

Parents' Perceived Roles and Home Practices in Supporting Taiwanese Children's English Language and Literacy Learning

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Abstract

Research with monolingual families and bilingual families in ESL contexts has shown that parental involvement plays a significant role in fostering children's language and literacy development. However, few studies have been conducted with families in an EFL context like Taiwan where English is spoken and taught as a foreign language. This article will report part of the results of a qualitative study that examined parental support and involvement in third grade children's English learning in Taiwan. It will particularly address parents' perceived roles in supporting their children's English language and literacy learning, and discuss the types of involvement and strategies they used to foster their children's language and literacy development. Participants of the study were nineteen parents of third grade children from three different schools located in three different cities in Taiwan. Data collected included in-depth parent interviews, artifacts related to English learning, and short teacher interviews and classroom observations. Results of the study showed that parents have different perceptions of their roles in their children's learning experience depending on their contextual and individual constraints (such as financial resources and language proficiency). Despite the constraints, parents engaged children in a variety of activities related to English learning. Similarities in the support system and learning opportunities provided by parents of high performing children are discussed.

Key Words: parental involvement, early second/foreign language and literacy learning, family literacy practice

INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement and home environment play a significant role in fostering children's overall educational success (Jeynes, 2005; Thorkildsen & Stein, 1998) and impacting children's motivation and attitudes towards learning (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). In addition, parental involvement in children's academic life after schooling begins offers "direct experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal that will themselves contribute to the child's development of a sense of efficacy for doing well in school" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p.315).

The positive influence of parental involvement has also been examined in the context of children's learning of specific content areas, such as math (Wang, 2004; Spera, 2005), science (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001), and language learning (National Literacy Trust, 2001; Hawes & Plourde, 2005). In the field of language and literacy development in particular, an extensive literature has demonstrated that language and literacy activities at home can contribute positively to different aspects of children's language achievement, including decoding skills (Sammons et al., 2000), motivation in reading (Sonnenschein & Munsterman, 2002), and vocabulary size (Hart & Risley, 2003).

The relationship between parental involvement and language and literacy learning is largely demonstrated by studies conducted with monolingual families (Dickinson, & Tabors, 2001; Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005) and bilingual families in ESL contexts such as the United States (August & Shanahan, 2006; Li, 1999). These studies have indicated specific parental practices such as shared

book reading and extended conversation that can facilitate young children's language and literacy learning at schools. However, little research has explored the issue of parental involvement in supporting children's English language and literacy learning in EFL (English as a foreign language) contexts. Most EFL research has focused on the role of teachers and schools (Gao, 2006). While pedagogical practices are critical to foreign language learning, the advent of a sociocultural approach on language and literacy learning calls for studies examining factors beyond the immediate learning context (classrooms) to provide a more holistic view on the language learning process. From a sociocultural perspective, language and literacy learning is a social and cultural process largely influenced and sustained by home culture and practices. By interacting with parents and participating in activities supported by the home environment, children acquire the value and function of literacy, which serve as a foundation to assist school learning. This type of theoretical orientation provides strong support for further inquiries on the role of parental involvement in an EFL context which presents a socially and culturally different picture from an ESL environment concerning the purpose of learning English, resources available, parents' language proficiency, learning and teaching cultures, and educational policy on English education (Chowdury, 2003; Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2005).

Moreover, studies on parental involvement in EFL contexts are particularly necessary, given recent educational policy changes making English a part of the elementary school curriculum in several Asian countries including China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. The study reported in this article investigated parental involvement in young children's English learning in Taiwan where every elementary

school student is required to learn English starting from the third grade at the latest. As there is an increasing emphasis on English learning in Taiwan and more parents are making English learning an educational priority for their children, the findings of the present study can provide information on how schools and families can work together to support children's English language learning.

The study intended to gain a fuller and more in-depth understanding on factors influencing parental involvement decisions in the context of Taiwan and specific strategies and practices that parents used to support their children's English language and literacy learning. Both abstract constructs such as beliefs, values, and attitudes and concrete involvement practices were examined. However, due to the page limit, this article will mainly report the following three specific research questions that focus on concrete parental involvement strategies and practices:

1. How do Taiwanese parents describe their role(s) in children's English learning?
2. What types of practices and strategies do Taiwanese parents report using to support children's English learning?
3. Do Taiwanese parents of high performing children in English learning report similar types of involvement and/or practices?

LITERATURE REVIEW

English Language Education in Taiwan

Along with many Asian countries including Japan, Korea, and

China, English education has been widely promoted and valued in Taiwan in recent times. Although the language of instruction at school is Mandarin, English has been a required subject at the secondary level for decades in Taiwan. However, the policy and trend of English education has continued to develop. In year 2001, the Taiwanese government mandated English as one of the core subjects of the elementary school curriculum from fifth grade up. Furthermore, in 2005, English was included in the curriculum from third grade up. It is also anticipated that in the near future, English will become a mandatory subject for all students starting from first grade. In some major cities such as Taipei, this is already the case.

In addition to the inclusion of English at the elementary school level, there are other changes outside of the public school system that show an increasing emphasis on English learning in Taiwan. For example, more and more kindergarten programs have begun to offer English lessons in their curriculum, though with great variations concerning instructional hours and types of instruction. Another educational phenomenon is the increasing number of private after-school English programs. These programs are designed to provide additional English instruction outside of the public school context. More and more students at or before the elementary school levels are enrolled in these programs. Moreover, the focus on English education is also reflected in the effort of the Ministry of Education (MOE) to develop General English Proficiency Test to assess English language proficiency. It is documented that about 2.2 million people had taken the test as of 2006 (Ministry of Education, 2007).

The promotion of English education in recent years has encouraged and influenced many Taiwanese parents to regard English

learning as an educational priority for their children. According to a survey conducted by Commonwealth Magazine (2004), among 763 Taiwanese parents of children under 12 years old, 77% considered English an important skill that will impact children's life greatly and 61% agreed that the earlier children start to learn English, the better the learning outcome will be. Although the English curriculum is implemented from the third grade, 34.4% of the parents indicated that their children started English learning during or before entering kindergarten and in particular, almost 80% of children at the kindergarten level were reported having started English learning already through private language programs, interacting with English materials and so on. Oladejo (2006) distributed a questionnaire on parents' attitudes towards bilingual education to 1,160 parents of children from elementary to senior high schools across Taiwan. It was found that 32.7% of the parents wanted their children to start English learning at the kindergarten level. In another recent survey with a larger sample of 2,500 parents reported by the King Car Education Foundation (2005), similar results were reported. This survey further indicated that almost all (90%) parents were concerned about their own limited English proficiency and the majority of the parents chose to enroll their children in after-school English language programs hoping to foster children's interest in and development of English language learning.

These survey reports demonstrate not only the increasing emphasis on English in Taiwanese society but also Taiwanese parents' desire to encourage and support the English learning of their children. The reports listed quantitatively some of the ways parents use to support English learning such as language programs, buying

English picture books, and watching English movies. However, a more qualitatively-oriented investigation is needed to gain a fuller and more in-depth understanding of specific support or practices that Taiwanese parents utilize to promote English learning and how it relates to the English learning of Taiwanese children. Also, it is important to explore qualitative variations concerning the use of different parental involvement strategies in children's English learning among Taiwanese families.

Parental Involvement and Second Language and Literacy Learning

Consistent with the literature on monolingual families, parental involvement and home literacy practices are generally positively related to bilingual and second language learners' literacy development and outcomes (August & Shanahan, 2006; Brisk, 2006). For example, Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991) reported significant gains in English reading achievement of a group of first- and second-grade Spanish bilingual children after systematic attempts had been made to involve parents in the learning process such as sending literacy materials home. However, the study also stated that as there had been other changes at schools, it was hard to single out the specific effect of the increasing parental involvement. Similarly, Koskinen et al. (2000) studied 162 first-grade second language learners to explore the impact of home rereading on children's reading motivation, comprehension, and fluency. Results showed that providing reading materials in the home environment not only promotes parental involvement but also benefits children's reading achievement and motivation.

However, some studies have presented conflicting results

regarding parental involvement in second language learners' literacy development and outcomes (Goldenberg, Rueda, & August, 2006). Hammer, Miccio, and Wagstaff (2003) studied the relationship between home literacy experiences and preschool children's literacy outcomes with two groups of Puerto Rican mother-child dyads with one of simultaneous bilingual families and the other one of sequential bilingual families. Based on first-language literature, they explored parents' value on literacy, press for achievement, availability of literacy materials, and the frequency of reading with children in relation to children's early reading abilities. No significant relationships were found. The researchers argued that the results might reflect the inadequate information available on home experiences and second language literacy. They suggested that second language learners might benefit more from direct instruction provided by parents compared to monolinguals. The inconsistent results presented in the research field also demonstrate some methodological concerns. Most research on second language learners that provides information on parental involvement includes parental involvement as a small part of their designs. Thus, it is difficult to particularly examine the impact of parental involvement on second language learning.

Another key theme regarding parental involvement in bilingual and second language development addressed in the literature is cultural differences in the function and meaning of literacy. Parents with different sociocultural backgrounds usually have different beliefs and assumptions about literacy learning. In an ESL context, studies have shown that the mismatch between home and school cultures and practices usually makes the transition from home to school extremely

challenging for bilingual and second language learners and impedes academic achievement (Gee, 2004; Goldenberg, 2004). Heath's (1983) seminal ethnographic work *Ways with Words* demonstrated that children whose social language experiences are more aligned with school-based literacy are more likely to succeed at school. Heath's findings are supported in other studies (e.g. Han & Ernst-Slavit, 1999; Ruan, 2003; Tsai & Garcia, 2000).

Differences in parental involvement do not exclusively come from cultural and social differences. There are also within group differences. Moreover, personal attributes and context also play a significant role in the process of parental involvement (National Literacy Trust, 2001). Parents' behaviors and their choices of literacy practices with their children reflect their personal beliefs, values, and attitudes. For example, in the case of bilingual and second language learners, parental beliefs, values and, attitudes towards a particular language impact greatly their children's beliefs, values, and attitudes towards the learning of that language and indirectly influence the learning outcomes (Li, 1999).

Most research that examines the relationship between parental involvement and children's literacy development and outcomes are quantitative and correlational. In addition to the inconsistent results presented in the current body of research, there is also relatively little knowledge and information about the process of parental involvement in literacy development. For example, there are questions that still need further investigation such as how parental beliefs impact decisions in parental involvement, how parents carry out literacy practices with their children, and how these practices are perceived by children and impact their learning. Qualitative inquiries are necessary

in order to gain a more holistic picture of the process of parental involvement in children's literacy development. Furthermore, the knowledge on the second language population is even more scarce, let alone English language learners in EFL contexts. It is therefore important to obtain information on parental perspectives in these contexts and their role in children's foreign language learning.

METHOD

Sampling and Participants

The sampling procedure of the study was purposive in nature to include a variety of sociocultural characteristics such as regional contexts, school contexts, socioeconomic status, and children's success in English learning. The goal of the sampling was to maximize the variations across participants in order to explore the range of experiences of parental involvement.

A total of three public elementary schools in Taipei, Tainan, and Hualien were chosen based on the variations in the demographic compositions of the school populations. Based on the consultations with the school personnel, one third-grade classroom was identified in each school to further invite parents of children with different English language proficiency to participate in the study. At the end, a total of nineteen parents agreed to participate in the study. Among the nineteen parents, three were fathers. Moreover, all but three participants were the primary person who was responsible for their children's English learning as indicated by the participants themselves. The parents interviewed presented a range of educational

backgrounds. Five parents did not complete high school, four parents graduated from high school, seven graduated from a four-year university or technical college, and three had received a master's degree (all three were from Taipei). Sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds of the parents and families were also collected (see Appendix A and B).

Appendix C displays the English learning backgrounds of the targeted third-grade children. All but one received their first formal English instruction at the kindergarten level. In terms of children's English language proficiency at the time of the study, the study included nine high-performing, five average-performing, and five low-performing children based on the integrated curriculum-based assessment developed by each school.

Data Collection

Two types of qualitative data were collected to answer the research questions explored in this article: in-depth interviews and learning artifacts from the home setting. Nineteen interviews were conducted during the summer of 2007. Based on individual parent's preference, the interviews were conducted in Mandarin, Taiwanese, English, or mixed. The length of the interviews ranged from 50 minutes to almost 120 minutes. The content of the interview was based on an interview protocol (revised after pilot interviews) prepared by the researcher (see Appendix D, questions related to parental involvement in English learning).

In addition to the interview data, the study also collected relevant English learning artifacts to provide a deeper understanding of the contexts in which parental involvement and children's English

learning occur. Three interviews were conducted at the respective school settings, and the other interviews were held at the home of each participant. Interviews at the home setting allowed the researcher to view and make a copy of the English learning resources and materials that parents reported using to support their children's English learning. For the three interviews that were conducted at school, parents were reminded to bring in relevant English learning-related artifacts. Artifacts collected included English learning materials used at home, children's daily schedule concerning English learning, assignments marked by parents, an English-learning computer program set up by parents, and written communication between the parents and the teachers regarding children's English learning. These artifacts can provide a more complete picture of what resources related to English language learning were available and what kinds of involvement behaviors were present in the homes of these families. Moreover, this data source also served as a means to triangulate the interview data.

Besides the aforementioned data sources, classroom data was collected to address parents' perspectives on the school learning contexts (not reported in this article). However, to address the questions explored here, classroom data is also necessary to better understand parents' perceived roles and involvement activities as perceived invitations for involvement from schools and teachers can impact parents' motivation and decisions to become involved and their involvement patterns (Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2005). Moreover, it was used to triangulate interview data and artifacts collected. Two classroom observations were done in each school with a specific focus to see if teachers

included learning activities or assignments that required or could have invited parents' participation either at school or at home. In addition, a 30-minute semi-structured teacher interview was conducted with each English teacher to better understand their perspectives about parental involvement in children's English learning.

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim. With the completed transcriptions, the study utilized four analytical steps of ethnographic interview proposed by Spradley (1979): domain analysis, taxonomy analysis, componential analysis, and relating the themes. The purpose of these strategies was to focus on the semantic relationship among the terms used by the participants and thematic categories identified in the data. In addition to these analytical strategies, the case ordered display method described by Miles & Huberman (1994) was used to explore the relations between parents' sociocultural context and their ideas about different identified themes. During this process, parents' responses were ordered according to several sociocultural variables including educational background, English proficiency, and regional context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Model

Based on the interview analyses, a model to represent the themes related to parental involvement and children's English learning was developed (see Figure 1). The purpose of the model is to

present different individual and contextual factors that impact parents' involvement. The concept map presents aspects that impacted parents' decisions to become involved in their children's English learning and their visions for children's English learning. Also, it describes what kinds of challenges parents encountered when supporting children's English learning and how those challenges impacted their involvement and support for their children. Although this article will not address every aspect described in the concept map, a brief summary is necessary and important to understand the data presented in this article.

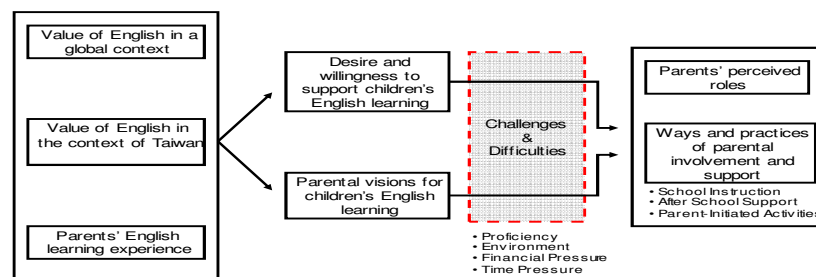


Figure 1
Model of Parental Involvement and Support
for Taiwanese Children's English Learning

All parents interviewed expressed a strong willingness and desire to support their children's English language learning. They also shared similar aspirations for their children's English learning such as the emphasis on oral language proficiency and the importance of interest in English learning. However, when it comes to actualizing their visions for children's English learning, parents seemed to differ

in the support systems that they provided for their children and the degree of their involvement. The variations are a result of the following four contextual and individual factors that each family encountered: parents' English language proficiency, financial pressure, time constraints, and societal and community environment such as opportunities to use English in Taiwanese society, available authentic English materials in the societal context, and changes of policy. These challenges and pressures impacted what parents perceived they could do and determined the extent to which parents' visions could be realized in the strategies and activities that they reported using.

The contextual and individual constraints, however, did not negate parents' willingness to support their children's English learning and they certainly did not reject the possibilities of parental involvement in children's English learning. However, the combination and dynamic of these constraints presented a learning environment and support system that was unique to each family. Based on the interview data and artifacts collected, parents varied in their perceived roles in children's English learning and the strategies and activities that they used to support their children's learning. Responding to the three research questions reported in this article, the following sections will mainly address these support systems and practices, which is the right-hand section of the model.

How Taiwanese Parents Describe Their Roles

During the interviews, parents discussed their roles in children's English learning. According to the analyses of the interviews, parents provided three types of responses that showed

differences in their means of support and their perceived responsibilities for themselves and the schools. Based on the analyses, parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, and perceived English language proficiency seemed to play a role in their perceptions of their roles, which will be presented in the discussion of each type of response. However, regional contexts were not shown to be a factor in differences of parents' responses.

Language learning helpers and teachers' collaborative partners. The majority response among parents described their roles as helpers in their children's English learning process. Twelve parents across different socioeconomic and regional backgrounds saw themselves indirectly assisting children's English learning by initiating children's interest in learning English, searching for language learning resources, and collaborating with teachers. An example is presented below.

我沒有直接參與啦，這不像其他科，英文我們也不懂，所以只能輔助他而已，我會看他需要什麼，或是像外文書，給他買輔助工具，我能供應他就供應他。

(translation) I'm not involved in her learning directly. It's not like other subjects. We don't know English so we can only assist her. I would see what she needs, like English books. I would buy her supplementary resources. Whatever I can give her, I'll do. (Mei, interview, August 10, 2007)

These parents suggested that they participated in some English-related learning activities such as helping children with homework, showing English-speaking cartoons, playing English

songs, and so on. The excerpt presented here reflects the perception that these parents were involved in their children's English learning process by providing all possible assistance other than teaching English to children directly. Moreover, these parents considered themselves active participants in their children's English learning, playing an equally important role as teachers in helping children succeed in learning.

While teachers hold professional knowledge and play the main role of teaching the subject, these parents (some with very limited English proficiency) believed that they should be partners with the teachers and take on the role of communicating with teachers and seeking available resources that can contribute positively to their children's learning outcome. One interesting comment made by Ting was that during the process of finding resources to support her daughter's learning, she also considered herself a learner.

對於怎麼樣把英語學好這件事，我還有很多很多的問號，所以我真的是邊走邊學，從孩子的學習狀況去做調整跟修正。

(translation) As for how to learn English well, I still have a lot of question marks. So I'm learning throughout the way. I make adjustments from her learning progress. (Ting, interview, September 2, 2007)

Language learning helpers and tutors. Similar to this first response type among parents, a second response group among parents, Young, Wen, Ya, Wei, Yu, also considered themselves active participants in their children's English learning process. They mirrored the first response type in that they also saw themselves as

helpers in trying to develop children's interest in learning English, and to provide necessary learning material and financial support. However, the difference is that these parents also ascribed themselves the role and responsibility of teaching English to their children formally or informally at home. These parents usually engaged children in a variety of language activities that focused on specific language skills. The following vignette was illustrative of these parents' perceived role as teachers.

還沒上學前，有時後會教他一些簡單的單字，開始數數啊，one two three four 這樣，然後譬如說顏色啊，yellow 這樣子，那時後就是我有空，或在路上看到有機會，我就教他們一下怎麼講。

(translation) Before he started elementary school, I would teach him some simple vocabulary, like counting one, two, three, four. Then, colors, like yellow and so on. At that time, when I had time or opportunities when we saw something on the street, I would teach him how to say something in English. (Wen, interview, July 4, 2007)

This excerpt shows that parents like Wen believed that they could contribute to their children's English learning by providing either formal or informal instruction. Unlike parents who considered themselves helpers in the first response group, parents of the second response group shared some sociocultural characteristics. These parents across the three school settings have comparatively higher educational backgrounds compared to other parents interviewed. Except Wen, all other parents are college graduates. Moreover, these parents were also those who perceived themselves as having

relatively higher English proficiency. All of them acknowledged that their proficiency level allowed them to fulfill the role of English teachers at home. In addition, when contextualizing parents' perception of their role in supporting children's English learning according to their children's English learning performance, an interesting characteristic was found. None of these parents' children were considered low achieving based on their school English performance and three of them were high achieving. Although a definite conclusion cannot be drawn here because of the nature of the study, data here seems to demonstrate positive influences of parent-initiated formal and informal English instruction on children's English learning. Moreover, it seems that parents' educational background and English proficiency level in particular play a role in whether or not these parents see themselves have the capability of assuming the role of teachers in supporting their children's English learning. However, more research is needed to further explore these issues and relationships.

Although parents of the first two response groups had different perceptions of their roles, they shared some similarities. Like the first group of parents, parents from the second group also believed that teachers and parents should share equal responsibility and collaborate with each other. They considered their role of teaching a means to prepare their children for school learning and to complement school instruction. Another important common finding among parents in the first two response groups was that most of them emphasized the importance of letting children know that they cared and valued English learning. They believed that regardless of parents' English proficiency, there were things that parents could and should do to

show children their interest in supporting English learning. This idea is exemplified in the following two quotes from parents of the first two response types respectively.

我沒有學過英文，那現在就是他在學，那有時後我就會說，反過來，因為我不懂，那你當我的老師，那你教媽媽，我現在是學生，你是老師，我覺得就是讓他們感受到我們也很關心他們的學習。

(translation) I don't have any English learning experience. Now, he is learning. So sometimes, I would say, 'let's change roles. Because I don't know English so you get to be my teacher. You teach mom. Now I'm the student and you are the teacher'. I just want to let my children feel that I care about their learning. (Yeh, interview, July 16, 2007)

覺得你大人，你的熱忱度不高，小孩子一定很低，這是絕對的。你不懂，也沒有關係，你可以問他說，那你們上甚麼，給我看看啊，你們的考試，甚麼之類的，看看課本，至少要show一下你的關心程度。

(translation) I think as parents, if you are not passionate about your children's learning, they certainly are not going to be passionate about it either. If you don't know English, that's fine too. But at least, you can ask them, what did you learn at school or show me some of your books or exams, something like that. At least, you should show that you care. (Yu, interview, August 25, 2007)

Language learning observers. The third response type differed from the first two in both the extent of their reported participation in their children's English learning and the perceived responsibilities of

the schools and themselves. There were two parents, Hua and Huei who suggested that schools should take more control of their children's English learning. They ascribed themselves the role of observers who took a relatively passive backseat role to teachers. As Hua explained,

因為現在學校沒有額外在補英文，我是希望說學校可以多一些這方面的補強，譬如說像下課，就給他留在學校，功課寫完，或學一些東西再回去。像現在三點回去，就看電視，所以我才想說如果他們可以在學校留久一點。

(translation) Because they don't have additional support for English at school, so I hope that schools can have more support in this area. For example, he can stay at school after 3:00. Stay at school and finish his homework or learn something and then go home. Otherwise, like now, when he gets back around three, he just watches TV. So I was thinking maybe they can stay at school longer. (Hua, interview, July 30, 2007)

Among the participants, Hua and Huei were the only two parents who did not continue their education beyond elementary school. They also were from a lower socioeconomic background and both of them reported that their families were in a very difficult financial situation. In terms of their children's English learning, both their children were considered low-achieving. Through the interviews, these parents revealed a low level of involvement and a perception that schools should be responsible for their children's English learning. They only reported a minimum level of involvement in their children's English learning compared to other parents. Although both

parents would look for free English learning resources such as books from relatives for their children and sign their children's communication book, they did not initiate or involve their children in any other English learning activities. Perhaps these beliefs and involvement patterns are influenced by the challenges and constraints experienced by these parents. For example, Huei suggested that it was financial challenging to her family to buy any additional learning resources. She thus wished that her son could receive more support from the school. The concern of financial resources was shared by Hua. Hua further pointed out that her twelve-hour work shift prevented her from paying close attention to her son's learning when he returned home from school. Thus, they perceived school as the only resource that they can rely on to support their children's English learning. In other words, it would be misleading to conclude that these parents did not want to support or be involved in their children's English learning. As indicated during the interviews, both parents expressed an interest in encouraging and supporting their children's English learning. However, available resources, financial capabilities, and living context might be factors influencing the extent of their involvement.

Another finding that needs to be addressed is that the roles that parents played were not static. They would change in response to the context in which their children's learning occurred. For example, during the interviews, both Young and Wen suggested that their involvement in teaching their children English declined over time as a result of increasing financial pressure and limited time with their children. Similarly, Wei thought that she would not be able to assist her son after middle school as the content would become more

difficult. Thus, the dynamics among the challenges and contextual constraints that parents encountered play an important role in the changes in the roles and the responsibilities that parents assume.

Findings reported here are aligned with the model on parental involvement proposed by Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler and Hoover-Dempsey (2005). They suggest that parents' perceived life context and parents' beliefs about their role as parents are major sources that can impact parents' choice of involvement practices. The study supports this framework and further presents the unique context in which these Taiwanese parents were situated and the dynamics between the actual individual and contextual factors in the process of parental involvement in children's English learning in Taiwan. Furthermore, the findings also suggest that parents' perceived life and individual context such as their language proficiency and financial resources influenced these parents' perceived role and involvement in supporting children's English learning.

Types of Practices and Strategies Parents Used

One major purpose of the study was to explore some of the ways in which parents were involved and what kinds of strategies and activities they used to support children's English learning. The study identified two major resources other than school instruction that parents relied on in supporting children's English development in the context of Taiwan: after-school programs and parent-initiated activities.

After-school programs. Ten parents reported that their children received some type of after-school support for English learning before or in third grade. The programs that parents chose varied in type and in hours of instruction. The types of programs these parents chose

included chain English language schools, after-school care centers that included English classes, and small English teaching studios operated by one or a few English teachers themselves. The hours of instruction ranged from two to five hours per week.

Parents interviewed seemed to rely more on after-school English enrichment programs or tutors to support children's English learning than school instruction. Two thirds of the parents expressed concerns about the shortcomings of school learning such as one-size-fits-all instruction, a lack of oral practice, and few English-related events or activities at their children's schools, which led to minimal participation on this aspect. In particular, parents of struggling English learners suggested that their children were left behind and no modification or additional instruction was provided to scaffold the learning process for their children. They were concerned that some schools and teachers had assumed that every child began English learning at school with some basic knowledge of English, which was not the reality. This concern is congruent with some phenomenon observed in the school setting. For example, with the exception of the class in Tainan which was conducted in both English and Chinese, the other two classes were delivered in mostly English. This could be very challenging for those students with limited knowledge of English. Parents' reliance on after-school programs was also related to their perceived invitation for parental involvement from schools. All but one parent stated that they had little or no communication with their children's English teachers. This perspective is consistent with the three English teachers' perceptions on their role as subject teacher. All three teachers expressed that with the large amount of students they had to teach every day, English

teachers often had little time to focus on individual students or to get to know students' parents or involve them in students' learning.

Except for one parent from Taipei, who worried that there was too much playing time and no actual English learning at his daughter's after-school care center, all other parents had relatively positive feedback on their children's after-school programs and tutors. They thought that after-school programs and tutors provided instruction that was more tailored to their children's levels and needs. Two parents chose to hire private English tutors so that their children could work on pronunciation and conversational skills respectively. Along a similar line, some parents suggested that after-school programs were more willing to provide additional instructional support on aspects in which their children had problems.

In addition to a more individualized curriculum and instruction, most parents also suggested that compared to school instruction, children had more opportunities to practice oral language skills in after-school English classes. Many parents mentioned that the instructional language was mostly English and that the number of students was fewer than 20, so that teachers could pay more attention to each individual child. Moreover, four parents commented positively on after-school English programs' efforts in providing time to work on individual children's oral language skills and on including that as part of their assessments of children's English learning, such as telephone interviews.

Parents also believed that they had more opportunities to communicate with the teachers directly and they could be more involved in their children's learning process. The majority of parents reported that they had frequent communication with their children's tutors and

teachers of the after-school programs. Mei's experiences in working with their children's after-school English programs is illustrative:

他們補習班有發媽媽手冊，裡面就是會告訴爸媽，陪讀要怎麼做，然後參考書裡的符號，什麼代表什麼，它裡面也會跟你解釋說，這些句子是什麼意思，因為像他們的課本是沒有中文的，但是媽媽手冊裡面有。她如果哪裡有不懂，我就可以拿媽媽手冊來幫她，家長也比較可以參與孩子的學習。

(translation) They have a guidebook for mothers at the after-school program. It tells parents how to read with your children. Also, it tells you what the symbols in the textbook mean. It also explains the meaning of the sentences. Because in the textbook, they don't have Chinese but in the guidebook for mothers, it has Chinese. If she had some problems, I could use the guidebook to help her. I think parents can be more involved in children's learning that way. (Mei, interview, August 10, 2007)

This type of comment seemed to speak to a crucial factor that impacted the extent of parents' involvement in children's learning at school, that is, parents' perceptions of an invitation for involvement and participation from the after-school programs. In many of the cases shared by parents, it seemed that teachers from after-school programs provided parents with frequent updates of children's learning progress so that parents could work with teachers to assist their children's learning. Moreover, as Mei pointed out in her excerpt, after-school programs usually provided more resources for parents to help with their children's learning and to be a part of the learning process. These resources were particularly useful for parents who

wanted to support their children's English learning but had less knowledge of the English language. According to Walker et al. (2005), such an invitation usually leads to higher level of parental involvement. This claim is supported by the findings of this study.

Parent-initiated activities. In addition to enrolling children in after-school programs, parents also reported that they used a number of strategies and activities at home to foster children's learning of the English language and development of literacy. (Appendix E provides a list of strategies and activities mentioned by each individual parent.) The findings of this study support previous surveys (CommonWealth Magazine, 2004; King Car Education Foundation, 2005), however, some qualitative differences were found in the amount and types of materials and how parents or families utilized these materials.

As shown in Appendix E, there were a few strategies and activities that almost every parent used to support their children's English learning. Nearly all parents were involved in assisting their children's homework, including assignments from both schools and after-school programs. However, the extent of their assistance varied among parents. Nine parents reported that they usually reviewed completed homework and pointed out errors or checked comments when the homework was returned by teachers, while six parents simply monitored or checked to make sure the assignments were completed before classes.

Although there were variations in parents' participation in English homework, most of them indicated that their level of involvement declined as their children became more independent and more used to the routine of English assignments. Ting stated,

因為單字很多，又比較難，所以變爸爸媽媽幫她查。那個時後剛接觸這個的時後 (*I Want to Fly*- 媽媽買的家教用教科書)。然後大概上了三次左右，我就覺得她進步很多，她就可以大概自己去回答那個問題了，她也習慣那個模式了，以前七題裡只有三題她可以自己完成，其他要我們幫忙，現在七題她幾乎全部可以自己寫。

(translation) There was a lot of vocabulary and it was more difficult. So we needed to look up the words for her. But that was back then when she started to use this (*I Want to Fly*, the textbook selected by mother). But after three sessions, I felt that she had made a lot of progress and she could answer the questions herself and she is used to that procedure now. Before, she could only finish three out of the seven questions and we needed to help her finish the rest. Now, she can do all seven.
(interview, September 2, 2007)

Another strategy that almost all but one of the families shared was the utilization of multi-media materials. However, there were also variations in both the quantity and types of materials available. The number of multi-media materials at home ranged from having one instructional CD, multiple sets of audio English books, songs, and DVDs, to having access to various on-line learning programs. Such differences seemed to be largely related to parents' socioeconomic backgrounds. Moreover, parents differed in the ways that they utilized the available multi-media materials at home. Parents like Hua and Hueh pointed out that it was their children's choice whether or not to use those materials and that most of the time, their children seldom engaged those materials. Other parents were more active in using the multi-media materials available at home. Thirteen parents simply

played CDs or DVDs as input while only three parents would incorporate extended activities based on the multi-media materials. An example of the extended activity is presented here.

有時後聽完CD，我會鼓勵他們角色扮演去練裡面的對話，然後他們兩個就會彼此會模仿那個CD 裡面的對話，有一次他們好像，我現在忘記了，那個內容很好笑，很有意思，一隻大象跟小老鼠在對話，他們練久了，就背起來了。

(translation) Sometimes after listening to the CD, I would encourage them to do a role play to practice the dialogue. Then both of them would imitate the dialogue from the CD. One time, I don't recall the content now, but I remember it was a funny story. It was a conversation between an elephant and a mouse. So they did a lot of practice together, and then they sort of memorized it. (Ching, interview, August 25, 2007)

In addition to multi-media materials for English learning, the majority of the parents shared that there were also written English materials and resources available in their homes. These parents reported a range of materials and resources. Some families had about twenty English or Chinese English bilingual picture books. Others like Ting, Ya, and Yu owned several collections by specific Taiwanese or western illustrators, and other types of materials including vocabulary flashcards, big books, dictionaries, and workbooks. Most parents who provided English written resources and materials at home also indicated that they sometimes would bring their children to bookstores and libraries to get materials that their children found interesting. The frequency of their visits ranged from

once a week to once or twice a month.

It is important to note that the five families that did not own any English written resources or materials were also families of children with lower English proficiency. While it would be misleading to suggest a relationship between the availability of English written materials and children's English learning outcomes, information on the language and literacy environment in which the English learning of low performing children took place is crucial in understanding the learning process of these children.

Another strategy that several parents used to support children's English learning was shared English book reading. Seven parents indicated that they read English or bilingual books with their children. Interestingly, children of these parents were all high-performing English learners. However, these parents' proficiency in English reading seemed to impact how they engaged their children in English book reading and the patterns of their interaction with children around English books.

Four parents reported that they started to read English or bilingual picture books with children after their children had received some formal instruction. Although these four parents had some basic knowledge of the English language, they still thought that reading in English to their children was a challenging task. Therefore, instead of doing most of the text reading themselves, they would choose books that their children could read, and listen to their children's reading. They usually would provide feedback or scaffold the reading process only when their children encountered difficulties. However, the interactions between these parents and their children during shared English book reading were also mainly text focused. Although these

parents did not have sufficient English ability to read English books fluently to their children, they emphasized the importance and value of reading with children in contributing to the success of English learning. As Hong stated,

我們也許沒辦法念太難的東西給他，但是跟他一起念一些簡單的東西，閱讀習慣培養起來，以後他會自己願意去念。

(translation) We probably can't read too difficult stuff to him. But by reading some simple books with him, we hope to help him develop the habit of reading, and that in the future he will be able to read himself. (interview, July 21, 2007)

Unlike the experiences that these four parents shared, three parents had better English proficiency skills to read to their children from a younger age. In early English book reading interactions, these parents sought to facilitate their children's early English literacy development and provide input for vocabulary learning. These parents were able to be more active participants during shared English book readings. Their interaction with their children also involved more intentional teaching of early English literacy knowledge and skills such as decoding, concept of print and vocabulary learning. Such a focus was also reflected in the extended activities that parents did with their children after book reading. For example, Ya utilized various literacy learning tools to encourage learning of vocabulary in the books. She explained,

我會念給他們聽，教他們念，可是不見得說，書裡面的字他會認識，那後來有東西出版社，他就會有很多 flash cards，然後我就會用 flash card，

我剛念過什麼故事，譬如說念到那個單字的時後，他就必須要把那個圖卡找出來。然後那我就會去一般的書局，買 A-Z 的磁鐵，然後就教他們拼，或是我念，他就把字拼出來。

(translation) I would read to them and teach them how to pronounce the words but it doesn't mean that they knew the words. Later on, there is a publisher called East and West, they have a lot of flashcards. So I would use them for the stories that I just read. For example, when I read certain words, they needed to find the corresponding cards. Then I bought alphabet magnets to teach them how to spell or when I read a word, they would spell it. (Ya, interview, September 5, 2007)

While these parents focused greatly on the word-level component of literacy during their shared book readings, they indicated that they had fewer discussions with their children on the content or illustration of the texts. Moreover, the frequency of shared reading activities declined as their children became more independent readers in English.

In sharing strategies to support children's English learning, nine parents also suggested that they would provide instruction or activities that they developed by themselves. For example, a number of parents tried to block out Chinese captions when children were watching simple English speaking cartoons in the hope of enhancing their children's English listening skills. Another interesting activity developed by Hong was a simple computer software that could allow her child to build a bank for English words and phrases learned at school and to practice these words and phrases. Hong said,

我自己英文可能沒那麼好，就用這樣讓孩子可以自己複習，他也可以自主性比較強的去加一些他想學的東西。

(translation) My English proficiency is not that good. So with this, my child can review his schoolwork and he can be more active in adding things that he wants to learn. (interview, July 21, 2007)

In addition to the strategies discussed above, a small number of parents also enrolled children in English certification exams, traveled with their children to English-speaking countries, and sought help from their social network including relatives or neighbors or English-speaking priests who had more knowledge of the English language to support their children's English learning.

Parents interviewed in this study engaged children in a variety of activities related to English learning. Their use of different strategies and activities demonstrated that parents were active in their efforts to support their children's learning of English language and literacy. However, the differences in the number and types of strategies and activities utilized by each family also seemed to reflect the influence of the contextual factors discussed earlier, namely parents' language ability, access to the language resources in the larger community and society, and financial and time constraints.

Similar Types of Involvement and/or Practices Among Parents of High-Performing Children

One of the main purposes of this study was to understand parental involvement and support for children's English language learning among families with children of different English language

proficiencies and with different sociocultural characteristics. Based on the analyses of interviews and artifacts collected, successful English learners in each of the three participating schools shared some similarities in the support system and learning opportunities provided by their parents. The similarities among characteristics of parental involvement and support seemed to cut across specific sociocultural characteristics of the school and city or town in which these children's English learning occurred. It is important to highlight these similarities, as they might play an essential role in contributing to success in English learning for this group of children. Four characteristics of parental involvement and support shared by most or all parents of high performing children were identified.

First, seven out of ten high performing children attended after-school programs or had private English tutors. The three parents who did not enroll their children in any after-school programs had high English proficiency themselves and could provide the necessary instructional support for their children outside of the school context. In other words, parents of high performing children were able to provide additional English instructional support to review and supplement English learning at school. However, it is important to note that some of these parents who had limited financial resources and had to make more sacrifices, such as working more hours or choosing less ideal programs to provide such additional support, compared well with parents with more financial resources.

The second common characteristic was that all these parents were highly involved in assisting their children with their homework including assignments from both school and after-school programs. Unlike parents of average or low-performing children who usually

only checked if children completed their homework, these parents seemed to be more involved in reviewing children's work and helping children when they encountered difficulties. Moreover, they usually checked teachers' comments when assignments were returned and tried to work on areas where their children had problems or difficulties. For parents with less English proficiency, they tended to ask after-school teachers for additional instructional support.

Moreover, most of these parents kept frequent communication with their children's after-school English teachers and tutors. There seemed to be a strong school-family connection in these families. These parents believed that by working closely with teachers, they were able to attend to their children's learning progress and be more aware of areas where they needed to provide more support for their children's learning. However, as the findings in previous sections showed, the higher extent of these parents' communication with teachers was also related to the perceived invitation for involvement from particular after-school programs and teachers.

The last important element identified in the support system provided by parents of high performing children was a home environment with rich literacy input. In addition to providing English oral and written materials, and periodic bookstore or library visits, all but three parents of successful English learners engaged children in shared book reading. Reading English books with children seemed to be a unique strategy that was used by this group of parents. Although these parents had different English language proficiency levels, they were able to scaffold their children's literacy development, particularly at the word-level such as pronunciation, decoding skills, and vocabulary knowledge.

Research conducted with both monolingual and bilingual families in ESL contexts has demonstrated that having a rich literacy environment and shared book readings play a significant and positive role in children's language and literacy development (e.g. August & Shanahan, 2006; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). The findings of this study support this perspective and further document that in EFL contexts, shared book reading can also be important in children's English language learning.

In previous studies, it has been suggested that extended conversation during shared book reading can be advantageous in children's language development (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; National Literacy Trust, 2001). One interesting finding of this study is that shared book reading activities described by these parents focused on the word level components of reading, such as letter-sound relationship and decoding skills, without much conversation on the content. For some parents, the lack of extended conversation on the content might be due to their lack of English proficiency.

However, parents with higher English proficiency also tended to engage their children in minimal discussion about the content. It might be that most parents perceived English book reading as a skill-based learning activity or lesson rather than a leisure activity. However, this study did not yield sufficient information on this matter to draw any conclusion. It would be interesting in future research to explore parents' interaction with children during Chinese book readings to further examine whether the lack of conversation on content is a function of language or a cultural difference in shared reading practices.

In sum, while all parents valued English learning and expressed

a strong willingness and desire to support children's English learning, parents of high performing children had a more clearly articulated vision of how they wanted to support their children's English language learning. Moreover, they were able to overcome various contextual challenges and constraints to execute most of their plans. With the exception of three parents with higher English language proficiency, all the other parents of high performing children did not consider themselves having sufficient English knowledge to teach their children English. However, they were able to seek and utilize other English learning resources and collaborate with professional teachers to compensate for their lack of English proficiency in supporting their children's English learning. In addition to the challenge of language proficiency, these parents were also able to overcome financial and time constraints to provide the best English learning environment possible for their children.

LIMITATIONS

Due to the qualitative focus of the study, one major limitation is the generalizability of the study. It is important to keep in mind that parents who have little desire to be involved in children's English language learning might be more likely to decline the invitation to participate in the study. Moreover, based on the small number of parents and schools included, the current study cannot extend its findings to make claims about all Taiwanese families. The nature of the study called for in-depth qualitative data from relatively few participants. Although the study tried to include families and parents

representing a range of sociocultural backgrounds and individual characteristics, whether the findings can be transferable to parents and families in Taiwan with different combinations of background experiences and literacy knowledge is not known. More research with parents from other individual and contextual backgrounds is needed. In addition, the study did not address the impact or effectiveness of parental involvement practices on the outcome of children's English learning. However, the findings can be used as a basis for future research exploring the links between specific home practices and English development.

IMPLICATIONS

In light of the findings of this study, several implications are drawn. First, the study reveals that parents might have different views on their roles in supporting children's English language and literacy learning even though they put similar emphasis on children's learning of English. Such differences seem to be related to the linguistic knowledge and socioeconomic background of each family. In particular, parents with fewer financial resources and lower socioeconomic status tended to feel powerless to assume a more active role in supporting children's language learning and children from these families were considered low-performing students in English learning. Such a finding is important and worrisome as it shows the possible Matthew effect in English language learning in Taiwan where the rich get richer and the poor get further left behind. This widening gap might continue to have a profound impact on

children's future academic advancement and career choices. It is thus important for schools and teachers to build a stronger partnership with parents so that parents' needs can be heard and necessary support can be provided for those parents who would like to become involved in children's English language learning but lack sufficient knowledge and resources. Moreover, schools and teachers should also engage parents in conversations that convey the importance of parental involvement on children's language learning process.

Second, the study demonstrates that many parents in Taiwan engage children in a variety of language learning activities. This finding underlines the importance of taking a sociocultural approach in understanding children's English language learning process in an EFL context. Children's English language and literacy experiences at home will become part of the resources that they possess and work with in classroom learning contexts. A mismatch between learning expectations held by the schools and the home experiences might have a negative influence on children's learning outcomes (Heath, 1983). While it is important for teachers to acknowledge parents' efforts in supporting children's English language learning, it is also important for teachers to take a more active role in finding out what kinds of English language and literacy activities their students are doing at home. Such information can allow teachers to better identify individual student's needs and to build on students' home experience.

Last, the study identified several strategies and practices utilized by parents of high performing children. Although more research is still needed, such information can be beneficial for parents who want to support their children's English language learning but do not know where to start. It is important for schools and teachers to

provide information on helpful involvement strategies and practices to parents, and to do this in an accessible format. For example, programs and regular meetings can be held at schools to demonstrate how parents with different English proficiencies can implement these English learning activities with their children at home. Several elementary schools in Taiwan have begun to develop family English language and literacy programs to involve parents in English learning activities with their children, such as book reading, a strategy used by most parents of high performing children in this study. However, this type of practice is still rare. It is important to keep in mind that parents need support from teachers, schools, and researchers concerning how to best assist their children's English language development with the resources that they have. This is particularly crucial for parents with limited financial resources who might not have adequate means to receive support other than schools and language teachers.

CONCLUSION

As the knowledge base of parental involvement and support for children's English learning in EFL contexts is still thin, much more research on this topic is necessary. More information on the understanding of home environment and parental support for English learning in EFL contexts can provide both educators and parents with knowledge of the EFL learning process, the role of sociocultural background and home environment, and ways to support and foster the English learning development of children.

In the context of Taiwan, the issue of parental involvement in children's English learning deserves urgent attention given recent and foreseeable changes in educational policies. This study has demonstrated that the parents interviewed were willing to support their children's English learning and utilize available financial and linguistic resources to foster their children's English language development from an early age. However, these parents will need more support from schools and teachers. To create a high-quality English learning environment for children, schools and parents should establish a reciprocal relationship. With this kind of relationship, schools can inform parents about effective ways to support English learning at home, keep parents updated on their children's learning progress, and provide parents with additional support; while at the same time, schools can learn more about parents' views and beliefs, experiences, and their knowledge. In this way, schools and parents can become partners in supporting children's English learning and a more equal learning environment can then be provided to all students.

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Appendix A
Family Sociocultural Background

Parent (M: Mother F: Father)	School	Educational background of the mother	Educational background of the father	Occupation of the mother	Occupation of the father
Mei (M)	Yong-Fong	Middle school	Middle school	N/A	Factory worker
Young (M)	Yong-Fong	College	High school	Secretary	Sales
Kai (F)	Yong-Fong	High school	Technical college	Bank teller	Teacher
Wen (M)	Yong-Fong	High school	High school	Vender	Vender
Lin (M)	Yong-Fong	Middle school	High school	Office work	Construction worker
Ping (M)	Yong-Fong	High school	High school	Office work	Company owner
Hua (M)	Yong-Fong	Elementary School	High school	Factory worker	Furniture mover (not regularly employed)
Ching (M)	Xi-Xin	High school	College	Office work	Office work
Yeh (M)	Xi-Xin	Middle school	High school	N/A	Police officer
Fang (M)	Xi-Xin	High school	High school	Cleaning woman	Sales
Ting (M)	Xi-Xin	Technical College	College	Teacher	Government official
Hueh (M)	Xi-Xin	Elementary School	Elementary School	Hairdresser	Breakfast vender
Ya (M)	Xi-Xin	College	Technical College	Government official	Bank teller
Wai (M)	Xi-Xin	Technical College	College	Office work	Sales
Yu (M)	Wen-Chin	Master's degree	College	N/A	Business owner
Chong (M)	Wen-Chin	College	College	Lawyer	Computer engineer
Ang (F)	Wen-Chin	College	Master's degree	Government official	Business manager
Liang (F)	Wen-Chin	College	College	Office work	Bank teller
Hong (M)	Wen-Chin	Master's degree	Master's degree	Office manager	Computer engineer

Appendix B
Family Linguistic Background

Parent	Languages that the parent speaks (Dominant, others)	Languages that the child speaks (excluding English)	Languages that parents speak to the child	Other languages spoken at home	Notes: Parents' English proficiency based on self-report
Ang	Mandarin, English, Japanese	Mandarin	Mandarin		High
Chung	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin		Low
Chong	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Mandarin		Low
Fang	Mandarin, Hakkanese	Mandarin	Mandarin	Taiwanese (Father)	Low
Hong	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin	Hakkanese (grandparents)	Low
Hua	Taiwanese, Mandarin	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Taiwanese		Low
Hueh	Mandarin, aboriginal language	Mandarin	Mandarin	Japanese (grandfather)	Low
Kai	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Mandarin, Taiwanese		Low
Liang	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Mandarin	Mandarin		Low
Lin	Taiwanese, Mandarin	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Taiwanese		Low
Mei	Taiwanese, Mandarin	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Mandarin, Taiwanese		Low
Ping	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Mandarin	Mandarin		Low
Ting	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin	Taiwanese (grandparents)	Low
Wei	Mandarin, Taiwanese, English	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Mandarin		High
Wen	Taiwanese, Mandarin, English	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Mandarin, Taiwanese	Hakkanese (grandparents)	Above average
Ya	Mandarin, English	Mandarin	Mandarin		High
Yeh	Mandarin, aboriginal language	Mandarin	Mandarin		Low
Young	Mandarin, Taiwanese, English	Mandarin	Mandarin		Above average
Yu	Mandarin, Taiwanese, English	Mandarin	Mandarin, English		High

Appendix C
Children's English Learning Background

Parent	Target child	English learning experiences prior to formal instruction	Types of formal instruction on English learning first received	Attending after-school programs	Types of after-school English programs	Time for after-school English programs
Ang	Yvonne	English songs and music	Private bilingual kindergarten	Yes (1 st -3 rd grade)	Group session	4hr/week
Chung	Willy	No	Private regular kindergarten	Yes (3 rd grade)	One-to-one tutoring	1hr/week
Chong	Nick	No	Private regular kindergarten	Yes (1 st -3 rd grade)	Chain school	6hr/week
Fang	David	No	Private regular kindergarten	Yes (3 rd grade)	Group session	2hr/week
Hong	John	English songs and music, Occasional vocabulary teaching	Private regular kindergarten	Yes (1 st -3 rd grade)	Chain school	4hr/week
Hua	Paul	No	Public elementary school (3 rd grade)	No	Group session	
Hueh	Stanley	No	Private regular kindergarten	No		
Kai	Michael	No	Public kindergarten	Yes (K-3 rd grade)	Small tutoring center	3hr/week
Liang	Lucy	No	Private regular kindergarten	Yes (3 rd grade)	Small tutoring center	4hr/week
Lin	Kevin	No	Public kindergarten	No	Group session	
Mai	Amy	No	Private bilingual kindergarten	Yes (1 st -3 rd grade)	Chain school	5hr/week
Ping	Cindy	English songs and music (listened with parents)	Private bilingual kindergarten	Yes (1 st -3 rd grade)	Chain school	5hr/week
Ting	Mindy	No	Private bilingual kindergarten	Yes (1 st -3 rd grade)	Group session	
Wa	Jeffery	No	Private regular kindergarten	No	First grade – attended chain school group session, since second grade one-to-one tutoring	Group (1 st grade – 3hr/week), one-to-one 4hr/week
Wen	Cole	Vocabulary (opportunistic learning)	Public kindergarten	No		
Ya	Vivian	Vocabulary phonics (formal teaching)	Private regular kindergarten	No		
Yeh	Ben	No	Private regular kindergarten	No		Attended only one-day English summer camp
Young	Joan	Phonics (through book reading)	Private regular kindergarten	No		Attended summer camps in the US annually
Yu	Tom	Book reading by mom	Private bilingual kindergarten	No		

Appendix D
Interview Guide
(Revised – translated into Chinese as well)

Parent's views, beliefs, and attitudes towards English learning
(Mainly for research questions not reported in this article)

1. How do you feel about your child's school learning so far?
2. How do you feel about your child's English learning?
3. What do you think of learning English in Taiwan?
4. Why do you want (child's name) to know English?
5. When do you think that children should start English learning?
(Why?)
6. What are your expectations for (child's name)'s English language learning?
7. What are some of the important things that can be helpful when learning English?
8. If you were to hire a tutor, what would you want the tutor to work on?
9. How do you see current educational policies regarding English learning in Taiwan?
10. Is there anything else regarding your views on English learning in Taiwan that you want to tell me about?

Parental involvement in English learning
(Mainly for research questions reported in this article)

1. How would you describe your involvement in (child's name)'s academic learning?
2. How would you describe your role in children's English learning?
3. How would you describe your participation/involvement in (child's name)'s English learning?
4. What are your experiences of communicating or working with teachers regarding (child's name)'s English learning? (Can you walk me through some of the experiences?)

5. What kinds of English materials are there available at your home?
6. What do you usually do with those materials? (Can you walk me through some of the things you did?)
7. What kinds of English-related activities/practices does (child's name) usually do at home? (Can you walk me through some of the things you did?)
8. What kinds of English-related activities/practices do you usually do with (child's name)? (Can you walk me through some of the things you did?)
9. What are the challenges that you face in supporting (child's name)'s English learning?
10. Is there anything else you do at home to support (child's name)'s English learning that you want to tell me about?

Appendix E
Strategies Used at Home (Reported by Parents)

	Ang	Chang	Chong	Fang	Hong	Hua	Hueh	Kai	Liang	Lin	Mei	Ping	Ting	Wei	Wen	Ya	Yeh	Yung	Yu
Child's English language proficiency*	L	H	A	L	H	L	L	H	A	L	H	H	H	A	A	H	A	H	H
Assisting with homework (including both school and after-school programs)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Having multi-media materials (e.g. DVD, songs, audio books etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Having English resources and written materials (e.g. bilingual books, flashcards, workbooks etc.)		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reading English or Chinese-English bilingual books					✓			✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Doing parent-developed instruction or activities			✓		✓			✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enrolling children in English certification exams								✓			✓	✓						✓	
Visiting bookstores or libraries					✓			✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Traveling	✓																	✓	✓
Seeking outside resources (Relatives, neighbor, other institutes such as church etc.)										✓							✓		

Note. * H: High performing, A: Average, L: Low performing

台灣家長在兒童英語語言學習上所扮演的角色及 所參與孩童英語學習之家庭活動

摘要

許多以英語家庭或是英語系國家的雙語家庭為研究對象的文獻都顯示，家長參與對孩童們語言整體學習跟發展，有很深遠的影響。但是，研究家長參與的文獻中，卻鮮少有以針對在以英文為外語 (EFL) 的環境裡學習英文的孩童及家庭來做深入的探討。本文將針對一項以台灣家長在孩童學習英語過程中的參與為主題的質化研究做部分結果探討，探討內容將著重在家長所認知其在孩童學習英語過程中所扮演的角色，以及台灣家長在孩童學習英語上的參與及所運用的資源與策略。本研究對象為十九位小學三年級的家長，他們的孩子分別就讀於台灣三個城市中的三個公立小學，研究資料的收集包括了深度家長訪談、使用的英語學習相關的資料及課室觀察。研究結果顯示，參與本研究的家長們對他們在孩童英語學習上所扮演的角色有不同的認知，而這些不同的認知與每位家長所面臨的環境及個人條件有關，例如經濟狀況與語言能力。不過，儘管家長們面臨的狀況不同，本研究發現參與研究的家長，都有鼓勵及讓孩子做許多不同與英語學習有關的活動。本文也將探討英語能力較高孩童的家長們在孩子學習英語過程中的參與之共同點。

關鍵詞：家長參與 早期第二語言/外語語言及讀寫學習
家庭語言讀寫活動