early childhood programs. The underlying assumption is that most early childhood English language teachers, having no specific training in teaching young children English, may share similar experiences. Four teachers representing different backgrounds were included in this study. Data were collected through interviews and classroom observations. Six common teaching experiences were identified and discussed in six areas: (1) easy access to the position but lack of training in early childhood education, (2) English as the sole medium of instruction, (3) encouraging children to speak English as a common practice, (4) teaching English in isolation, (5) teaching as accommodation, and (6) teaching English as a process, not as an end. Suggestions and directions for future research were also addressed.

Key Words: native English speaking teachers, non-native English speaking teachers, early childhood English language education
INTRODUCTION

Given widespread understanding of English as an international language, and parental belief that fluent English is a competitive advantage that leads to successful career development, learning English at a young age has become the prevalent trend in Taiwan. As a result, numerous kindergartens and preschools are eager to recruit native English speaking teachers (NESTs) or Taiwanese non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) in order to provide English courses that will meet parents’ needs, such as English immersion, partial English immersion, and single-period English programs¹ (see Kung, Chen, Wang, & Chao, 2000). At the same time, the quality of these English teachers working with young children has become a major concern in the field of early childhood education.

Unlike adults and school-aged children, kindergarteners have unique ways of learning and thinking (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Unfortunately, most English language teachers, regardless of their nationalities, are not professionally prepared to teach young children. Prior to entering the field of English language education for young children, about 45% of teachers in Taiwan received short-term training through private language centers, and 30% of teachers earned a bachelor degree majoring in English instruction. The remaining 25% of teachers either graduated from education related

¹ In early childhood English immersion programs, all learning activities are delivered in English and led by a native English-speaking teacher. The children are expected to speak English only. In partial English immersion programs, English learning activities are provided either in the mornings or afternoons. In single-period English programs, English learning activities are offered one to five times a week, from a half hour to one hour a day.
or non-related programs (Kung et al., 2000). Within this group, only a few had received training in early childhood education. While these teachers may have been trained in teaching English, they could lack knowledge about how young children think and learn.

Indeed, the existing literature tends to highlight the inadequate teaching performances of NESTs. For example, Hsu (2001) reports instances of NESTs’ lack of patience when dealing with children’s illnesses, arguments, and misbehavior. Likewise, Chang, Chang, and Lin (2002) demonstrate that NESTs often emphasize mechanical conversation practices, in which most children tend to pay more attention to receiving a prize for their activities than to the process of learning English. In addition to such emphasis on drilling, Nien (2001) describes the NEST in her study as often using flash cards as teaching materials, and designing teaching content that was far beyond the children’s abilities. The above cases may reflect the teachers’ lack of competence in English language education for young children.

Although NNESTs are the majority of early childhood English language teachers in Taiwan (95%) (Kung et al., 2000), little research has been done to investigate their teaching practices exclusively. Typically, most studies have contrasted differences between NESTs and NNESTs in terms of teaching behaviors, language usage, attitudes (Chen, 2005), and classroom management (Wu, 2005), as well as interactions with classroom home teachers (Wu, 2006).

The main purpose of this study is to understand NESTs and NNESTs from a different perspective: their common experience as early childhood English language teachers. According to the literature, a majority of early childhood English language teachers are unfamiliar with the contexts of kindergarten and preschool. Once they
enter the early education field, they may encounter all kinds of difficulties as novice teachers, irrespective of their status as native speakers or not. Therefore, this study intended to address the following question: What experiences did NESTs and NNESTs, teaching young children English in Taiwan, have in common? By listing the teachers’ common experiences, this study attempted to contribute to the body of knowledge related to NESTs and NNESTs in early childhood English language education.

LITERATURE REVIEW OF NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKING TEACHERS

The assumption that native speakers of English are the best teachers of their first language because of their ability to provide accurate, fluent and idiomatic utterances (Chen, 2005; McNeill, 1994; Phillipson, 1992), to identify and accept adequate or inadequate forms (McNeill, 1994), and to appreciate the cultural connotations of the English language (Phillipson, 1992), has affected and dominated the contexts of learning English as a second language (Phillipson, 1992). However, with the increasing number of students engaged in learning English as a second or foreign language, native speakers’ linguistic privilege has been challenged in both the West (Braine, 1999; Cook, 1999; Kramsch, 1997; Phillipson, 1992; Tarnopolsky, 2000) and Taiwan (Chang, et al., 2002; Hsu, 2001; Lu & Chen, 2005).

The literature has documented the weaknesses of native speaking teachers. The general disadvantages of native speakers’ teaching competence have been recognized in several areas. McNeill
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(1994) indicates that native speakers are less likely to be sensitive to the needs of their students because of the linguistic distance that exists between them. Cook (1999) further asserts that the superior English proficiency possessed by native English speaking teachers may intimidate, rather than encourage, learners. In Taiwan, native English speaking teachers’ inappropriate teaching practices, poor training, and lack of patience in dealing with children’s misbehavior and illness have also been extensively reported (Chang, et al., 2002; Hsu, 2001).

In contrast, the merits of NNESTs have been widely acknowledged. Tarnopolsky (2000) argues that the majority of EFL teachers are non-native speakers, and that it is almost impossible to create a favorable learning environment with feedback and input from native speakers. According to Tarnopolsky, it is therefore rational to highlight the advantages of non-native English speaking teachers. Non-native speakers are generally acknowledged in the existing literature as being beneficial to students’ learning processes. Because they share similar backgrounds and struggles with learning experiences, non-native English speaking teachers are assumed to be more capable of coping with their students’ specific learning problems (Tang, 1997). Learners’ developing interlingual awareness may be applied to target language learning, using the pupils’ first language to accelerate and facilitate their growth (Tarnopolsky, 2000), as well to represent an achievable model of language learning.

Unfortunately, the advocacy of non-native English speaking ESL/EFL teachers does not grant them superior status, higher English proficiency, or improved teaching performance. A study by Seidlhofer (as cited in Seidlhofer, 1999) reports that non-native
speakers still suffer from feelings of insecurity about the size of their vocabulary and their ability to express themselves in English. More seriously, some non-native English-speaking teachers expressed aspirations to be able to adopt the accents of native English speakers (Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck, & Smit, 1997). They tended to believe that native speakers are preferable in language programs, and are considered to be the best teachers in the hiring process (Liu, 1999). Their lack of English proficiency (Liu, 1999; McNeill, 1994) and foreign accents (Tarnopolsky, 2000) are their most apparent limitations. Other minor weaknesses include their difficulty in anticipating current trends in the development of English, their lack of exposure to the latest English teaching instructions and materials, and their incomplete understanding of certain cultural verbal and non-verbal communication styles (Tarnopolsky, 2000). However, Tarnopolsky believes that most of these disadvantages can be overcome by means of the appropriate professional development.

Among the research studies that use interviews to elicit the inner states of native and non-native speakers, a study by Medgyes (2000) is unique in the focus on the actual classroom practices of five pairs of native and non-native English speaking teachers. The results did not completely correspond with the general assumptions of these teachers, and the teachers’ perceptions did not correspond exactly with their teaching performances. Specifically, native English speaking teachers were identified as being poor time managers, and non-native English speaking teachers complained about native English speaking teachers’ casual attitude towards teaching. However, in terms of classroom practices, native English speaking teachers, due to their proficient language competence, showed strength in giving
clear instructions, attempting to understand the students’ culture, incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into the curriculum, presenting lessons in a logical fashion, and facilitating a relaxed and humorous learning environment which encouraged students to speak in English. In terms of the teaching practices of non-native English speaking teachers, it is not surprising that these teachers stated that they are incapable of emulating native speaking teachers’ English competence, although they were observed to be capable of designing more varied lesson plans than native speakers. In addition, non-native speaking teachers tended to assign more homework to their students, correct their errors more frequently, and prefer that students sit for most of the time, which is consistent with most current findings. What was unexpected in the Medgyes study was that non-native English speaking teachers made no effort to cope with student culture, and tended not to deliver culturally relevant information in class, a finding that diverges from typical assumptions regarding non-native speaking teachers.

The above literature reveals once more the differences between NESTs and NNESTs, whereas Liu (1999) argues that a clear-cut dichotomy between the two groups of teachers does not exist. Other external conditions affecting teaching performances and expertise should also be taken into consideration, such as the teaching environment (Liu, 1999), learners’ characteristics and backgrounds (Liu, 1999), educational experience, teaching techniques, content knowledge, and personality (Lee, 2000). Therefore, a greater need exists for researchers to explore the process and experience of being an English language teacher, rather than to dichotomize differences as has been suggested by Medgyes (2000) and Seidlhofer (1999). Since
little research has been done to study native and Taiwanese non-native early childhood English language teachers, the aim of this study is to describe commonalities in their experience of teaching young children.

METHOD

Participants
In order to understand the English teaching experience of NESTs and Taiwanese NNESTs in early childhood programs, four participants representing diverse backgrounds in terms of nationality, educational training, teaching experience, and working conditions were invited to participate in the study. All of the participants were employed by private kindergartens. Two of the participants were native English speakers. Sophia was born in Canada and Karen migrated to Canada from Taiwan at 16 years of age and speaks fluently in both English and Mandarin. Both worked in partial English immersion programs. The program at which Sophia worked offered half-day English learning activities every morning, while the one at which Karen worked provided half-day English learning activities every afternoon. The other two participants were Taiwanese non-native English speaking teachers. Yu-San worked in a single-period English program which offered a one-hour English course every afternoon. Ya-Chi actually worked for an English language training center that provided her with English teaching activities for different early childhood programs. Ya-Chi’s teaching was observed at a single-period English program, which provided
half-hour English courses twice a week. None of the participants were novices as regards teaching English to young children. Prior to participating in this study, they had taught children either at research sites or as part of other early childhood programs. Of the four participants, one - Sophia - had undergone short-term training in Reggio Emilia\(^2\). Their detailed profiles and the research sites at which the observations were conducted are summarized in Table 1.

**Data Collection**

The primary data of this study were collected by observation and interview at the four early childhood programs where the four participants were employed. The data set was created by drawing on data originally produced for three different projects\(^3\). Each project began with observations taking place in a classroom of the participant’s choosing in order to acquire insights into English language instruction, interactions, challenges, and cultural rules in the context of early childhood institutions. Observations were randomly performed once or twice a week for at least three months in order to

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\(^2\) Reggio Emilia is an educational philosophy governing early childhood and primary education. It was initiated by Loris Malaguzzi and the parents of the children residing in the Reggio Emilia villages of Italy. The approach emphasizes the individuality of children as individuals who learn through concrete experiences and have hundred languages to express themselves. Parental involvement, community support, teachers as learners, and the environment are vital components of the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

\(^3\) Sophia and Yu-San’s data were collected by Hsieh (2006). Ya-Chi’s data were collected by Hsieh (2007), Karen’s data by Hsieh (2008).
### Table 1
The Profiles and Research Sites of Four Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Language Description</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>English Teaching Experiences</th>
<th>Research Site/Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>Canadian native English speaker</td>
<td>Junior college student majoring in Geography</td>
<td>Two-year teaching in an ECE English immersion program</td>
<td>A partial English immersion program offering English courses every morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Short-term training in Reggio Emilia</td>
<td>The second year teaching in the research site</td>
<td>Full-time English teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Taiwanese Mandarin-English bilingual speaker (migrate to Canada at 16ys)</td>
<td>Bachelor degree in Psychology</td>
<td>Two-year teaching in a Korea English cram school</td>
<td>A partial English immersion program offering English course every afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Short-term training in TESOL</td>
<td>The second year teaching in the research site</td>
<td>Full-time English teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu-San</td>
<td>Taiwanese non-native English speaker</td>
<td>Bachelor degree in Business Administration</td>
<td>The fourth year teaching in the research site</td>
<td>A single-period English program offering one-hour English course every afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Master degree in Bilingual Education (US)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time English teacher and director of English department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ya-Chi</td>
<td>Taiwanese non-native English speaker</td>
<td>Bachelor degree in English Instruction</td>
<td>Seven-years English teaching experiences for kindergarteners and elementary school students</td>
<td>A single-period English program offering half-hour English course twice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The first year teaching in the research site</td>
<td>Part-time English teacher at different early childhood institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

avoid “the tendency of unnoticed biases” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 48). The duration of each observation period at each research site varied according to the different segments of the English lessons included in the programs. Specifically, the duration of an observation period in Sophia’s classroom was usually three hours, while it was three hours,
one hour, and thirty minutes in the case of Karen, Yu San, and Ya Chi, respectively. During the observations, the researcher played the role of a passive participant (Spradley, 1980) by taking notes without participating and interacting with the teachers and children. The aim was to avoid interrupting the classes. All observations were video and/or audio recorded with the teachers’ permission. After each observation, an observation log was made, which included the date, time, context information, description of classroom activities, speech acts, body movements, and the observer’s comments and reflections. An example of this observation log is shown in Appendix A.

The interview protocol was designed in advance to guide the interview process; however, maximum flexibility was allowed for the exploration of questions that were not on the protocol (Carspecknen, 1996). The protocol comprised six domains developed on the basis of the research question and literature, which included (1) roles and experiences of being an English language teacher for young children, (2) structure of the English curriculum, (3) English instruction, (4) support from the working environment, (5) children’s reactions to the English instruction, and (6) parents’ expectations and participation in English language education. Each domain generally covered several covert categories. For example, the covert categories in the first domain included working experience, constraints and strengths in teaching, educational background, and future career development. Some interview questions were then developed on the basis of the above categories, while others were generated from the observational data, specifically related to the teaching practices of each participant. For instance, the researcher frequently observed that Ya-Chi gave the children stickers and candies, and thus, one interview question posed
to her so as to glean her beliefs regarding English instruction was, “Why do you use candies and stickers as rewards?” The interview protocol, including six domains, the covert categories of each domain, and the interview questions, is shown in Appendix B.

Up to four semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. The duration of each interview and the interval between each interview varied according to the participants’ schedules and interview content. Each interview lasted for one and a half to two hours and was conducted approximately once a month. The first interview was conducted after the researcher had familiarized herself with the classroom routines, made observation logs, and conducted a preliminary analysis on the basis of the approximated first-month observational data. Information on the participants’ educational backgrounds, employment process, career goals, and opinions on teaching young children English was sought. As Pan (2003) recommended, the above questions were simple and easy to answer rather than intimidating for the interviewees. The second and third interviews enabled the participants to talk about all aspects of their experiences of teaching young children English in the research sites. These interviews enabled the researcher to clarify the queries stemming from the observations (e.g., why did Ya-Chi use stickers and candies as rewards?) and check the consistency between the participants’ teaching behaviors in the observation data and their statements. The final interview was usually conducted within a month of the researcher withdrawing from the research sites. A summary of the study results and some preliminary reconstructions were shared with the participants to invite commentary and challenges as well as to discuss the analyses of data.
In the first three interviews, the researcher played the role of a facilitator, who attempted to construct a safe and supportive environment, allowing the participants to explore topics using their own ideas and vocabulary. After a trusting relationship was established, the researcher assumed the role of a colleague of the participants during the last interview, to initiate peer discussions and co-construct an understanding of their teaching experiences (Carspecken, 1996). Notes were taken both during and after each interview, and personal reflections were written. Each interview was audio recorded with the teachers’ permission and was later transcribed verbatim, along with notes on the participants’ tone, body language, and facial expressions.

**Data Analysis**

The data gathered through observations and interviews were analyzed according to the procedures of Carspecken’s (1996) hermeneutic-reconstructive analysis. First, to establish codes of observational data, the data were read through various times. A variety of analytical methods were adopted to articulate and interpret the possible meanings, tacit norms, and power relations embedded in the participants’ actions, speech, and interactions with others. Once an emergent behavior pattern or meaningful thematic content became apparent and occurred repeatedly, a code was assigned. Subsequent examples of similar behaviors were recorded under that code. Second, similar analytical techniques were also applied to the interview content. Consistency checks between observational and interview data were then conducted. Third, all the coded data was re-examined in order to identify some repeated patterns of behavior or statements.
across different participants. Several themes were then extracted according to the coding list. These themes referred to the symbols that are linked to what are considered meaningful relationships across the four participants’ critical experience of teaching young children English. Last, some sample codes and initial meaning reconstructions were shared with the participants to enable member checking, and a peer de-briefing. These procedures either confirmed a good insider’s view or helped to create a better one.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the observations of and interviews with the participants, it was apparent that the major differences between the native and non-native English speaking teachers lay simply in their educational backgrounds, nationalities, teaching hours in English class, and features of their English instruction techniques. However, in spite of the above differences, the participants shared more similarities than differences regarding their teaching experiences. Our main findings have been categorized into six themes.

Easy Access to the Position but Lack of Training in Early Childhood Education

Although the four participants entered the profession of early childhood English language education from diverse paths, their employment processes suggest that the requirements for becoming an English language teacher of young children are not rigorous. During her junior year in college, Sophia decided to experience the world and
applied for a leave of absence from school. She heard from a friend that there were many job opportunities in Taiwan, and so she came. Due to her Caucasian appearance and native accent, she was employed as an English teacher, even though she lacked the relevant training.

Karen happened to discover a TESOL training program after graduation and then quit her job. She thought, “Maybe I can give it a shot,” so she took the training course, and first taught English in a Korean “cram school” to which she was introduced by an agency. She then wished to return to her hometown, so she began looking for a job in Taiwan. She was subsequently employed by a private kindergarten. Karen recalled her interview process, and stated that because a Caucasian appearance or knowledge about children were not prerequisites, her previous teaching experience in Korea, fluency in English, and positive attitudes toward children were acknowledged.

Having acquired a Master’s degree in bilingual education, Yu-San began her career by teaching young children English instead of teaching adults because she lacked confidence in her English skills and teaching presentation. She therefore wanted to accumulate her teaching experience and refine her English for a while. She was hired due to her educational background.

Ya-Chi stepped into early childhood English language teaching when she was a college student majoring in English instruction. She began to work as a part-time teacher in a private English training agency, which provided her with in-house training and assigned her teaching at different early childhood institutions. After graduating, she automatically became a formal employee, and was granted more teaching hours. The different institutions at which she taught all hired
her as a part-time English language teacher through the agency. When reviewing her teaching experience, Ya-Chi concluded, “There is no requirement for being an early childhood English language teacher. Anyone who has a basic level of English proficiency and receives a short term of training is qualified to teach children English.”

The employment process of the four participants all revealed that English proficiency was the fundamental requirement for becoming early childhood English language teachers. Knowledge or experience about teaching young children English was not the central concern for the administrators during the employment process. The underlying assumption under their employment process was that that anyone could easily become early childhood English language teachers if they knew how to speak English.

However, once they stepped into the classrooms, the four participants revealed various aspects and degrees of lack of proficiency in teaching young children. Sophia reflected that she did not know how to begin teaching young children English and that all she could do was try some songs and games first and adjust her teaching and material according to the children’s feedback. Although Sophia accumulated teaching techniques through work experience and learning from colleagues, she still encountered challenges providing age-appropriate learning activities for a four- to six-year-old heterogeneous group of children. Observations indicated no individualism within the program because all children were required to engage in similar activities, which failed to reflect individual strengths, interests, and needs (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

Karen was uncertain about her abilities to effectively teach
young children English and admitted a “lack of knowledge and experience.” She listed multiple challenges, including lack of clarity on what English content could be taught, what kinds of activities could be implemented, how a story could be told in an interesting manner, how children’s attention could be retained, and how children’s misbehavior and emotions could be dealt with. Karen’s struggles were also noticed in the observations. Take singing as an example. Karen opened a songbook and led the children in singing ten continuous songs with the music. At that time, only about half the children sat still and sang with Karen, whereas the others withdrew themselves from the singing activity, displaying such in behaviors such as looking around or playing with their peers. Singing is viewed as a wonderful means to initiate English learning (Tseng, 2004). However, Karen lacked the knowledge that children demonstrate different modes of learning and knowing (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Action songs may have attracted those preferring a kinesthetic mode and, thus, retained their attention.

For Yu-San, the most challenging aspect was to integrate the essences of early childhood education, such as hands-on activities, children’s interests, meaningful experiences, and free play, into the teaching of English and connect the Mandarin thematic curriculum into the English curriculum. Her expressed frustrations revealed her uncertainty as to what children can or cannot do [four- to six-years-old], how to manage the different levels of the children in a mixed-aged class, and how to teach certain subjects in English. For

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4 A thematic curriculum is one of the most commonly recommended forms of curricula in early childhood education.
example, given her limited knowledge about the science curriculum in early childhood education, Yu-san was unsure of how to provide the children with scientific experiences on the theme of “plants” in her English classes. She also designed some hands-on activities appropriate for children, such as making an English book. However, due to her limited knowledge on the general and fine motor development of children (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), some procedures were too difficult and the children were unable to complete the book unaided.

As an experienced teacher, Ya-Chi seldom stressed over her challenges. She only complained about the limited space of the classroom, the large number of children in the class, and insufficient time for English lessons. However, her emphasis on drills and the usage of stickers or candies as rewards may be viewed as inappropriate (Chang, et al., 2002). Ya-Chi stated several times in the interviews, “You have to let them (children) repeat, repeat, and repeat (saying the target words and sentences). They will be able to remember.” Stickers and candies were incentives, motivating the children to repeat the words and sentences loudly. Indeed, the children were able to produce sounds but did not completely understand what the sounds meant. They were unable to understand sentences, such as “Where is the museum? Sorry, I don’t know,” by viewing flash cards and repeating without translations or other conceptual support. When asked about the children’s low comprehension, Ya-Chi pondered and then responded, “I thought they understand.” It seems that she did not recognize that repetition was meaningless to the children and the content was not related to children’s lives (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Vale & Feunteun, 1995).
The above description revealed the need for professional development of English language teachers for young children. According to Bredekamp and Copple (1997), one should have knowledge about a child’s growth, learning, and development in different domains; the child’s individual differences within a group; curriculum design; materials and instructional design; and classroom management skills in order to supply developmentally appropriate activities. However, none of the participants had received official training about early childhood education before they entered the field. Their difficulties seemed to correspond to classroom practices that have been critiqued in early childhood contexts when teaching young children (Chang, Chang, & Lin, 2002; Hsu, 2001; Nien, 2001). Moreover, they seem to reflect a lack for educating young children, such as designing meaningful and hands-on learning experiences, providing mixed-aged children with accessible opportunities for participation, and selecting target content related to children’s experiences (Wu, 2005). In sum, English proficiency is not the only prerequisite in the field. Native English speaking teachers or teachers with fluent English do not necessarily make outstanding English language teachers for young children, as argued by Kramsch (1997) and Phillipson (1992). Prior training in early childhood education would aid the teachers in implementing developmentally appropriate English language curriculum.

**English as the Sole Medium of Instruction**

Having the ability to speak and understand the first language of students is a privilege for teachers like Ya-Chi, Yu-San, and Karen (Medgyes, 2000; Tarnopolsky, 2000), but Mandarin was not used in
their classrooms. All three teachers pretended not to understand Mandarin. In spite of the different types of English language programs in our study, all participants were expected by the administrators to use English as the sole medium of instruction in the classroom. The principle “learning English through English-only interaction” sought to immerse children in an English only environment. The underlying assumption that, by giving the children comprehensive input they will “acquire” English, corresponds with Krashen’s (1982) input hypothesis that English is best taught monolingually (Phillipson, 1992).

Using English as the sole medium of instruction has both positive and negative effects. All participants described similar accounts of children not understanding the language in the beginning stages, and communication largely relying on gestures and body language. After a period of providing the children with English only instruction, the participants acknowledged that children’s listening skills began to continually improve. The drawbacks of this approach were observed when participants introduced certain adjectives, or vocabulary words that were disconnected from children’s daily experiences, such as “greenhouse” and “uncomfortable.” The children did not comprehend, or misunderstood such words.

**Encouraging Children to Speak English as a Common Practice**

Teaching practices varied between the four participants, and all provided children with ample opportunities for speaking English in different ways. Sophia’s practice focused on linguistic structures, alphabet writing, vocabulary building, and open-ended discussions. She had the children repeatedly speak target sentences out loud by
playing games, and also allowed the children to express their ideas in English in discussions about various topics, such as “insects.” Karen taught children English by singing songs, reading picture books, and informal conversational interactions. She also had children learn vocabulary words about toys in the classroom. The children in Karen’s class had many opportunities to chat in English with her during free-play time. Yu-San utilized picture books as a means to incorporate the four language skills into one lesson. During her class, the children also had opportunities to articulate their opinion after listening to stories, and described their work samples in English. Ya-Chi strictly followed the content of the textbooks published by her agency, and made children repeat target sentences and vocabulary words. Although the children were often observed to have difficulties in fully expressing their ideas in English fluently, the participants acknowledged that the longer the children were engaged in the process, the more likely they wanted to speak English. As Karen commented, “You (children) have no choice but to use English. If you want to communicate, you have to use English.” Thus, pushing children to make efforts to communicate with the teachers enables them to understand English as a tool of communication as argued by Richard (2006).

**Teaching English in Isolation**

During the classroom observations, it was observed that the teacher participants frequently presented themselves as the primary managers of curriculum design, methodology application, and selection of learning materials. The classroom teachers assumed secondary support roles, providing assistance only when necessary.
Ya-Chi received the least support from the classroom teacher. She usually had to handle 36 children alone while the early childhood teachers disengaged themselves from teaching altogether, leaving the classroom to deal with chores or, every once in a while, taking a seat alongside the children in order to maintain harmony. Ya-Chi expected the classroom teachers to manage the class, believing that the children were more likely to be obedient, since their full-time teachers were present more often than she was. In addition, Ya-Chi was aware that the children demonstrated limited English skills because of insufficient class time, and thus hoped that the teachers would occasionally review vocabulary with the children during the regular school period. She attempted to express her needs to the early childhood teachers, but did not receive positive feedback. She stated,

In the beginning, I wondered why they [early childhood teachers] did not review the lessons for me. After a while, I tried to put myself into their position, telling myself, ‘they may not be able to have the time to review the English lessons because their workload is heavy as well.’

Realizing that the classroom teachers were not able to be helpful, Ya-Chi saw that she had to carry out all of the teaching duties alone.

In the other three institutions, the administrators recognized that the participants, lacking knowledge about children, might need input and support from classroom teachers. Thus, the classroom teachers were expected to assist English language teachers at different levels according to the administrators. Still, the participants often encountered isolation while teaching.
In Yu-San’s and Karen’s institutions, the classroom teachers’ duties were to assist the English teachers to provide information about children’s learning processes, suggest potential directions for the design of the English curriculum, and participate in every English class. However, it was often observed that the classroom teachers were engaged in other tasks, and that Yu-San and Karen had to handle the entire class on their own. Yu-San explained,

This program places additional emphasis on the portfolios of the children’s performances. It may include all kinds of styles, such as written records or photographs. Classroom teachers and English language teachers all have to do this. However, it is not reasonable to require a teacher to take care of lessons and records at the same time. I don’t believe anyone can do this. That is why there should be two teachers in a classroom. They have to cover each other. However, the reality is that I have to collect all records of the children’s work by myself, and this has been the case for a while.

Yu-San said she understood that classroom teachers were busy doing their own work. However, teaching English and documenting the children’s learning at the same time by herself alone was demanding. Thus, she appreciated classroom teachers’ occasional help with ideas and plans for appropriate learning activities, and believed that their presence and assistance could ease her stress.

Karen tended to act independently while teaching. As a new teacher without experience of teaching young children, she often wondered how to manage the class, tell a story in English, and design art-related activities. She tried to ask the opinion of classroom
teachers, but “you can decide it by yourself” was the most frequent response she received. She wished that they could directly tell her how to appropriately deal with children. All she could do was observe how the class teachers led the class and try to use similar strategies. She also claimed,

I didn’t initially ask for help from classroom teachers. When I think about how lessons should be implemented, I never think about how classroom teachers could possibly contribute to the class because they are quite busy… I am on my own.

Karen also wished the school could provide in-service training for the teachers teaching young children English. A suitable person from school administration could attend her class and suggest improvements.

Because the program administrator instructed that the English curriculum should be developed collaboratively by the English language and early childhood teachers, Sophia received the most support from classroom teachers. During her lessons, the teachers were responsible for taking photographs, observing and recording English learning activities, and reading vocabulary out loud with the children whenever Sophia requested. Still, Sophia indicated that time constraints were still an issue: “…we don’t have enough time to meet each other, so, okay, fine, I just plan it. If you [early childhood teachers] don’t like it, tell me what your ideas are.” A typical scenario was that Sophia would briefly describe her plans to the early childhood teachers as soon as she arrived in the classroom at around 9:30 a.m. Once in a while, the early childhood teachers provided
feedback, but they tended to support Sophia’s ideas without input or change. The so-called cooperative planning between the English and the early childhood teachers never realized its original function.

Ideally, in the field of early childhood education, collaboration between teachers is critical for class management and may benefit the design of the English curriculum (Hsieh, 2006). Nevertheless, in the English classroom, the participants were responsible for almost everything, and only limited cooperation was observed between participants and classroom teachers. This seemed to contain the hidden message that English was viewed as a separate subject unrelated to other children’s learning activities, and whose responsibility lay only with the English language teachers. The isolation of the language teachers was rarely taken into consideration.

**Teaching as Accommodation**

The theme of “teaching as accommodation” was also prominent in our observations and interviews. Participants’ teaching methods, attitudes, and identities had to be adapted to the particular working context. In Sophia’s case, she had ultimately chosen to keep quiet and teach what she had been told to teach after her suggestions for how the English curriculum could better meet the essence of the Reggio Emilia approach was declined several times. She understood that she must adapt her personal agenda of teaching English through playing to the specific goals set by the administrator, who believed that knowledge of grammatical structure led to successful communication and that, therefore, drills or repetitions of certain grammatical forms must be taught. She thus compromised on some of her teaching approaches, saying:
I am just a teacher. I don’t run the school, and I don’t own the business, so it’s easy for me to talk like this… [However,] I don’t want to be in the position where I am going against my school. I have to be careful because I have to be loyal to my employer.

Sophia also encountered different cultural expectations regarding her students. In a personal conversation, she mentioned an experience in which one mother asked her to improve her daughter’s “poor” English skills. She could not understand the mother’s request, because her daughter was one of the best students in the class. After several years of teaching in Taiwan, however, Sophia developed a better understanding of Taiwanese culture in which parents stress on their children’s academic success. They want their children to possess good English skills in order to have more career opportunities, and thus, they put their children under considerable pressure. Sophia then learned that in order to meet parents’ expectations of their children, the school she worked at stressed on children’s English abilities rather than on providing them with more play-based activities. Thus, as an English teacher in the kindergarten, she realized that in order to accommodate the school’s program, she had to alter her teaching methods from a play-based approach to an approach that focused on academics.

Ya-Chi adjusted her teaching methods in order to balance her beliefs with the expectations of parents and administrators. Ya-Chi personally believed that the primary goal of early childhood English language education ought to be to develop children’s positive attitudes toward learning English. Yet, as a new teacher arriving in the classroom, Ya-Chi noticed that the last English teacher left her position when the parents complained about their children’s limited
abilities to read English aloud from a book. The institution provided only two half-hour English classes each week. She indicated that it was challenging to develop English competency in such limited time, and that there was no possibility for her to modify the environment in which the children were situated. Thus, she was anxious about the students’ performance and made them orally reiterate target vocabulary words and sentences in order to ensure that they knew how to read aloud. Ya-Chi stated,

> Of course, I care about student results, especially since I know that the last teacher didn’t develop the students’ ability to read aloud from a book. In fact, there are various language teaching methods, and how I teach English may depend upon the administrator’s requirements or parents’ expectations. If the administrator expected me to teach the students to write, I would pay more attention to this aspect. Therefore, a teacher should act flexibly to enact the teaching context accordingly. A teacher can certainly set up certain objectives for students, but one should still respect the administrator.

Thus, all she could do was to familiarize the children with the vocabulary words and sentences taught in class, and integrate games into her lessons to maintain interest. In this way, she was able to both sustain her beliefs and meet the program’s expectations.

Yu-San endeavored to create a middle way approach through combining child-centered and structure-oriented philosophies. She worked in an environment that highlighted constructivism and flexibility. Ideally, she was expected to follow thematic curriculum
implemented by classroom teachers in the morning and extend the content to the afternoon’s English curriculum accordingly. However, feeling secure and in control while planning the curriculum was critical to Yu-San, because she came from an educational training background in which learning activities and goals were pre-determined. Indeed, she had difficulty, and struggled in fully presenting the spirit of a thematic curriculum as she had been taught. She gave these details describing how she longed for structured lesson plans:

[That way,] I would know what contents and materials I should provide for the students. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have any idea when curricula should start and finish [under a constructive-centered framework]. It would be easier for me to control the schedules of lessons.

Yu-San then made an effort to look for thematic topics associated with English picture books that she used as teaching materials. The children learned vocabulary words and sentences from these books. Her approach was finally accepted by the administrator, because picture books were familiar to children. This allowed Yu-San to work independently of the morning thematic curriculum, and spend more time designing learning activities in advance.

Karen concealed her ability to speak Mandarin and presented herself as a native English speaker after she experienced problems in job interviews. She described how she was immediately rejected when she admitted her bilingual status and presented herself as a local style. After she realized the disadvantage of speaking Mandarin, and that some parents preferred their children to be taught by NESTs,
Karen decided, “I will only use English when I am interviewed. I want to be identified as a foreigner…That’s the way I feel most comfortable.” Thus, when she was employed by the program in Taiwan, no one knew she that was Taiwanese and spoke both fluent English and Mandarin. Everyone spoke English to her. Karen felt respected. She illustrated,

I don’t think that it’s a bad thing to stress that I’m a foreigner. I don’t think it’s a bad thing, because um…in a lot of ways it’s true. And in also a very… in a very important reason, I have to survive.

In a competitive market where NESTs are in high demand, Karen chose to emphasize her foreign status in order to obtain a teaching job.

Similar teaching situations were faced by the four participants. Their knowledge of teaching had been developed through past experiences that affected their classroom decision making, as observed by Tsang (2004). However, their acquired teaching knowledge conflicted with certain expectations of the institutions where they worked, as has also been revealed in other studies (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Volkmann & Anderson, 1998). Parts of their teaching performances needed, therefore, be shaped and adjusted to meet institutional expectations. In this instance, Sophia wanted to present herself as a child-centered teacher, but she was expected to teach under strict guidelines favored by her administrator. Ya-Chi attempted to achieve a balance between increasing children’s interest in learning English through playing games and using drill techniques to teach vocabulary words and sentences. Yu-San felt
uncertain adopting a theme-based curriculum, and was expected to act as a professional early childhood English language teacher who should be knowledgeable about how children learn and how the English language can best be taught. Karen made the decision to present herself as a native English speaker to meet the demands of the market.

Interestingly, the participants appeared to readily cooperate with the direction and context of the programs in which they worked. The norm reflected here, judging from the resigned attitudes of the participants, indicated their willingness to accommodate themselves to the necessary context, which reflected the contractual power existing in the interaction between the teachers and the administrators. That is, the administrators are granted authority over teacher performance in their role of paying wages. In the same vein, to ensure the stability of their jobs and earnings in a competitive work environment, the teachers dare not to offend their principals. The accommodation of Yu-San and Ya-Chi as Taiwanese English teachers can be viewed as an issue of cultural ethics in the background. The hidden message behind this willingness parallels the traditional propriety of Chinese society, wherein a figure in a higher position has absolute authority over a person of lower status (Lin & Tsai, 1996). Moreover, the power of the schools’ decisions on English curriculum organization and teacher recruitment reflect the ambiguous position of the Ministry of Education (MOE). The MOE deferred introduction of the study of English into schools because most literature tended to support the belief that the early introduction of English instruction was not necessarily beneficial for children. Therefore, the ministry decided that local government divisions should ban those
kindergartens and preschools that provided English-learning instruction. However, the MOE failed to insist firmly on the “no English instruction in early childhood education” policy after being pursued by parents and early childhood programs. The MOE then proposed that English be integrated into children’s school routines rather than be taught as a single subject at a certain period; however, no practical guidance on integrated English instruction has so far been provided for the concerned teachers. Thus, scholars like Lu and Chen (2005) have criticized the Ministry’s regulation by saying that local government divisions may not be able to execute the new regulation strictly due to political considerations and that early childhood programs may attempt to reject the regulation. Thus, the lack of a strict policy with regard to the early learning of English encourages early childhood programs to supply various types of English curriculum and recruit teachers who are not adequately prepared.

Teaching English as a Process, Not an End

Extending the above theme of teaching as accommodation, the conflict between school culture and personal interest also drove the four participants to pursue different future careers. Sophia discovered that she liked to work with children during her teaching experience in Taiwan. Her enjoyment frequently manifested itself in an understanding of the children’s humorous reactions and sensitivity to the children’s emotional and psychological needs, such as laughing loudly with the children and holding them in her arms when necessary. Thus, instead of teaching English she decided that she would like to continue working with children after returning to her home country. Sophia viewed teaching English in Taiwan as an expansion of her life
experience. At the end of the research project, she resigned and went back to Canada to take care of her ill father. Returning home and teaching students with a similar culture and background could be more preferable for her.

Teaching English in Taiwan and Korea was a relatively brief period in Karen’s life. The teaching job offered Karen extraordinary wages that allowed her to pay off her student loan. During the course of this study, she was also taking Chinese language teacher training courses, and considering teaching Mandarin after moving to England and getting married. At the end of the data collection, she quit the job and left for England.

As previously described, Yu-San became an early childhood English teacher for an interim period in order to accumulate teaching experience, as a springboard leading to another better career. By confronting the tensions between implementing constructive and structured English learning activities, she hoped that she would be able to teach adult learners someday in the future.

Unlike full-time English language teachers such as Sophia, Yu-San, and Karen, Ya-Chi, as a part-time early childhood English teacher, was concerned about the future market of teaching younger children English. Due to the declining birth rate, many early childhood institutions have difficulty in recruiting students. The participating kindergarten where Ya-Chi worked was one such school, and thus, Ya-Chi’s teaching hours were reduced in the semester following the observational period. She thus concluded,
I am not sure whether I will dedicate my whole life to teaching children English… Although the hourly pay is high, the income is unstable… After teaching for a period of time, I think I will try a different professional field.

Several studies identified dissatisfaction with salaries as one of the chief reasons why teachers resign from their jobs (Imazeki, 2004; Ingersoll, 2004). Similar to the findings in the literature, Ya-Chi’s experience with unstable wages may also lead her to consider leaving the teaching profession. Though the four teachers had different reasons for entering the field of early childhood English language education, teaching children English might just be a small part of their lives, not a lifetime career.

In sum, the above six themes revealed common experiences shared by NESTs and NNESTs in teaching young children English rather than dichotomizing their differences (e.g., Cook, 1999; McNeill, 1994; Medgyes, 2000; Wu, 2005). The findings led to several theoretical contributions. While most of the literature on the subject tends to focus on the teaching practices of the NESTs of young children in Taiwan (Chang et al., 2002; Hsu, 2001), the findings of this study contribute to understanding of the experiences of the NNESTs of young Taiwanese children, a topic that has remained relatively untouched in the literature so far. On the basis of empirical data, this study provides a new perspective on the NESTs and NNESTs of young children, thus redefining their common experiences, including their challenges, adjustment and the process of entering and leaving the profession of teaching English language to young children. Further, while most of the literature is less concerned
about young children as unique groups in terms of their development and learning styles, this paper argues the importance of compiling and presenting the experiences of NESTs and NNESTs with the objective of identifying the need for professional development in early childhood education. The results can serve as vehicles in establishing training guidelines, creating a supportive system, generating criteria for teacher selection, and promoting an overall improvement in the quality of English language teachers for young children.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Although previous literature attempts to dichotomize the differences between NESTs and NNESTs (Cook, 1999; McNeill, 1994; Medgyes, 2000; Seidhlofer, 1999; Tarnopolsky, 2000), this small case study found that, on the contrary, the teachers shared more similarities than differences in terms of their employment process, teaching practices, challenges, and career development. The experiences of the four participants revealed that the only prerequisite for teaching young children English is the ability to speak English. In class, the teachers should only speak English and provide children with opportunities for oral English practices. Similar to Chang and others (2002) and Hsu (2001) who criticized classroom practices of native English speakers, this study pointed out that the NESTs and NNESTs all confronted challenges in teaching due to their lack of training in early childhood education. Further, they also experienced isolation and tensions between personal teaching beliefs and institutional expectations. As Liu (1999) states, a clear-cut dichotomy
between the two groups of teacher did not exist in the research findings.

The results also assert Liu’s (1999) assertion that the impact of external conditions on the performances and expertise of English language teachers should be taken into account rather than dichotomizing their differences. Indeed, the participating teachers’ teaching experiences were directly shaped by their educational backgrounds (Lee, 2000; Liu, 1999), the contexts in which they work (Johnson, 2006; Liu, 1999), and the external power and cultural and social relationships they associated with (Pennycook, 2001). These experiences may have resulted in their turning to other professions. As the existing literature has yet to be explored from the perspective of the common experiences of NESTs and NNESTs of young children, the findings of this study contribute to the field of English language education in early childhood.

This study found that investigating the participating teachers’ experiences rather than identifying them as the stereotypical images of NESTs and NNESTs helped a teacher educator shed light on the reality of their working world, struggles, and needs. As such, the importance of initial and continuing professional development of age-appropriate English curriculum should be highlighted in order to promote the quality of English language education for young children. First, in addition to training for English proficiency, knowledge and skills on the curriculum design, teaching methods, and materials and child development in all domains as well as classroom management should be included in pre-service education for English language teachers teaching young children (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Vale & Feunteun, 1995). Second, early childhood institutions are also
responsible for in-service professional development after they recruit English language teachers. Some effective strategies, as suggested by Vesay (2008), can be used to help teachers cope with the challenges mentioned previously, such as identifying an individual’s challenges, providing consultations accordingly, setting up expert on-site mentoring and observations, offering follow-up and feedback, supplying sequential workshops on the same topic, and providing opportunities for applying new strategies and knowledge. Next, the collaboration between class teachers and English language teachers should also be supported by administrative work, as suggested by Fu, Houser, and Huang (2007), including a period of discussion time and a reduction in teachers’ administrative work. As for teacher recruitment, a mutual understanding about expectations and teaching beliefs between administrators and teachers should be made clear during interviews, so that the need for teachers to make accommodations, as seen in this study, will be minimized. Last, the study revealed a variety of English curriculum for kindergartens, in which some represented a traditional view on English language education. As Lu and Chen (2005) suggested, instead of releasing power to institutions to decide the English teaching practices, in which some of the practices might not be appropriate to children, the government should clarify and regulate the implementation of recommended methods, materials, and maximum hours for English instructions per week. Moreover, in order to provide guidelines for recruiting teachers, pre-service training, and for sustaining the quality of teaching practices, the government should develop criteria for English language teachers of young children, such as teachers’ education background and prerequisite course trainings (e.g., child
This study merely serves as a starting point, revealing the experiences and struggles shared by four NESTs and NNESTs of young children. Due to the small number of participating teachers, the research findings cannot be generalized to other early childhood English language teachers. More empirical studies can be conducted in the future. Specifically, questionnaire surveys on curriculum practices, struggles, strengths, weaknesses, and professional development of English language teachers across different types of early childhood English programs can be investigated, in order to better understand the teachers’ general teaching experiences. Additionally, studies can be conducted to compare teaching strategies between English language teachers with and without early childhood training backgrounds, to identify age-appropriate approaches that can be applied in the classroom. Finally, all the participating teachers remarked about their experiences on working with the class teachers. As early childhood teachers can play an important role in contributing to early English instruction, their perspectives on collaboration with English language teachers can be taken into consideration.

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### APPENDIX A

**Observation Log**

Date: April 22, 2009  
Time: 2:30 – 5:30 pm  
Location: Karen’s classroom  

**Context Information:**  
The observer arrived at 2:20 pm. Most of the children were still asleep. Karen and John (classroom teacher) waked the children up and helped them get ready for the English class. The other classroom teacher, Sara, was out for a school meeting. The observer noted that there was a new student, Peter. John explained later in the day that Peter was the youngest student in the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Comments/ Reflections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:40</td>
<td>[1] After all of the children waked up, Karen took out the file with lyrics and sang and waited for them to get ready for the English lesson. While Karen was singing, the children started moving near to Karen and sat down. There were only a few children singing with Karen. In the meantime, there were some children chasing each other around the classroom. After singing songs and all the children got ready, Karen closed the lyrics file.</td>
<td>[1] The songs were new to the children and the melodies were not easy for them to sing along.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Karen started singing with no movements, and only a few children sang with her. There were some children talking and playing while Karen was singing and they were asked to be quiet by John.

Karen: Emily, please give the book to Peter; let him try. After Karen sang five songs with the children, she asked Emily to give the book to the new student, Peter. Emily pushed the book in front of Peter.

One found Peter was allowed to read the English book and said: I want that, too (in Chinese). One of the children continued to say: No, you cannot (in Chinese). One child continued to say: He (Peter) cannot sing an English song (in Chinese). Karen did not say anything to the children and kept singing.

Peter looked at the ABC song book in front of him. Some children crawled to Peter and no one sang with Karen.


Karen may expect Daniel to participate more in class by giving him the book.

Karen doesn’t say anything to the talking children. What were the reasons?

Karen put away the ABC song book and took out a big book on the floor. The children were still talking to each other.


Word by word, Karen read the storybook, without any explanation or gestures. While Karen was telling the story, one child kept talking, Karen asked the kid to stand up. Karen continued to read the story

One child kept saying: He is really bad (in Chinese). It is because the story was about a naughty cat. Karen doesn’t respond to it.
Karen closed the book and continued to tell another story titled “Is Your Mama a Llama” with the same calm tone and way. Then, Karen started a new lesson.

3:09
Karen: T, [t], [t], tiger. D, [d], [d], dog. Karen held the flashcards of letter T and D in her hands and the children repeated after her. She then put the two flashcards on the floor.

Karen: What are these? Karen took out a new flashcard of teeth on it.

Children: Teeth.

Karen asked the children where the flashcard should be.

The children: T. Karen put the flashcard next to T.

Karen: What is it? She took out a flashcard of a cup.

Children: A cup.

Karen: A cup of what?

May: Coffee.

Karen: It's not coffee, there is a tag. She pointed at the tag of the cup.

Karen asked the children where the flashcard should be. The children answered T. She put the flashcard next to T.

Karen used flashcards and introduced more words to the children. The words included tie, dog, doll and door. She asked the children to repeat the words. Then, she led the children to play twister. She displayed the flashcards on the floor and asked the children to put their different body parts on the words that Karen said. When Karen explained the rules of the game, John sat behind Peter and translated Karen’s instructions. The children were excited in playing the game.

Because Daniel was a new student in class, John sometimes sat next to him and explained things to him. It was not typical in the observations.

3:17
Karen started a new lesson. She took out some flashcards of month. Before she flipped the cards, the children already reviewed these vocabulary words very quickly.
started singing the song about month with a loud voice.

[28] Karen: What month is it? She picked one of the flashcards by chance and asked the children. The children were able to answer her question. She repeated these several times.

[29] Karen then took out the flashcards about week. The children and John started to sing the song about week.

[30] Karen: What day is today?

[31] Children: Wednesday. All children started to sing, “Today is Happy Wednesday.” Some children even stood up and sang with movement.


[33] Children: [æ], [æ], apple; [b], [b], book; [k], [k], cat; [d], [d], dog; [ɛ], [ɛ], elephant…. After the children saw the flashcards, the whole class read the phonics chant automatically and immediately without Karen’s guidance. The children read twice with a loud voice and they seemed interested in the words.

[34] Karen: “Today is Wednesday. If it’s not raining, we can go outside.” She announced after the children read the phonics chant. Karen then asked the children to wash their hands and got ready for snack time.

3:30 [35] It was snack time in the afternoon. After having snacks, the children can read storybooks in the classroom. Karen waited until all the children finished their snacks and cleaned the tables.

3:52 [36] Karen entered the classroom and sat at the library corner. Linda shyly sat on Karen’s lap and uttered the phonics chant. Sam also walked to the back of Karen and taped Karen’s head lightly.

[31] The children were willing to participate in this case.

[33] The children were familiar with the phonics chant.

[34] Karen reviewed some vocabulary words, phonics, and told stories within fifty minutes. It seemed no focus in this English lesson.

[36] Children were close to Karen.
[37] Karen asked children to return the books to the bookshelf and gathered all the children.

[38] Karen led the children to play at the outdoor playground. The children ran and chased around the playground. Karen looked at the children.

[39] Linda: [w], [w], watch. She ran to Karen and tided a leaf on Karen’s wrist. Karen smiled as if she was happy to see that Linda can connect what she leaned in the class to the real situation.

[40] Karen then noted two boys had an argument. Jason hurt Ken’s lip. Karen asked Jason to apologize to Ken. When Karen met John, she told him about it.

[41] Linda asked Karen to play paper, scissors, and stone with her, and there were a few children joining together, too. Sam approached to Karen and asked Karen to hug him. Karen gave him a hug.

Karen and the classroom teachers told each other about the children’s situations.

Sam used to be the youngest kid in class before Peter came to this class. The teachers put more attention on Peter than Sam recently. Sam tended to rely on the teachers more today.

[42] Karen asked all the children to gather and took them back to the classroom.

[43] Karen: *We will drink water and wash hands.* She walked to the door and said to the children. She also asked every child to repeat the sentence before they stepped into the class. It’s Joshua’s turn.

[44] Karen: *Say we will drink water and wash our hands.* She kneeled down and said to Joshua.

[45] Joshua: *We will drink water and wash Karen.* He touched Karen’s face with his hands.

After the children washed their hands, Karen and Sara (the classroom teacher) helped the children to change their clothes. John was using the computer.

Karen led the whole class to sing “Goodbye Song” before the class dismissed. Sara sat with the children as well. After singing the song, each child lined up and hugged teachers.

Then, it was time for Sara to lead the class. She gathered the children and guided the children to review the activities today and preview the activities tomorrow. Karen still sat with the children and remained silent.

It was time for closing. The children played in different learning centers and waited for their parents. In the children’s free-play time, Karen still stayed in the classroom, put the flashcards in order, and assisted some children who need to take the school bus home to put their things in schoolbag in order.

Karen left the classroom.

Note. Verbatim speech acts were put in italics.
APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

Topic Domain One:
The Roles and Experiences of Being an English Language Teacher for Young Children
[Covert categories: working experiences; constraints and strengths in teaching; educational background; future career development]

1. Please tell me about a typical day of your teaching as detailed as possible? You may start from when you first enter the school, and then take me though all activities you do alone or with your students.
2. Please tell me about your experience as an English language teacher, from the time you studied to become one until now. How are you growing and changing in this process?
3. You have taught English in Taiwan for several years. What is it like to teach young children English in a foreign country (or in Taiwan)? Have you ever encountered any cultural shock?
4. Are you satisfied with your teaching job? How do you image your career path?
5. What is your ultimate goal of your career development?
6. What are challenging parts in your teaching experiences? Please give me some examples. When you have difficulties in teaching, what do you do in order to solve the problems?
7. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a native/non-native English speaking teacher?
8. What qualities or trainings should an ideal English language teacher require in order to teach young children English?

**Topic Domain Two:**

**The Structure of the English Curriculum**

[Covert categories: the philosophy of this school for providing English instruction; the position of English courses among regular courses; expectations toward children’s English learning; challenges the school faces].

1. I have observed your class for a short period of time. I am not sure whether I catch all important aspects of your English curriculum. Would you please describe how the English curriculum is organized in this school?

2. It seems that this school intends to develop students’ foreign language abilities. So, I am curious about why English instruction needs to be provided in this school?

3. Would you please give me more examples to show how this school emphasizes the pupils’ English learning? (for Sophia)

4. So far, we only focused on English courses. I wonder about the relation between the English course and other courses. Would you please say more about this? (for Yu-san)

5. As you said, children have English courses regularly. I wonder what the administrator would like to see in terms of their learning outcomes of learning English.

6. What are the different expectations toward children in different age levels in terms of learning English? (for Sophia and Yu-San)
7. What skills do you/the program want children to develop in the early childhood education?
8. Does this program encounter any difficulty in terms of providing English instruction?

**Topic Domain Three:**

**English Instruction**

[Covert categories: implicit teaching beliefs of English instruction; how English instruction is delivered in terms of different age levels; approaches and methods are used in English teaching; learning materials selections (textbooks and/or picture books); language usage in class]

1. You teach children English across various age levels. I wonder how you plan the learning activities. (for Sophia and Yu-San)
2. In your class, what are the most important activities for your students to do in order to learn English well?
3. I notice that you use a lot of children’s books as teaching materials. How do you access these reading materials? How do you select these reading materials? (for Karen and Yu-San)
4. What do you do to pupils whose English is falling behind?
5. What language do you expect children to use in English class?
6. What do you think about the idea that “the best way to learn English is to interact with native English speakers?” Why it is inappropriate to teach children English through their first language?
7. Why do you use stickers and candies as reward? (for Ya-Chi)
8. Would you please explain why you use games in the class? What are the purposes of these games?
9. How is children’s performance evaluated?
10. Recently, I observe you guide the children to sing many songs. What do you want to incorporate singing in your class? (for Karen)

**Topic Domain Four:**
**Support from the Working Environment**
[Covert categories: training/support received from the school; cooperation with classroom teacher]

1. Does the school provide you with any support in assisting you teaching young children English? Please give some examples.
2. As I know, English and classroom teachers are expected to collaborate in planning English curriculum. How does it work? Would you please specific your roles and duties roles in terms of developing English curriculum. What are the most challenging parts for teachers to work together? (for Sophia and Yu-San)
3. Would you please describe the relationship (or cooperation) between you and the classroom teacher?
4. What do you expect the school and the classroom teachers assist your teaching?

**Topic Domain Five:**
**Children’s Reactions toward the English Instruction**
[Covert categories: children’s likes and dislikes in English class; children’s reactions toward learning English; relationship between English language teacher and the children]
1. I’ve noticed that some children tend to remain silent in English class. How do you feel about their silence?
2. The children seemed enjoy playing games. How do you feel about the children’s responses toward English class?
3. What is the favorite activity to your students? What is the most disliked activity to your students? Please give me some specific examples.
4. How do you describe their development in English learning?
5. How do you feel about children’s English proficiency?
6. I noticed that some children did not fully participate in English learning activities. Why do they act like this? How do you interpret their behaviors? (for Karen)
7. What is the relationship between English teacher and children?

**Topic Domain Six:**

**Parents’ Expectations and Participations in English Language Education**

[Covert categories: parental expectations toward English language education; parental involvement; teacher-parent communication]

1. As an English teacher, how do you communicate with parents about their children’s learning?
2. What are parents’ expectations toward their children’s English learning?
3. How do parents get involved in children’s English learning? Would you please give me some examples?
4. What are parents’ complaints or praise of your program?
幼兒英語教學：外籍與中籍英語教師之經驗

摘要
現有的文獻多著重於比較外籍和本國籍英語教師的差異，然而本研究試圖從另外一個角度來探討這些教師
在台灣教導幼兒英文的共同經驗，因為研究顯示大部分的幼兒英語教師並未受過幼兒教育的訓練，因此當
他們進入幼兒教育現場很可能面臨相似的挑戰。本研究參與者為四位分別代表不同背景的幼兒英語教師。
研究資料包含課室觀察與訪談。研究結果從六個主題呈現幼兒英語教師的共同經驗，並提供相關建議以及
未來研究方向。

關鍵詞：幼兒英語教學 本國籍英語教師 外國籍英語教師