

**Mothers' Ideas about Home-Based English Teaching and
Learning for Children Prior to School Age: A Study in Tainan,
Taiwan**

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Abstract

In contemporary Taiwan, issues surrounding the teaching of English as a foreign language to young children are widely debated. The Taiwanese Ministry of Education has encouraged parents and preschool aged children to study English together at home in a playful, informal manner (Taiwan MOE, 2004b), instead of using English “cram” schools and English-only kindergartens. Anecdotal evidence suggests that home teaching of English may be common. There has, however, been a lack of empirical data about Taiwanese mothers’ beliefs and practices concerning their child’s English language learning.

This study investigated Taiwanese mothers’ ideas about young children learning English as a foreign language (EFL), and their self-reported practices in teaching English to their child in the home. The study took place in Tainan, Taiwan. A mixed methods design, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, was employed to gather and analyse data from Taiwanese mothers of children aged from 3 – 6 years. The data included questionnaire responses from 647 mothers and interviews with 6 mothers.

Results of the study showed that Taiwanese mothers expressed a generally positive view about the importance of early English language learning in the global and Taiwanese contexts. Many stated that early childhood is an important time for EFL learning (“the earlier the better”), and engaged in home teaching of English. They were also seeking more information about how they could support their children’s English acquisition. Mothers’ views and self-reported practices were associated with their demographic characteristics, such as their educational attainment. The findings have implications for policy makers, early childhood educators, parents and the general public.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the research in this thesis entitled “Mothers’ Ideas about Home-Based English Teaching and Learning for Children Prior to School Age: A Study in Tainan, Taiwan” is my original work and it has not been previously submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. All the help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information resources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, reference number HE24OCT2008-D06170 (October 2008).

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Yi-Chen (Dora) Lan (Student No. 41355873)

April 2013

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation investigates Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about young children's English as a foreign language development, and the relationship between mothers' beliefs and the English as a foreign language (EFL) learning environment they report creating for their young children at home. In this study, mothers' beliefs about young children's English language learning were investigated through a questionnaire and interviews. In the following section, I will explain why this study is important and significant in the Taiwanese early childhood context. I begin by describing the linguistic context currently pertaining in Taiwan. I then set out the early childhood system and finally discuss the aims of this thesis.

Language Policy in Taiwan

In recent decades, the English language has become a lingua franca of international trade and communication. Therefore, educational practices and policies involved in teaching English to speakers of other languages have become a major topic of language research worldwide (Nunan, 2003). In Taiwan, as in many other countries throughout Asia, there is an increased focus on learning English as a foreign language (Butler, 2004; Tseng, 2008; Tu, 2006).

English language education is emphasized by the Taiwanese Government in several ways. In 2002, the Challenge 2008 National Development Plan, a six-year-long program, was launched by the Taiwanese Government (Council for Economic Planning and Development (CEPD), 2002). In this plan, the first sub-project was designed to "cultivate talent for the e-generation" (CEPD, 2002). It emphasized the importance of the ability to master foreign languages, especially English, and to use the internet effectively. Since English is seen as the language that links the world, the Taiwanese government has designated English as a quasi-official language and it seeks to actively expand the use of English as a part of daily life (Government Information Office, 2002). The stated goal of the Taiwanese Government, to "cultivate an international living environment to enhance English proficiency" (Taiwan Ministry of Education (MOE), 2006a, section 1:1), is to be achieved by promoting the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT). This test will potentially enhance the quality of English

educators in Taiwan, promote international trends in universities and colleges, attract foreign students, and encourage study abroad (Taiwan MOE, 2006a).

The Taiwanese Ministry of Education has made many efforts to achieve its goal of good English proficiency for all students. Since 2000, English has been a compulsory subject for all elementary school students. In 2001, compulsory English studies commenced in Years 5 and 6 (children aged 11 and 12). The starting age for the introduction of English language study has gradually decreased since then. In 2005, students throughout the nation commenced compulsory English classes in Year 3 (children aged 9). Since 2006, students in metropolitan areas, Taipei City and Taipei County, Hsin-Chu City, Taichung City and Tainan City, started studying English in Years 1 or 2 (children aged 6 or 7), at the insistence of the local governments (W. Chang, 2007).

Early Childhood Education in Taiwan

In Taiwan, early childhood education services (kindergartens and day care centres) are not included in compulsory education. Parents can decide whether or not to send their children to early childhood educational settings. The “Expand Five-year-old Underprivileged Children Head-Start Program” was launched in August 2007 (Taiwan MOE, 2007). This program is aimed at providing adequate preschool education opportunities for five-year-old children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Children from low income families are eligible to enroll in public kindergartens for free or to receive subsidies for private kindergartens to get a high quality preschool education.

Currently there are two dominant systems of early childhood education and care programs: kindergartens and day care centres (nursery schools). Both kindergartens and day care centres can be either public or private. Kindergartens are available for children aged 4 to 6 (although from 2012 this may cover 2 to 6 year olds). Most of the public kindergartens are attached to an elementary school. Private day-care centres (nursery schools) serve children aged from 1 month to 6 years of age while public ones are for children aged 2 to 3 years. Private kindergartens and day care centres can be established by individuals or groups. Both public and private kindergartens and day care centres are under the supervision of the local education authorities (also see Hsieh, 2004; Hsu, 2008). However, within the local education authorities, kindergartens and day care centres are regulated by different administrators in terms of systems and functions. Both emphasize education and care in their teaching practices and learning environments (Hsieh, 2004). In this thesis, I use the term “preschool” to include

both public and private types of early childhood education and care (kindergarten and day care centres) for children prior to the commencement of formal compulsory school education.

The Standards for Kindergarten Curriculum document, revised by the Taiwan MOE in 1987 (Taiwan MOE, 1987), provides a broad outline of the kindergarten curriculum. The main aims of the curriculum are to support children's physical and emotional development, to enable them to acquire good living habits, to enrich their life experiences, to instill ethical and moral concepts and to develop gregarious social behaviours (Taiwan MOE, 1987; Laws & Regulations Database of the Republic of China, 2012). These aims can be fulfilled through six subject areas: health, play, music, fine and gross motor skills, language and general knowledge (social studies, mathematics and sciences) education. Though language education is a fundamental subject in the early childhood education curriculum, there is no clear regulation as to how languages should be taught. It is therefore regarded as having "no mandated or centralized curriculum standards" (McMullen, et al., 2005, p. 453). Due to this lack of a standardized curriculum for language instruction, there are many different early childhood approaches flourishing in Taiwanese preschools which have implications for preschool language education, such as the Project approach, Constructive approach, bilingual or whole English language approach, Montessori instruction, Froebel models, Waldorf education, and so on (Hsieh, 2004).

EFL in early childhood education in Taiwan.

Explicit teaching of English language in prior to school services is prohibited according to the Brochure of Early Childhood English Education Policy (Taiwan MOE, 2004b), which is based on the spirit of the Article 5 of "Children and Youth Welfare Act of 2003". There are "three principles" underpinning this prohibition. Please note that these principles have been translated from Chinese into English by the researcher, as the act is not available in English.

Principle 1: The order of language learning is to be native language first, Mandarin second, and then English.

Principle 2: The goal of learning English during early childhood years is to promote cultural learning and understanding of the international world, rather than to achieve fluency in English.

Principle 3: Foreign English speaking teachers should not be employed to teach English as a foreign language. Foreign English teachers are not officially licensed and do not

have formal early childhood training.

This brochure then provides three recommendations regarding the learning of English as a foreign language. The following is an English translation of these recommendations.

(1.) It is not too late to start learning English in the third grade of elementary school.

The MOE encourages parents to dismiss commercial slogans such as “Don’t let your child remain behind the starting line”, and “the earlier the better” (to learn English language).

(2.) Choose a high quality but not an all-English or English-Chinese bilingual early childhood education kindergarten or day care centre for your children.

(3.) It is more effective for parents and children to study English together. English language games, songs, and parent-child shared reading of picture books are recommended to cultivate children’s interest in English learning.

However, the Standards for Kindergarten Curriculum document provides only an outline of the curriculum; each kindergarten or day care centre is free to design its own pedagogical practices to meet its goals and social needs (Lin & Tsai, 1996). It is an “open secret” that most of the private kindergartens or day care centres provide English lessons for at least 2 hours a week (Lee, 2007; Wu, 2004). Given the fact that many parents have high expectations for their children (Chang, 2004; Shang, Ingebritson, & Tseng, 2007), and that the fees for the private programs are at least three times higher than public ones (Lee, 2003), there is pressure on private kindergartens and day care centres to provide an attractive English language program in the curriculum to enhance children’s English language development. Lin (2003) indicated that 97% of private kindergartens in Taiwan provide instruction in English as a foreign language. Tsai (2001) indicated that the main reason that kindergartens adopt English into the curriculum is at the request of parents (89%).

There has been continued debate in Taiwan about the best time to introduce English as a foreign language to Taiwanese children. There has been a widespread public belief that “the earlier the better” is true, regarding introducing young children to English. This perception appears to be based on the so-called “critical period hypothesis” which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Yet many researchers have argued that there is not necessarily a “critical period” in which exposure to a new language is most likely to be effective. Some scholars have claimed that when the first language is learnt thoroughly, prior to the introduction of second language learning, the second language is learnt more efficiently (Gabriele Troseth,

Martohardjono, & Otheguy, 2009; Lao, 2007; Shiu, 2005). Snow (1987, cited in Cheung, 2006) and Snow and Hoefnagel (1978) have argued that a critical period for language learning does not exist. Moreover, Cheung (2006), Wu (2004), and Wu and Chang (2005) claimed that there is no significant relationship between the early introduction of English as a foreign language and strong English academic performance in later years (also Department of Elementary Education of Taiwan MOE, 2005a).

In other words, the Taiwanese MOE has made it very clear to the general public their attitude towards early teaching of English as a foreign language in early childhood. Yet there is widespread public debate on the matter, with many people disagreeing with the government's position.

Significance of This Study

Allen and Hawkins (1999) describe mothers as “culturally identified as the center of nurture and care in family life” (p. 204). In the Taiwanese context, mothers typically play a major role in parenting. For this reason, I have focused on mothers' beliefs in this thesis. Mothers' beliefs influence the manner in which they interact with their children and thus play a powerful role in their children's development (Bingham, 2007; Brody, Flor, & Gibson, 1999; De Houwer, 1999; Sonnenschein, et al., 1997). Also mothers' and fathers' beliefs about their role, such as viewing their responsibilities for children's schooling, contribute to their motivation to enact their involvement (Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2005).

Research about Taiwanese parents' beliefs and practices in relation to early childhood English language learning is very much needed since the government recommends that parents and children learn English at home to cultivate children's interest in English learning. In order to bring about educational reforms successfully, it is important to understand what parents believe and how their beliefs influence their behavior (Sigel & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2002). Numerous studies have reported barriers and conflicts in implementing the Taiwanese government's policies (Su, 2006). Oladejo (2006) has suggested that the implementation of educational planning or reforms should be guided by an investigation of parents' opinions and their expectations of language education. How to lead the implementation of parents' involvement in their children's education is a recent concern for policy-makers and educators (Hung, 2007; Taiwan MOE, 2006c). Effective strategies for handling this issue depend on a deep understanding of parents' opinions and expectations. Unfortunately, there seems to be

lack of empirical data to inform policy makers and teachers of young children about mothers' beliefs about early English as foreign language learning in the home setting. There is therefore need for educational research to provide evidence to help bridge the gap between the government mandate and parents' ideas and expectations. Some critical issues are emerging to challenge policy makers. For example, there are conflicting expectations of policy-makers about the early English as a foreign language (EFL) implementation. Many parents are keen for their children to start early to gain English proficiency, to pass examinations and get the necessary qualifications for the job market in the future (Chou, 2009). These issues raise questions concerning how to formulate educational change in line with the goals of the government policy and be consistent with parents' beliefs and expectations in the global environment. Mothers' beliefs and values about education are some key areas for policy research. It is hoped that this study will contribute new knowledge and inform policy objectives for educational development.

Most research about the development of English as a second or foreign language in Asian contexts has focused on children aged six years and above (Chung & Huang, 2010; H. C. Hsu, 2004; Lee, 2008; Nieh, 2004; Raschka, Sercombe, & Huang, 2009; Sheu, 2006; Tsou, Wang & Tzeng, 2006; Tseng, 2007; Yu, 2006). Among the limited number of studies on early EFL learning, the majority has focused on factors such early childhood English education at school (Chang, Chang, & Yan, 2001; Din, 2005; Hsieh, 2006; Lee, et al., 2006; Shang, et al., 2007) and English integrated in the preschool curriculum (Chen, 2008; Wu & Hsu, 2008). Recently, parents' beliefs, attitudes and even their activities have also been studied, such as parents' beliefs about their six-grader children's EFL learning (Hung, 2010), parents' attitudes towards their children's learning of English (Chang, et al., 2001), parents' attitudes towards the English education policy (Chang, 2008; Oladejo, 2006), parent-child English co-learning activities (Chao, 2004; Liu, 2010) and the widespread support of Taiwanese parents for the idea that preschools and kindergartens should offer some English language instruction (Chang, 2006; Oladejo, 2006; Shang, et al., 2007).

Few studies have explored Taiwanese parents' attitudes towards early English language learning and the provision of English literacy experiences in the home context. Even fewer studies have investigated Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about family literacy practices, such as parent-child joint book reading at home. Wu and Honig (2010) provide one of the few studies to examine Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about reading aloud to young children. In their

study, they found that Taiwanese mothers reading belief inventory scores and parent and child literacy-related behaviours were significantly correlated. While the practice of parents and children studying English together at home has been encouraged by the authorities, little is known about mothers' beliefs about their young children's English language and literacy learning and mothers' teaching practices in the home environment. Although Hung (2008) investigated mothers' experiences helping their preschool-aged children to learn English at home, the children in her study attended immersion English/ bilingual kindergartens. This meant that English instruction provided by mothers was based on and supported by practices which occurred in formal school contexts, rather than informally at home. In reality, not all families can afford the expensive fees required for their children to attend immersion English or bilingual programs in Taiwan, neither do they necessarily wish their children to attend such programs.

This study therefore examines the mothers' beliefs, and how they report that they enact their beliefs through their reported teaching behaviours and through the English learning environment they provide for their young children. The findings can potentially raise important issues to inform public debate and have significant implications for policy and educational practices regarding English teaching during the early childhood years in Taiwan and other parts of the world.

Research Questions

The aims of the study reported in this thesis are to investigate Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about early English language and literacy learning at home for children prior to school. The following questions guided this investigation:

1. What proportion of Taiwanese mothers were engaged in teaching their children English at home prior to school commencement?
2. What demographic and attitudinal features were associated with mothers' decision to teach or not to teach their child English at home?
3. What were Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about how young children learn English as a foreign language at home?
4. What teaching practices and resources did Taiwanese mothers' utilize to teach English to their children, and were these practices related to maternal education?
5. What motivated Taiwanese mothers to teach their child English?
6. How did Taiwanese mothers interpret and enact their roles in relation to their

young children's EFL at home and what factors impact upon them?

Thesis Outline

This thesis includes one chapter of preliminary analysis and four journal articles (three published, and one accepted for publication, as indicated in Table 1) that are linked coherently. Each article addresses at least one of the above research questions. The publication details of each article, where they are located in the thesis, the research questions they address, and the research method(s) used, are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. *Outline of Journal Articles, their Location in the Thesis, the Research Questions they Address, and Research Methods Used*

Article	Location in thesis	Research Question(s)	Research Method
Lan, Y.-C., Degotardi, S., & Torr, J. (2011). Factors related to the home teaching of English language to preschool aged children: A Taiwanese study. <i>Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education</i> , 5(2), 27-48.	Chapter 5	1 & 2	Survey (quantitative)
Lan, Y.-C., Torr, J., & Degotardi, S. (2011). Learning English as a foreign language at home: The practices of Taiwanese mothers and their preschoolers. <i>Journal of Modern Education Review</i> , 1(1), 10-21.	Chapter 6	4	Survey (quantitative)
Lan, Y.-C., Torr, J., & Degotardi, S. (2012). Taiwanese mothers' motivations for teaching English to their young children at home. Submitted to <i>Child Studies in Diverse Contexts</i> , 2(2), 133-144. doi: http://dx.doi.org/105723/csdc.2012.2.2.133	Chapter 7	3& 5	Survey (qualitative--thematic analysis)
Lan, Y.-C., Torr, J., & Degotardi, S. (in press). Taiwanese mothers as their child's first English teachers: Issues and challenges. Submitted to <i>Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education</i> .	Chapter 8	5& 6	Interviews (qualitative--thematic analysis)

In this chapter, a general description of the Taiwanese language context, language policy and the early childhood English education are described. The chapter gives a brief introduction, including the background, the purpose and the significance of this study.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of relevant literature. Research in four main areas was reviewed: traditional Chinese culture, current social and political context in Taiwan, leading to an emphasis on proficiency in English, current issues regarding English as a foreign language learning for children prior to school and the relationship between maternal beliefs and practices.

In Chapter 3, the benefits of a mixed method approach, the research design for this thesis, the method of analysis and possible limitations are discussed.

In Chapter 4, the initial statistical results are provided in tabular forms with a brief narrative. Ten questions relating to Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about the age at which children should start English language learning and the optimal ways for young children to learn English as a foreign language are investigated. The relationship between mothers' views and their educational achievement are determined.

More detailed analyses of the data are presented in chapters 5 – 8 (which comprise the four published articles). Chapter 5 (pp. 55-77) addresses research questions number 1 and 2 (1. What proportion of Taiwanese mothers were engaged in teaching their children English at home prior to school commencement? 2. What demographic and attitudinal features were associated with mothers' decision to teach or not to teach their child English at home?) This article has been published in the *Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*.

In Chapter 6 (pp. 79-91), research question number 4 (4. What teaching practices and resources did Taiwanese mothers' utilize to teach English to their children, and were these practices related to maternal education?) is discussed and an article has been published in the *Journal of Modern Education Review*.

In Chapter 7 (pp. 93-112), research question number 3 (3. What were Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about how young children learn English as a foreign language at home?) and research question number 5 (5. What motivated Taiwanese mothers to teach their child English?) are discussed and an article has been published in the journal *Child Studies in Diverse Contexts*.

In Chapter 8 (pp.113-136), research questions number 5 and 6 (5. What motivated Taiwanese mothers to teach their child English? 6. How did Taiwanese mothers interpret and enact their roles in relation to their young children's EFL at home and what factors impacted upon them?) are explored. This chapter has been reviewed, and accepted and will be published in the Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education.

In the Conclusion, Chapter 9, I draw together the key findings and results from my investigation, the contribution to the literature, the limitations of this study and the implications for educational authorities to refine their understanding of mothers' current beliefs and their practices regard early EFL at the home context.

References

Although each published article has its own reference list as requested by journals, a complete list of references is provided at the end of the thesis. It is anticipated that this will prove convenient to readers of the thesis.

Thesis by Publication Format

This thesis has been presented according to the requirements of a thesis by publication, which is the preferred model for a Macquarie University doctoral thesis (Reid, Thoeming, Hooper, Tan, & Lo, 2010). According to the Macquarie University Higher Degree Research Guide, "Theses may include relevant papers (including conference presentations) published, accepted, submitted or prepared for publication during the period of candidature...These papers should form a coherent and integrated body of work, which should be focused on a single project or set of related questions or propositions. These papers may be single authored or co-authored...It is not necessary to reformat published works in a thesis" (p.20).

Co-authors' Contribution to the Publications

The four publications in this thesis were co-authored with the researcher's two supervisors (Associate Professor Jane Torr and Dr. Sheila Degotardi). While I was in consultation with my supervisors across all aspects of the research design, I was primarily responsible for developing and carrying out the questionnaire, the interviews, data collection, transcription and translation of interviews, data analysis, and writing a preliminary draft of each publication in the format of a journal article. The co-authors (supervisors) contributed to the initial conceptualization and design of the study. They also provided input on how to analyse the data and present the results and also assisted in data analysis. They provided valuable and critical feedback on draft manuscripts during regular meetings to ensure that

claims were substantiated. They also gave final approval for each article to be submitted and pointed out directions for further analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is a general review of the relevant literature. The published articles (chapters 5 – 8) contain further background and literature review sections that are more specific to the content of each article.

Studies have established that cultural values and beliefs have powerful effects on parenting (Wong, 2008). This is especially the case when different cultural influences impact on traditional values, for example the increasing influence of English language and popular culture on Chinese society. Consequently, in order to develop our understanding of Taiwanese mothers' beliefs and practices surrounding their children's English language education, it is crucial to review the values embodied in traditional Chinese culture as well as recent trends influencing contemporary Taiwanese parents. In this chapter, I begin by discussing how traditional Chinese values have intersected with social and political changes over the last decades, and the implications for English language education in contemporary Taiwan. I then focus specifically on parents' beliefs about their children's development of English as a foreign language, and outline some of the major issues surrounding English education for young Taiwanese children. I then explain the theoretical framework underpinning this study; that is, the relationship between maternal beliefs, practices and children's development.

Chinese Cultural Traditions

An orientation towards formal examinations as a way of assessing and evaluating students has a long history in China. The examination system can be traced back as far as the Sui (隋) Dynasty, around AD 605 (Lin & Tsai, 1996; Wong, 2008). By successfully passing different kinds of examinations, a young Chinese student will be able to have access to further education, and to powerful career positions such as an official in a government department, thus bringing fame to himself and the whole family (Wong, 2008). Examinations still exert a powerful influence in contemporary Taiwan. The entrance examination system in modern Taiwan affects every student; only those who pass such examinations will be admitted to university or graduate school. Therefore, it is not surprising that Chinese people highly value

excellent language and literacy skills as a channel for educational achievement (Ho, Peng, & Chan, 2001; Wong, 2008).

According to Confucius, education is important not only for personal development but also for the improvement of society as a whole. Through education, human nature will improve. The most learned members of society will become officials (Lee, 1996). Influenced by Confucianism, the aim of education has always been to cultivate the elite. Therefore, Chinese parents place a high value on their children's efforts and academic achievement (Chi & Rao, 2003; Hsieh, 2004; Hsu, 2008). According to traditional Chinese culture, children are malleable and effort is the way to success. According to this philosophy, if children are to learn effectively, they are in need of direct teaching, explicit instruction, and rote learning (Johnston & Wong, 2002). Biggs (2009) indicated that numerous studies have found that "people in Confucian heritage cultures attribute success to effort, and failure to lack of effort" (p.53). This attribution of success to an individual's *effort* is distinguished from the Western perspective which attributes success to an individual's *ability*, rather than amount of effort. Likewise, according to recent Western approaches, rote learning is argued to impede children's learning and kill their curiosity (Biggs, 2009).

Deeply influenced by traditional thinking, many Chinese parents regard themselves as playing a specific role in their children's education. Huang (2002, cited in Hsieh, 2004) indicates that the attributes and philosophies of traditional Chinese early childhood education can be found in Li-Chi and Yi-Chin, two of the great Chinese ancient books. In ancient times, young children were primarily educated at home, and their parents (typically fathers) were their teachers. Parents willingly made personal sacrifices to support their children's education (Ji, & Koblinsky, 2009), including saving money to spend on education (Ho, Chen, Tran & Ko, 2010), and spending time supervising their child's homework (Luk-Fong, 2005).

However, traditional Chinese cultural values appear to be undergoing rapid social and political changes. Chi and Rao (2003) have suggested that contextual factors, such as economic opportunities and global trends, might be more important than traditional cultural values in influencing parental beliefs and practices surrounding their child's learning. For example, influenced by Confucianism, the cultivation of moral values has been a primary goal and function of formal education. However, the parents in Chi and Rao's (2003) study did not regard moral cultivation as a primary goal. Instead, parents tended to emphasize the economic benefits of educational attainment. Thus, parents main educational goal for their

children is more likely to be focused on economic benefits rather than moral cultivation. This finding is consistent with the parents in Kong's (2010) study in that parents were also well aware of the importance of education in securing employment in the modern economy.

Recent Changes in the Taiwanese Political and Social Context

Taiwan has experienced enormous political and economic changes in recent years. After the Koumingtang (KMT) government lost its political power to the Communist Party in China and moved its base to Taiwan in 1949, Taiwanese people lived under the martial law, which ended in 1987. After that, the multi-party political state replaced the one-party government, and in 1996 the Taiwanese people elected their first national president (although direct elections for some local government heads and legislators were introduced in 1950). Democracy was taking root in Taiwan (Government Information Office, 2010a). Due to the industrialization and urbanization, the economic structure has also changed immensely in recent years; for example, per capita income has doubled, and employment opportunities have increased for women. Being the world's 18th-largest trading nation, 26th-largest economy and the 4th largest holder of foreign exchange reserves in 2008, Taiwan is one of the world's most active economies and plays an essential role in a number of high-tech fields (Government Information Office, 2009a).

In response to the impact of globalization and advances in information technology, the mastery of foreign languages (especially English) and computer knowledge are emphasized as two of the major characteristics of a highly educated society (Ng, 2009; Taiwan MOE, 2006b). Actually, this emphasis on proficiency in English and computing has not only taken place in Taiwan but also across the Asia Pacific region, as governments respond to the pressures of globalization (Rizvi, Engel, Nandyala, Rutkowski, & Sparks, 2005).

In 1998, the national science and technology programs were launched to accelerate Taiwan's socioeconomic development and enhance its competitiveness. Recently, government policies of increasing scientific and technological resources and personnel training resulted in outstanding outcomes in terms of innovation and technological readiness, with Taiwan ranked 7th and 15th respectively by the World Economic Forum (Government Information Office, 2009b). As a result, the government has increased computer classes and Internet availability in schools in the century of information. "A technology-oriented education will popularize technologic knowledge, promote a scientific spirit and attitude, and cultivate essential abilities needed in the coming age of information" (Government Information Office, 2002, p. 1). The

integration of technology into the school curriculum in Taiwan enhanced collaboration between students and teachers, and increased the students' willingness to learn (Kozma, 2003).

From 1998 to 2003, the government released the Education Reform Action Plan, which comprised 12 key policies, in response to the challenges of the 21st century. Parents' associations, communities, teachers' associations and administrative systems were hoped to work together as partners in the education system. At the same time, the government also recognized that it needed to help parents to understand their role in education and what values were needed in this new era (Taiwan MOE, 2004a).

The growth of the economy, the reduction in the birth rate, the progression of technology and the influences of Western culture have impacted on current cultural values and social needs. While traditional cultural values continue to have some influence on education, the current social changes have also brought about new perspectives on education. These changes have resulted in tensions for many Taiwanese parents, who have indicated that raising children nowadays is a more complicated challenge for them than it was for parents in the past (Reid, 1999, cited in Beckert et al., 2004).

Factors Influencing Policy about English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Early Childhood

Given the recent emphasis on English as a global language, combined with pressure on children to achieve success as measured by formal examinations, issues surrounding Chinese and English bilingualism in the early childhood curriculum have come to the forefront in Taiwan. Despite the term "bilingualism" having many definitions, a broad definition of this term describes an individual who has facility in more than one language to different degrees and has the ability to use these languages for a variety of purposes (Brisk, 1998). The literature on bilingualism notes that there are two kinds of bilingualism— *simultaneous* and *consecutive/successive* bilingualism (Macrory, 2006; McLaughlin, 1984). Simultaneous bilingualism is said to occur when a child is consistently exposed to, and interacts in, two languages relatively equally during the first three years of life. Frequently bilingually developing children hear one language from one adult and the other language from another adult or playmate, so that they can learn to speak both languages to some extent. Successive bilingualism is said to occur when one language is well established in a child's life, before exposure to a second language commences at a subsequent period after the age of three years (Macrory, 2006; McLaughlin, 1984).

The term “bilingualism” is commonly used broadly and ambiguously in the Taiwanese context (Din, 2005). In Taiwan, bilingual education (for example, instruction in both Chinese and English) is not necessarily motivated by the desire to maintain children’s facility in both their native (minority) language as well as the national language, such as occurs in the US and Canada, but rather it aims to facilitate the learning of an international language, mainly English. This is confirmed by research which demonstrates that the reason many parents send their children to bilingual programs is for them to possess a foreign language for career related benefits in the future (Shang, et al., 2007). In this study I have used the term English as a foreign language (EFL), rather than “bilingual” development, to refer to the situation typically occurring in Taiwan, where Chinese is the national language and English is taught as an additional language.

One of the most controversial topics concerns the optimal age to introduce young Taiwanese children to the study of English as a foreign language. On one hand, proponents of the position that English should be introduced “the earlier the better” justify their position by reference to the “critical period hypothesis”. On the other hand, opponents to the introduction of English as a foreign language prior to school argue that early introduction of English may interfere with children’s acquisition of Chinese and impose formal instructional methods which are inappropriate for very young children. According to Snow (cited in Wu, 2004), there are “the optimal conditions” (p. 24) instead of “the optimal age” (p. 24) for early ESL learning. These optimal conditions include the quality and quantity of mothers’ speech addressed to young children. Edelenbos, Johnstone, and Kubanek (2006) pointed out that starting early is not the key factor; instead, a supportive environment, good teaching, and continuity over time are necessary to make an early start effective.

I will now discuss each position in turn.

Arguments in support of the early introduction of EFL.

Linguistic theorists during the 1960s claimed that there is a critical period in children’s development during which language is acquired relatively quickly and with native speaker like proficiency (Asher & Garcia, 1969; Penfield, 1965; Lenneberg, 1967). After this period, language acquisition becomes more difficult for learners (Johnson & Newport, 1989), who are unlikely to ever achieve native proficiency. This “critical period hypothesis” has become popularized in Taiwan and is frequently cited as the rationale for introducing instruction in English as a foreign language to children prior to school. As recently as 2008, a Taiwanese

author of a bestselling book titled *pei yang hai zi di ying wen er duo* (*Helping children to develop an awareness of the English language sound system*) promoted the view that there is indeed a critical period for language acquisition (Wang, 2008). Support for this hypothesis is not confined to the general public. Chen's (2007) study found that all of the 30 participants, who were Taiwanese PhD students at Spalding University, Kentucky, believed that there is a critical period for second language learning and it is better to start young to achieve success.

The critical period hypothesis was based on studies of brain development. Penfield argued that before the age of nine years, the brain has a plasticity that it subsequently loses. Lenneberg (1967) stated that language acquisition can only be attained between the ages of two years and puberty, at about thirteen years of age. He reviewed Basser's (1962) study about the effects of unilateral brain damage in children, as evidence to support his argument. Similarly, Krashen (cited in McLaughlin, 1984, pp. 46-47) also analyzed Basser's data on unilateral brain damage in children and suggested that the completion of lateralization possibly occurs by the age of five or even earlier. Further support for the critical period hypothesis came from Johnson and Newport's (1989) study, in which forty six adult Chinese and Korean ESL participants and a control group of twenty three native speakers of English were given a grammatical judgement test. From the results, Johnson and Newport concluded that there is a critical period for both first and second language acquisition.

Supporters of the critical period hypothesis have not reached a consensus as to which age is best to introduce a second language, due to the lack of knowledge about lateralization completion time. For example, Scovel (1969) accepted that children are able to master the sound patterns of a second or foreign language much easier than adults, but claimed that theories of the discrepancy in language learning between children and adults have not proved consistent yet. On the other hand, Lenneberg (cited in McLaughlin, 1984) and Johnson and Newport (1989) did not deny that language learning was possible after puberty.

Some empirical research has focused specifically on the effects of early English instruction on later development. In a study which aimed to explore the impact of English learning experiences in early childhood on children's subsequent achievements in Mandarin at elementary school, Chao (2005) found that the 2nd grade students who had experienced English tuition in early childhood scored significantly higher than those students without any English learning experiences. Chao's participants were assessed using the Verbal Ability Development Test Battery and other tests of academic achievement in Mandarin at school. In

particular, the academic achievement in Mandarin of children who had had 2-3 years' English experience prior to school was significantly higher than those without any English experience.

According to Fitzgerald (1993), one of the major principles for the development of ESL early literacy learning is "that ESL learners should be immersed in reading and writing at the earliest possible time" (p. 644). Larson-Hall (2008) pointed out that starting studying a foreign language at a young age is beneficial due to the frequency of exposure to an instructed foreign language. According to her findings, earlier learners develop superior abilities in morphosyntactic and phonemic discrimination. Bialystok (2001) argued that the early introduction of a second language is advantageous for bilingual children's cognitive and intellectual development. This advantage comes from the experience of speaking two languages and the exposure to two different print systems, which helps to develop their decoding skills. In a task which compared monolingual (Mandarin) and bilingual (Mandarin and Taiwanese) children's ability to acquire novel phonotactic patterns, Kuo and Anderson (2012) have demonstrated that bilinguals have an advantage in verbal tasks and in forming an abstract representation of phonological patterning. Buckwalter and Lo (2002) reported on a case study which documented the development of a five-year-old boy from Taiwan for 15 weeks, focusing on his biliteracy in Chinese and English. The results suggest that, prior to formal instruction, children would not become confused by literacy development in two different family languages. This conclusion is supported by the research of Bialystok, Luk and Kwan (2005) and Kenner, Kress, Al-khatib, Kam, and Tsai (2004) who showed that the use of two different languages did not cause confusion.

Arguments against the introduction of EFL to children prior to school.

A range of arguments has been made against introducing formal English instruction for Taiwanese preschoolers. First, the notion that there is a critical period for learning a foreign language has recently been challenged (Chang, 2007; Cheung, 2002; Wu, 2004). Singleton (2001) criticized Penfield's analysis on the grounds that it was based on his own children's experiences of learning German and French, rather than on scientific evidence, and that Lenneberg's theory was based on folk wisdom instead of empirical evidence. Birdsong and Molis (2001) replicated Johnson and Newport's (1989) study with sixty one Spanish learners of English. They found that adult learners can fall within the range of native speaker performance on the grammatical judgement task. Hakuta, Bialystok and Wiley (2003) used a large sample obtained from the 1990 U.S. census data (2,016,317 speakers of Spanish and

324,444 speakers of Chinese), to analyze the self-described English ability of the participants. They found that there was no discrepancy between the proficiency of the native English speakers and the speakers who learnt English as a second language after the age of puberty. Their results did not support a critical period hypothesis.

Anecdotal reports have also been used to refute the critical period hypothesis. Wu and Chang's (2005) report, supported by the Taiwanese government, claimed that there is no obvious difference in the English abilities of those who started learning English before they commenced school and those who started learning English at the elementary school level (also Department of Elementary Education of Taiwan MOE, 2005b). For example, many of the highest achieving students in English at the National Taiwan Normal University's English department did not receive early childhood English education (Chang, 2002).

Other arguments have also been forwarded opposing the early introduction of English as a foreign language. First, there is the difficulty in finding appropriately qualified early childhood teachers who are also fluent in English (C. F. Chang, 2007; S. J. Chang, 2007; Y. L. Chang, 2003). Some teachers are simply native English speakers without any early childhood teaching qualifications. Others may be skilled teachers but their English fluency and pronunciation are deficient. It is therefore difficult to ensure the quality of early childhood English educators.

Secondly, it has been argued that the introduction of formal English instruction at too young an age may negatively impact upon children's emotional and physical development (Cheung, 2002) and social identification (Lu & Chen, 2005). Some parents and scholars have expressed concern that teaching children to read and write in two languages at one time may cause confusion (Baker & Sienkewicz, 2000). Some worry that learning a foreign language when young children's first language is still developing may cause delays and errors in both languages.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) versus "English Fever"

The notion that there is a critical period for language acquisition continues to motivate many Taiwanese parents to seek English tuition for their children prior to school. In response to the controversy on teaching English to preschoolers, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan has stated that there is no need for preschools or "cram" schools to teach English to children prior to school, and no need to commence English instruction at the kindergarten level. Instead, the Ministry of Education argues that there is a need to build children's content knowledge

and literacy through the medium of Chinese, their primary language (“MOE clarifies English learning policy for preschools,” 2004). The authorities emphasize the fact that the focus of the curriculum should be on emergent literacy development in Mandarin Chinese, which is the language of instruction from kindergarten to high school in Taiwan. It is claimed that this focus will support later academic achievements including in mathematics. This assertion is consistent with the findings of some research demonstrating that children’s language skills are related to mathematical word problem performance (Orosco, Swanson, O’Connor, & Lussier, 2011) and early numeracy skills (Purpura, Hume, Sims, & Lonigan, 2011). Moreover, Krashen (2003) suggested that starting later was preferable when children are learning a foreign language. Therefore, according to the Taiwanese education authorities, the best time for commencing English as a foreign language instruction is Year 3 at elementary school (with children aged 9 to 10 years). For the above reasons, the Taiwanese Government has prohibited English language instruction in all preschools and kindergartens, as noted in Chapter 1.

This move has caused a public backlash, with many in the population arguing that the government should not restrict the age of formal English learning (Oladejo, 2006; Shang, et al., 2007). There is widespread support from many Taiwanese parents for preschools and kindergartens to offer some English language instruction (Chang, 2006; Oladejo, 2006; Shang, et al., 2007). In a similar move, the use of the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT), mentioned above in the discussion on language policy, has had the effect of pushing down the starting age for English language learning (Oladejo, 2006). In Taiwan, English has become the most popular foreign language, and the whole country has been caught up in “English fever” (Krashen, 2003).

Taiwanese Parents’ Attitudes towards Their Children’s Education

The debate about when English instruction should commence needs to be understood in terms of Taiwanese parents’ attitudes towards education in general, and English education in particular. In general, Taiwanese parents expect their children to be eminent in their chosen field and to reach a higher social status than they themselves have achieved. They believe that academic achievement is the best way for children to accomplish this (Hsu, 2008). While this has always been the case, as noted above, parents have fewer children, more time and greater contact with Western culture, thus enabling them to pay much more attention to their children’s learning needs and interests than ever before. The current attitude towards education is expressed by the slogan of a commercial advertisement for cram schools, “Do not

lose at the starting line,” which indicates the intense pressure and competition driving parents to seek more formal academic instruction for their children at a younger age. For most Taiwanese parents, the idea of formally teaching children at the earliest age possible is seen as providing a good start for their children’s learning. This social phenomenon was also found in Biggs’ study (2009) where the Japanese children from Confucian heritage cultures were exposed to formal teaching before they arrived at school.

Taiwanese Parents’ Attitudes towards Early Introduction of EFL

Second language learning is influenced not only by internal factors such as age, but also by external factors such as parents’ beliefs, parents’ practices, and parents’ ideas about bilingual education. Studies have shown that many Taiwanese parents have a positive attitude towards the early introduction of English language learning for their children (Chang, 2006; Hsieh, 2006, Oladejo, 2006; Shang, et al., 2007; Tsai, 2001). In Tsai’s (2001) study, 86% of the parents indicated that they would like to see their children learn English prior to entry into primary school. Chang (2006) claimed that 95.3% of the parents in her study thought that bilingual education should be implemented during the preschool years, with more than half (55.4%) supporting Mandarin-English bilingual education. Parents in Hung’s (2008) study claimed that they wanted their children to learn English at an early age and they did not believe that learning English at an early age would have a negative impact on their children’s Chinese language development.

It appears that more and more parents have a growing perception that they need to enhance their children’s English proficiency to “survive in the competitive international society” (Chung & Huang, 2010, p.1). Some research has indicated that many parents send their children to immersion English or Chinese-English bilingual kindergartens, or to English *bushiban* (coaching schools) (Chung & Huang, 2010; Wang, 2002) or have mothers teach their children English language at home (Din, 2005; Chou, 2009). In other words, parents’ expectations are to develop their children’s interest in learning English and also to develop English skills, such as native-like pronunciation, alphabet recognition, vocabulary, and simple communication skills.

Research on Appropriate Pedagogies for Young Children's English as a Foreign Language Learning (EFLL)

De Houwer (2007) collected data from 1899 families and argued that “successfully raising children to speak two languages very much depends on the parental language input patterns” (p. 421). Many researchers (Clark, 2000; De Houwer, 2007; Macrory, 2001, 2006) believe that it is important for parents and caregivers of very young children to maintain both languages and support language development by providing a stimulating and rich linguistic environment. Such recommendations, however, rely on parents being bilingual themselves, which is not necessarily the case in societies such as Taiwan.

Some researchers urge that explicit language teaching supports bilingual children's language and literacy development, especially when children have limited English input in their environment (Ashmore, Farrier, Paulson, & Chu, 2003). In contrast to the model based on monolingual children, “more direct teaching about literacy rather than modeling of literacy activities may be needed to encourage children's literacy development in the second language” (Hammer, Miccio, & Wagstaff, 2003, p. 28). This method of explicit teaching for very young children is widely accepted in many Asian EFL contexts, as evidenced by the popularity of English “cram schools” for preschool-aged children (Hsieh, 2008; Park, 2007).

In Taiwan, not only after-school English cram schools but also English immersion programs and partial English immersion programs have become popular choices for young children from upper-middle class families to learn English in the preschool setting. The goals are to construct an environment in which young children will be motivated to use English in all contexts, as well as to gain English instruction from professional teachers. Chen (2006) argued that parents in her study were mostly from upper-middle-class families and sent their children to English immersion programs because the parents thought that they were incapable of teaching their children English. The parents believed that they themselves could provide a rich Chinese language learning environment at home for their children.

While there is a large body of research on the development of English as a second or foreign language in children aged 6 years and above (Chung & Huang, 2010; H. C. Hsu, 2004; Lee, 2008; Nieh, 2004; Raschka, Sercombe, & Huang, 2009; Sheu, 2006; Tseng, 2007; Yu, 2006), little is known about the EFL development of children under the age of six, despite the popular view that “the earlier the better.” Given the widely held view that English proficiency is vitally important in Taiwan, research is needed on how to create a supportive English

learning environment for young children whether their mothers or caregivers have limited English proficiency or not.

In monolingual English contexts, oral language, phonological processing abilities and print knowledge have been seen as the three primary early literacy skills acquired before the commencement of formal literacy instruction (Purpura et al., 2011). Research has shown that these skills are acquired through sustained shared interaction between attuned parents or caregivers and children (Zimmerman, et al., 2009). Shared reading and storytelling has also been shown to play a key role in supporting children's long term literacy achievement. Smither (2003) asserts that learning nursery rhymes on a parent or caregiver's lap has traditionally been regarded as an important first step towards literacy and numeracy skills and the key to phonological awareness. Digital technologies may also play a role in children's language and literacy development, according to some researchers (Burnett, 2010; Grimshaw, Dungworth, McKnight, & Morris, 2007; Moses, 2008, 2009). In Marsh and Thompson's (2001) study, the use of television was thought valuable to build literacy practices among 3- and 4-year-olds in UK. Children became familiar with the language of books as they watched and re-watched videos.

Family literacy practices such as shared reading, storytelling, and TV viewing, have been recommended not only for monolingual families but also for families who want their children to learn a foreign language. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in teaching strategies for EFL learners, such as listening to favorite nursery rhymes, stories and songs on electronic media (Linse, 2006; Wong, 2006; Wu, 2008) and watching English TV programs (Verdugo, & Belmonte, 2007; Xu, 1999). Listening to stories in their first and foreign language can enhance children's comprehension and make learning a new language more meaningful and enjoyable (Richards, & Anderson, 2003; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Wu, 2008; Zevenbergen, & Whitehurst, 2003). In Xu's study (1999) about young Chinese ESL children's home literacy experiences, parents regarded TV shows to be both educational and entertaining, as they were seen as an important means for achieving a "perfect" American English accent. Some parents were afraid that their own Chinese accent would affect their children's English accent. In addition, children between 5 to 6 years old found popular culture to be an important means of understanding and developing their use of English as an additional language. Evidence showed that bilingual children accesses a range of popular and media texts in more than one language (Kenner, 2005; Xu, 1999).

Zheng, Young, Brewer, and Wanger (2009) suggested that learning English in a 3D game-like virtual world also led to children overcoming some cultural barriers for learning English and increased learners' confidence and comfort. Kim, Gu, and Jeon's (2010) study investigated the use of "edutainment" multimedia in English teaching and learning and found that it not only raised learners' interests and confidence but also had a positive effect on long-term vocabulary retention. In their study, the experimental group which used "edutainment" had statistically significantly higher results in interest and confidence than did the control group who used painting cards, word cards, and game cards based on the content of a "learning book." New immigrant mothers in Taiwan reported that they facilitated their young children's Chinese reading through the use of computer games (Hsin, 2011). Research on edutainment is extensive and some researchers have studied edutainment in English education at school or in learning a dominant language. However, little is known on mothers' ideas about early English language learning using edutainment in the home contexts.

Parents' Beliefs, Ideas and Practices

The terms "belief" and "idea" are frequently used in the literature on parenting. These three words are closely related and have often been used to refer to many aspects of parent cognitions about their children and children's learning. Parents' beliefs, for example, have been defined as their ideas, knowledge, values, goals and attitudes in generating and shaping parental behaviors and practices (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006; Sigel & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2002). Similarly, Quattrone (1985) viewed the term of "ideas" as cognitive "internal states", which might 'involve an attitude, a belief, an attribution, or an inference about one's own physiological state' (cited in Goodnow, 1988, p. 288; see also Goodnow & Collins, 1990). This leads us to consider – do beliefs encompass ideas, or do ideas encompass beliefs?

In views of parents' behaviors, beliefs and ideas are often argued to underpin their actions. In the study correlating to parents' ideas with parents' actions, Miller (1988) indicated there existed a relationship between what parents believe about children and how they behave toward children. Researchers have operationalized parental beliefs along a number of dimensions, including parental beliefs about the effects on academic achievement and cognitive development, children's social development and discipline and child behavior management. In addition, parents' beliefs about their children's development constitute a major influence affecting the environment they create for their children (Sigel & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2002). The important distinction, according to Sigel (1985) is that

beliefs are ‘mental constructions of experience’ (p.351) that are “held to be true and that guide behavior” (p. 443). Meanwhile, the term “idea” is argued by Goodnow and Collins (1990) to have a better fit in studies of the way parents think about parenting and development. They agree that the term “beliefs” captures the sense that that these cognitions are taken as true, and argue that this excludes more transient states such as perspectives, expectations opinions and motivations. The term ‘ideas’ they argue, is more inclusive of the range of cognitions that parents hold about their children.

For the purposes of the present study, and following the suggestion by Danesco (1997) and Miller (1988), I use the terms beliefs and ideas interchangeably. In this way, I aim to avoid the philosophical maze associated with the theoretical conceptualization of these terms, while being inclusive of the range of cognitions that mothers may hold about their child’s EFL learning and teaching. Thus, beliefs and ideas concerning expectations about educational achievement and development of EFL skills will guide the discussion since maternal beliefs and/or ideas have the potential to explain the development of maternal practices and expectations for their children’s EFL learning.

Parents’ beliefs are argued to be manifested in their behavior, for example in the types of learning environments they provide for children in the home context, through their encouragement, expectations of, and involvement in their children’s learning (Hong & Ho, 2005; Hung, 2007; Phillipson, 2010). A large number of studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between parents’ role in their children’s education and their children’s academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hung, 2007; Hung & Marjoribanks, 2005; Phillipson, 2010). Parental expectations are regarded as playing an important role in improving children’s performance in school (Phillipson & Phillipson, 2007) and these expectations are communicated through their involvement with their children’s everyday lives (Phillipson, 2010). Furthermore, in a Taiwanese, Chinese or Asian context which is highly achievement-oriented, parental expectations tend to be regarded as the essential predictor of subject achievement, especially in English and mathematics. As a result, many early childhood education and care programs have taken on a heavy academic focus and include English in the curriculum to meet the parental expectations. Parents may expect teachers to emphasize their children’s academic performance in subjects such as English, Chinese and mathematics, rather than their overall development (Hsieh, 2004).

In terms of children's language and literacy development, empirical research has suggested that what parents believe about oral language and reading development is manifested in their practices and behaviors with their children, including the home literacy environment they provide (Bingham, 2007; DeBaryshe, 1995; Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, & Shapiro, 2006; Meagher, Arnold, Doctoroff, & Baker, 2008; Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993; Sonnenschein, et al., 1997; Sonnenschein & Munsterman, 2002; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006). Parents' beliefs have implications for children's reading (Baker & Scher, 2002; Cottone, 2012; Stephenson, Parrila, Georgiou, & Kirby, 2008), long term verbal skills and communication ability (Donahue, Pearl, & Herzog, 1997; Winsler, Feder, Way, & Manfra, 2006).

Studies in Asian contexts have indicated that Chinese parents' beliefs and practices have a deep impact on their children's learning (Philipson & Philipson, 2007). Min (2001), for example, has demonstrated that young children's language patterns were affected by their mothers' language patterns, the ways mothers interacted with their children, and mothers' attitudes towards Chinese and English code switching. Other research has also documented the influence of parental beliefs on their children's EFL learning (Gao, 2006; Hung, 2008; Hung, 2010; Lin, 2008), including children's attitudes and motivations (Gao, 2006). For example, the more parents were involved in their child's EFL learning, the more interest and achievement their child demonstrated (Chao, 2004; Tsai, 2001).

Recently attention has focused on the relationship between maternal beliefs in different cultural contexts, since culture is regarded "as a window to understanding the origins and development of parents' beliefs" (Sigel & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2002, p.491). Chi and Rao (2003) pointed out that parental educational ideas and practices, reflected in the routines of daily life, are related to "the particular cultural and ecological context in which children develop" (p.347). Chan, Bowes, and Wyver, (2009) examined the relationships between parental goals, parental beliefs and parenting styles in 189 Hong Kong Chinese mothers of children aged six to eight years. They found that maternal goals were related to the manner in which they viewed their parenting role. Those mothers who accepted "guan" and filial piety adopted either an authoritarian or a psychologically controlling parenting style; meanwhile, those who embraced "guan" and harmonious social relationships held an authoritative parenting style. Li (2006) explored 26 middle-class Chinese immigrant parents' perspectives on their children's school learning within mainstream American schools. She found that there

existed a discrepancy between parental preference and American school instructions in writing skill. Miller, Wang, Sandel and Cho (2002) compared European American and Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about childrearing and practices. They found that these 2 groups differed in ways which reflected their cultural beliefs. European American mothers had a self-esteem concept underpinning their childrearing beliefs and practices. Self-esteem was regarded as crucial to many developmental aspects among those European Americans. In contrast, Taiwanese mothers held the view that building children's self-esteem might create psychological vulnerabilities rather than strengths. This empirical research has demonstrated how parental beliefs vary between different traditions and cultures, and how those beliefs impact on practices and children's development.

The Importance of Mothers' Educational Level and Its Relationship with Other Sociodemographic Variables

A number of sociodemographic and socioeconomic variables, including parental attitudes, parental education and family income, have been linked to children's development. These two key variables, parental education and family income, are regarded as important predictors of home learning environment and home learning experiences (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994; Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, 1994). For example, Davis-Kean (2005) examined 868 8 to 12-year-olds to determine how these two socioeconomic factors, parents' education and family income, related to children's academic achievement via parents' achievement beliefs and stimulating home behaviours. She found that parents' beliefs, educational expectations, and home behaviours were related to children's academic achievement, by positively influencing behaviors, such as reading for enjoyment, the types of literacy-related materials provided in the home, the number of books, and also the affective relationship between parents and children. Previous findings show that family income plays an important role in determining the amount of linguistic enrichment which children experience (Yeung, Linver, & Brooks-Gunn, 2002). In Hart and Risley's (1995) longitudinal study of 42 American families, they revealed that children of parents in high SES household had larger size of vocabulary and were learning words at a faster rate than their counterparts from lower SES families.

Though income is sometimes investigated in research as a factor, however, Hart and Risley (1995) also found that family SES was highly correlated with maternal education and "parental educational level is often more stable and less controversial to measure than family

income” (Dollaghan, et al., 1999, p. 1433). Some studies have also indicated that the mother’s educational level can be regarded as a general measure of a family’s SES (Duncan et al., 1994; Ensminger & Fothergill, 2003; Hoff, 2006). Furthermore, maternal education was also highly correlated with father’s education and is rarely missing in surveys (Entwisle & Astone, 1994).

Davis-Kean (2005) has found that parents’ education tends to influence parents’ beliefs and behaviours which lead to children’s academic achievement. Some research has demonstrated that maternal education is a factor which is associated with home literacy practices and children’s language and literacy development (Cottone, 2012; DeBaryshe, 1995; Wu & Honig, 2010) and the quality of the home literacy environment they provided for their children (Bingham, 2007; Leppanen, Niemi, Aunola, Nurmi, 2004; Skibbe, Justice, Zucker & McGinty, 2008) .

These characteristics also vary significantly in Taiwan. Parental education as well as family income are associated with variations in Taiwanese parents’ attitudes about English language learning and teaching (Oladejo, 2006). Maternal education was a significant predictor of home literacy resources in Wu and Honig’s (2010) study. Others studies found parental (including maternal) educational attainment was related to their young children’s EFLL at home, such as the frequency with which parents spoke English to their children (Tsai, 2001) and spend more time helping their children study English language (Chang, 2008). Such findings from the previous studies lead me to think maternal education level as a crucial effect to be explored in the present research.

Summary

In this chapter, I have investigated the scope of research literature relevant to my research topic, such as the factors influencing mothers’ beliefs and practices regarding their children’s language and literacy development. I have discussed how traditional Chinese values and attitudes surrounding the education of young children are being challenged by “English fever” and pressure for young children to commence formal English language instruction prior to school. In Chapter 3, I will describe the methodology used in this thesis.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This study investigates Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about their young children's English as a foreign language (EFL) learning and the relationship between mothers' beliefs and their early EFL teaching practices and the types of environments provided for their children. This study uses a mixed methods design, combining quantitative methods (questionnaire) and qualitative methods (written responses from open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews), in order to gather data on mothers' perceptions of young children's EFL learning. In this chapter I provide an overview of methods employed and participants involved in the study. Further details of the methods and participants can be found in the articles compiled in this thesis.

Rationale for Mixed Method Research Design

The mixed method approach, which has been defined as combining quantitative and qualitative approaches into a research methodology of a single study or multi-phased study (Collins & O'Cathain, 2009; Creswell, 2005, 2009; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007a, 2007b), was applied in this study. It is argued that mixed method has advantages which are not present in single method research (Creswell, 2005, 2009). Bryman (2008) argues that there exist strong differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods. By combining qualitative and quantitative findings, which complement each other, the mixed method approach may enable researchers to see a bigger or more complete picture of what is being explored than would be possible using one type of research. As Tashakkori and Teddlie (2008) suggest, one of the reasons to utilize a mixed method design is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being explored. Tashakkori and Creswell (2007a) indicated that "mixed methods studies benefits from a dynamic process in which the component (strand) questions are reexamined and reframed as the two or more strands of the study progress" (p.210).

This study employed two means of data generation, which included a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, to investigate Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about their young children in learning English as a foreign language. A questionnaire is one of a variety of methods that can be used as part of a survey process (Walter, 2010). A survey allows the

researcher to obtain information from a large number of people. Descriptive surveys have been used in childcare and education to find out information of parents' and practitioners' attitudes on a variety of issues (Mukherji, & Albon, 2010). Moreover, according to Ruane (2005), "questionnaires can transcend most barriers of time and space" (p. 123). Therefore, a questionnaire was deemed to be an appropriate method used to gain data from mothers via kindergartens, day-care centres and church Sunday schools since the researcher was based in Sydney, Australia and collected the data from Taiwan in Asia.

A questionnaire which included Likert scale questions, close-ended and open-ended questions was employed for the present research. While the questionnaire yielded valuable insights from the numerical data, scale-based responses and qualitative responses to set questions, not all the research questions in this study were amenable to being fully answered by a questionnaire. For example, in order to find out how mothers cope with or encounter difficulties, a questionnaire would probably only provide limited insight. Written responses usually only provide a brief or summarized response and there is no way for the researcher to request clarification or elaboration. Meanwhile, qualitative interviewing, such as the in-depth interview, is regarded as a predominant social research method and technique to explore the meanings and understandings that the respondents bring to the topics (Travers, 2010). Therefore, interviews can be an effective way of gaining further insights into an issue. Marshall and Rossman (2006) state that one of the strengths of qualitative research is that it "searches for a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon under study" (p.55). Creswell (2005) points out that "one-on-one interviews are ideal for interviewing participants who are not hesitant to speak, are articulate, and who can share ideas comfortably" (p.215). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) indicate that in a semi-structured interview, "the standard questions with one or more individually tailored questions are to get clarification or probe a person's reasoning" (p.184). The in-depth responses assisted in gaining a greater understanding of survey results as well as of issues that were beyond the scope of the survey questions.

In the initial planning stage of this study, the researcher employed a triangulation mixed methods design in which the results from qualitative and quantitative analyses were compared to determine if the two databases bring in similar or dissimilar results (Creswell, 2005). The researcher therefore collected both quantitative and qualitative data to understand whether the results from both types of data supported or contradicted each other. For example,

interviews were employed to provide more qualitative data to supplement and extend that collected in the questionnaire. The researcher first surveyed a large number of individuals and then followed up with six participant mothers to obtain their specific voices about their ideas and practices.

Location of study.

This study took place in Tainan City (urban area) and Tainan County (suburban areas), which are southern areas in Taiwan. Tainan city and Tainan county were regulated as Tainan metropolitan area on December 25th, 2010. Tainan, the oldest and the ancient capital of Taiwan, now is the fifth-largest city of Taiwan (Tainan City Government, 2011).

Design and structure of the questionnaire.

In an attempt to investigate maternal beliefs about their children's early EFL learning and the manifestation of these ideas, the researcher developed a questionnaire to assess maternal beliefs. The questionnaire comprised four sections and was designed and translated into Chinese by the researcher.

Section 1.

The first section was composed of 32 Likert 5-scale questions with options of 1, strongly disagree; 2, agree; 3, not sure; 4, agree; and 5, strongly agree or 1, not at all to 5, a great deal. General topics covered by this questionnaire include: (1.) mother's beliefs about early literacy development (e.g. parents are their children's first teacher; reading to children helps children to read and write); (2.) mothers' beliefs about the value of English language learning (e.g. people in Taiwan need to know English to get a good job); (3.) mothers' beliefs about the age at which English instruction should commence (e.g. the younger the child, the greater the ability to learn a second language); (4.) mothers' views of the argument that early foreign language learning has negative influence on the mother tongue (e.g. if children begin to learn English before they start school, they will not learn Chinese properly); (5.) mothers' own literacy behaviors and practices (e.g. I enjoy reading Chinese newspapers, books, and magazines; how often do you go to the library with your children); (6.) mothers' views of their young children's literacy outcomes and behaviours (e.g. my child can read some English alphabet letters and some Chinese characters; my child loves to read picture books); (7.) mothers' ideas about English language pedagogy for young children (e.g. to learn English, children need to see people around them reading and writing in English; teaching a child to recognize isolated words on sight will help him or her how to read.); (8.) mothers' beliefs

about the usage of multimedia for children's language learning (e.g. children learn to speak English by listening to tapes or CDs in English language; (9.) mother's willingness to seek more information to help their children's English language learning (e.g. I would like to attend free workshop/ programs provided by the government which teach me to assist my child's English learning before age of 6).

Section 2.

The second section consisted of thirteen closed-ended questions, mostly about mother's and child's practices, and was designed to measure the frequency of mothers' Chinese and English literacy-related behaviors, practices and mothers' provision of learning resources. For example, yes-no questions and "if yes since when" were asked (e.g. 'Do you read to your children in Chinese/English? If yes, how old was your child when you started doing this?'). There were also some clarification questions. (e.g. "How many Chinese/English books for your children do you own?"; 'How often do you go to the library with your children?'). The mothers were asked to rate 1=none; 2=fewer than 10; 3=between 10-30; 4=more than 30. Or, 1=never; 2=once a week; 3=once a fortnight; 4=once a month; 5=less than once a month.

Theoretical basis of the questionnaire items.

The items for the questionnaire were generated based on the relevant literature, which thereby contributed to the credibility of the questionnaire. Some of the questions about mothers' opinions about English language learning and early literacy development were adopted or modified from Lynch & Anderson's (2006) and Li's (2006) studies. Some questions about the home literacy environments were modified from the studies by Lao (2004), Bingham (2007), and DeBaryshe (1995). Some questions about young children's literacy outcomes were based on work by Weigel, Martin, & Bennett's (2006) study. Some questions about mothers' opinions about bilingualism were formed after reading Oladejo's (2006) and Buckwalter & Lo's (2002) studies. Moreover, some questions were asked based on the researcher's own experiences of being an English teacher and a mother of a young boy in Taiwan.

Questions about the Chinese home literacy environments and practices were initially included in this research for two main reasons. Firstly, although the main emphasis of the research is English language learning, the researcher wanted to avoid a misunderstanding with the mothers about English language learning replacing Chinese language learning. Secondly,

access to public kindergartens may have been limited if the questionnaires only focused on English language learning as some directors strictly followed the government policy of Chinese language learning being the first priority in early childhood education.

Following an analysis of the initial findings, it was demonstrated that Chinese language learning environments and practices in the home context were already provided by the majority of mothers. For example, 61.2% ($n=392$) of the families owned more than 30 Chinese children's books; 28.7% ($n=184$) of the families had 10-30 Chinese children's books; and only 0.6% ($n=4$) of the families owned none. Further, the majority of the mothers (91.8%, $n=594$) reported that they read to their children in Chinese. 92.4% ($n=595$) of the mothers reported that their children asked to be read Chinese children's books. Also, 84% of the mothers reported that their children read Chinese children's books themselves. Thus, the researcher decided against further investigation of the Chinese language learning of these families for this research.

Section 3.

The third section contained two open-ended questions. The first aimed to obtain the reasons mothers did or did not teach their child/children English at home. The other question asked participants to express freely their views about young children's English language and literacy development to share any additional opinions. These were conducted to "allow respondents freedom in their response and add a richness to the data that is unobtainable from closed questions" (Walter, 2010, p.174), and for the researcher "to probe a little deeper and explore the many possibilities that individuals might create for a question" (Creswell, 2005, p.364) within the respondent's experiences instead of the researcher's.

Section 4.

The last section was composed of seven items regarding participants' demographic information, like the mother's age range, educational level, the yearly household income, their location, family size, the types of preschool the child enrolled and mothers' employment status. Among previous studies in the Taiwanese context, family socioeconomic status related to Taiwanese elementary school students' English learning achievement. Those familial factors were indicated as living areas, parental education level and parental occupations (Lin, 2008; Liu, 2006; Nieh, 2004; Wang & Hyun, 2009). Parental age and education were suggested as significant predictors of parental attitudes towards early English as a foreign language learning (Oladejo, 2006; Tsai, 2001; Yeh, 1994). An understanding of the backgrounds of those

mothers would provide insights into factors relating to their beliefs and practices about this issue. Data on the number of children in each family was collected in this study as, in previous research, family size has rarely been considered as a potential factor influencing beliefs or practices related to EFL learning. However, it emerged that most of the participant mothers (89.1%) had a maximum of two children, so, this was not pursued further. Data on yearly household income and employment status were not investigated further, either. The sample in this study did not contain enough low income families. Also, there may be an argument that the scale of NT\$ 300,000—NT\$ 1,000,000 should be divided into two or more scales. More details about income as a factor are discussed in Chapter 5 (the first article). Furthermore, employment status (i.e. employed or unemployed) was not investigated further, as it may not be a stable factor due to the missing data (18.4%) and worldwide economic depression. A copy of this questionnaire in English and Chinese language can be found in Appendix 6 and 7.

Content of the interviews.

An interview was designed to gain a deeper understanding of the participant mothers' lived experiences. Questions asked in the interview were to probe similar issues to those asked in questionnaire. The qualitative findings were expected to play a complementary role in explaining the quantitative results, thus deepening our understanding of the questionnaire results as well. The interview also functioned to clarify any ambiguities or inconsistent interpretations in the questionnaire and to determine whether there were any points of further interest that were present in the replies from the questionnaire.

The key sample questions in the interview were: (1) mother's background and beliefs (i.e. what language(s) do you speak with your child at home? do you think children should learn a foreign language?), (2) Chinese Home Literacy Environments (i.e. what's the most important consideration for you to choose the books or reading materials for your child?), (3) Chinese Home Literacy Practices (i.e. what do you do to help your child gain more stimulation on language acquisition?), (4) English Home Literacy Environments (i.e. do you buy English books, rhymes, music, CDs, DVDs, and electronic educational toys for your child's English language learning?), (5) If the mother teaches English to her child at home, what English home literacy practices does she engage in? (i.e. how do you assist your child to learn English?) (6) If the mother does not teach English to her child at home, what are the reasons? (i.e. are there any difficulties or problems that prevent or hinder you from doing so?). A copy

of general open-ended questions asked in the interviews can be found in Appendix 8 for English version and Appendix 9 for Chinese version.

Ethical Issues

In accordance with the requirements of the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (please see Appendix 1 for approval letter: Ref. HE24OCT2008-D06170), the purpose of the study was explained in the questionnaire to the participants prior to mothers' finishing the questionnaire. Participants were assured that the findings from the study may be published in refereed and professional journals or at conferences but with all identifying information removed. An invitation to participate in the interview was accompanied with the questionnaire. Mothers were asked to provide their names if they wished to participate in the interview. They were assured that pseudonyms will be used in the reports to protect privacy and that they could withdraw from the study if they so wished. Following this, the mothers provided written consent to be interviewed.

Recruitment of Participants

Questionnaire recruitment.

In November 2008, an information letter (See Appendix 2 for English version and Appendix 3 for Chinese version) was e-mailed to twenty directors of public or licensed private kindergartens and day-care centres and three ladies who took charge of their church Sunday schools in three different churches in Tainan metropolitan area. Ten of them e-mailed back their willingness to participate. Telephone calls were followed to the directors and the church Sunday school teachers to confirm their willingness. Three more directors of the kindergartens /day-care centres helped after the researcher visited and explained the purpose of the study in person. Two of them asked to view the questionnaire before they promised to help with the distribution to the mothers of children enrolled in their centres. After viewing the questionnaire, they helped most enthusiastically and actively. Because of their enthusiastic help to ensure the survey to be done, the researcher realized that the directors thought it was a helpful issue in the communities and might educate parents by doing the questionnaire. For example, one director called and came to the researcher to get 200 copies of questionnaire sets, from her remote location. The other director called to encourage the researcher; she claimed that she appreciated this study and its significance. The final and accurate number of kindergartens, day care centres and church Sunday schools is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *The Number of Kindergartens, Day-care Centres and Church Sunday School for Distribution.*

The places for distribution to mothers of young children		# of "sites"	# of copies returned	
<u>Tainan City</u>		Church	2	16
	public	Kindergarten (primary school-based)	4	257
	private	Kindergarten	1	69
		Day-care centres	3	90
<u>Tainan County</u>	public	Kindergarten	0	0
	private	Kindergarten (technology university- based)	2	121
		Day-care centres	1	94
<u>Total</u>			13	647

Recruitment of interviewees.

The mothers who were interviewed were recruited from the questionnaire. The last part of the questionnaire included a written consent form where the mother indicated whether she was willing to participate in an interview. About 90 mothers indicated that they were interested in being interviewed, and wrote down their contact details. The researcher followed up each of the 90 mothers with a phone call approximately one month later to thank them for their offer and to acknowledge their interest in participating in an interview. However, not all the mothers who volunteered for an interview were teaching or helping their young children to learn English at home. Some expressed the belief that children should learn English early, but they were not teaching them EFL. Initially I had planned to interview five mothers who agreed and five mothers who disagreed with the statement that young children should learn EFL prior to formal education. However, only one participant both disagreed with the statement and was willing to be interviewed. The researcher then needed to further refine the criteria for choosing which other participants to interview. So, the criteria for inclusion then were mothers agreed with the statement, were home teaching, did not send their children to whole English/ bilingual kindergartens or had a tutor teaching their children English at home, and were available during my field visit to Taiwan. This yielded five mothers who met these criteria and one mother who did not agree with the statement but her daughters learned English at the kindergarten.

Profile of Participants

Respondents to questionnaire.

The 647 participants had children aged 3 to 6 years old at the time of the study who were attending the public, private kindergartens or day-care centres which the researcher was able to access at the time. The following table shows the demographic details of respondents. Some of them did not complete every question in the section of participant's demographic information so the total numbers differed.

Table 3. *Demographic Information: Mother's Age, Mother's Educational Attainment, Participants' Yearly Household Income, Location, Number of the Child in the Family, Types of Institute the Child Enrolled and Mother's Employment Status.*

Demographic Information	Percentage (%)
Age Range (years) (n=573)	
31-39	75.57
40-49	16.75
20-30	7.5
50 and above	0.17
Under 21	0.00
Educational Attainment (n=566)	
Bachelor's Degree	37.99
High school / Vocational high school certificate	24.20
Junior college Diplomat	21.73
Master's Degree	10.42
Junior High /Middle School	3.00
Doctoral Degree	2.30
Elementary School	0.35
Yearly Household Income (n=546)	
NT \$300,000- 1,000,000	55.68
NT\$ 1,000,001-1,700,000	25.27
below NT \$ 300,000	11.36
above NT\$2,300,001	4.21
NT\$ 1,700,001-2,300,000	3.48
Location (n=572)	
Tainan City	68.1
Tainan County	30.42
Other (n=8; living in KaoHsiung, mothers working and children studying in Tainan)	1.40
Family size (children number) (n=569)	
One child	23.20
Two children	65.91
Three children	10.19
Four children	0.70
Types of institute the child enrolled (n=647)	
Public	46.60
Private	53.17
Missing data	0.20
Mother's employment (n=576)	
Mothers are employed.	58.68
Mothers stay home as "house wife"	22.92
Missing data	18.40

Information about interviewees.

As detailed in the recruitment section, there were six mothers were chosen as the interview participants for the present research. The participating mothers were conversant in Mandarin Chinese and the children were developing normally, without hearing impairment or need for speech therapy. Their spouses (fathers) were equally or slightly higher educated than mothers and also all employed out of the home in full-time jobs. All mothers interviewed are able to speak English but only three mothers reported that they are confident of their English proficiency since they have studied and lived in the United States for at least three years. Five of the six mothers are able to speak Mandarin and Taiwanese languages fluently to their children at home and the sixth mother speaks only Mandarin fluently to her children since her husband does not understand Taiwanese. The following table sets out the educational qualification and other details of the mothers who participated in the interview.

Table 4. *Information of Participant Mothers for Face-to-Face Interview*

Mothers	Educational level	Occupation	Number of children	types of institute their child enrolled
Ah-Sing	Master	Assistant Professor in a university of technology	2	private
Li-Li	finishing Master	Public elementary school teacher	1	private
Yi-An	Master	Lecturer in a university of technology	2	private
Shu-Feng	Master	Associate Professor in a university of technology	1	private
Huei-Huei	Master	Manager/ teacher of her own English coach school	3	home
Ling-Ling	finishing PhD	High school teacher/on leave at the time of this research	2	private

Data Collection

Data collection was completed using: questionnaires for the respondent to complete and face-to-face interviews.

The questionnaire was distributed to the mothers through their children in various licensed public or private kindergartens or day-care centres. Collecting the questionnaire back from the mothers is in a similar way, through the kindergartens and day-care centres. The researcher

went back to those sites to thank for the directors' and teachers' help and to collect questionnaire on specified dates. While 1180 questionnaire sets were distributed, 647 were returned, resulting in a 54.83% return rate.

Mothers who were willing to participant in the interviews were contacted to schedule a time for an interview for this study. When the interview took place, the researcher introduced herself first and explained orally the research purpose and the procedures again to the mothers. A written information and consent form (See Appendix 4 for English version and Appendix 5 for Chinese version) was provided for the mothers to sign in the presence of the researcher before the interview commenced. All procedures were conducted by the researcher in Mandarin. All key sample questions for interview were translated into Chinese. The semi-structured interviews with the mothers were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated into English for thematic analysis. All interviews were held at the most convenient location for participants such as the participants' houses, workplaces, or in the room provided by the kindergartens/day-care centres where the mothers enrolled their children. These 6 interviews ranged from about 30 to 180 minutes in duration. The interview phase of the study was conducted in January, 2009.

Mothers were asked to begin by talking about their interest in being interviewed, family background like the number of children, language spoken at home, etc. The conversations then turned to the strategies to meet the goals for their children's Chinese/English language development, the mothers' beliefs about Chinese/English language learning as well as their children's language exposure and proficiencies. Mothers were encouraged to follow issues and angles of particular interest to them. One mother delved into other areas of interest, such as her new future career as well as the issues about new immigrant mothers. Only one mother, in particular, tended to respond to interview questions by using very short answers or phrases. The interviews had a conversational, friendly and relaxed tone. A couple of interruptions during the interviews were short phone calls.

Methods of Analysis

Quantitative research.

The data collected from the participants' responses to the questionnaire set were onto Excel sheet and frequency distributions were taken. The frequency distribution helps to present the data "in a more manageable, coherent form" (Ruane, 2005, p. 179). Based on the

collected data, statistical findings are provided in tabular form with a brief narrative. Survey responses were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 17. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysed to obtain a broad description of perspectives among Taiwanese mothers of young children. For example, a descriptive statistical technique was used for demographic information. Percentages, means and the standard deviations for the participants were reported in Table 3. A range of analytical techniques, such as factor analysis, Pearson Chi-square, and Multivariate Analyses of Variance were employed. These techniques are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, 5 and 6.

Qualitative research.

The responses from open-ended questions were first translated into English in ways that would make them understandable to English readers, because of the difficulties of translating meaning from written scripts to another. Then the transcriptions with English translations were printed, cut and pasted on index cards for sorting. The responses given from the open-questions were categorized into rationales for data analysis.

All the interviews were audio-recorded and fully transcribed. During the interview all the participants used Mandarin or Taiwanese dialect; the transcription process also involved translation from Chinese into English. The Chinese transcriptions helped the researcher to understand the interviewed mothers' meaning better by reading and re-reading carefully. The researcher, however, coded in English so the researcher and her two supervisors could examine and compare the data together within and across the categories to determine themes and build a logical chain of findings.

A systematic iterative and grounded approach was undertaken to analyze the qualitative data collected from the written responses to the open-ended questions and from the transcripts of interviews. The constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1977; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was used to analyse the qualitative data through coding transcripts. The corpus of data from the written responses to the open-ended questions was analysed using thematic analysis following Ryan and Bernard (2003). The researcher conducted open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) with the responses from the open-ended questions and interview transcripts. The codes are then analysed to derive emerging themes and categories. As these initially derived codes were continually compared, contrasted, and adapted through the subsequent analyses of those written responses and interview data, they came in to identify initial categories. These categories were then subjected to re-examination with data collected from

participant mothers. These categories were then grouped according to different features and dimensions through axial coding which is the process of reorganising concepts under a superordinate theme (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Reliability, Trustworthiness and Transparency

Before the Chinese version of the questionnaires were distributed to the mothers, an associate professor and a Chinese language teacher in Taiwan looked through the questionnaire content to amend ambiguous and unclear statements.

In qualitative research, issues surrounding “reliability” are more usually framed in terms of trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003) and authenticity (Bush, 2002). It is crucial to ensure that the data derived from a methodological framework is consistent and can be replicated at different times (Creswell, 2005). According to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), the analytical procedures should be made transparent so that other researchers can understand the way of analyzing, which is supported by the data, and the way to reach assertions.

While the Chinese responses from the open-ended questions were translated into English by the researcher, some poorly structured or colloquial Chinese responses were translated after consultation with two other Taiwanese translators, also PhD students when the research was conducted, to clarify the meanings. In order to ensure that the gist of the Chinese responses had been captured in English translation, a consensus of the translated meaning of each response was reached through discussion with the researcher’s supervisors, two native English speakers. Then, the researcher sorted the quotes into named piles independently and then sorted the quotes together with the researcher’s supervisors and finalized the titles for the piles.

Interviews were audio-recorded to be transcribed in detail to ensure reliability of transcription. Bryman (2008) suggested that tape recording helps to conquer the limitations of memories of what people said in interviews. Additionally, Silverman (2010) also mentioned that the reliable interview studies should use low-inference methods; all face-to-face interviews should be audio-recorded and carefully transcribed. In adherence to these recommendations, all interviews were recorded and transcribed in detail. After the interviews were transcribed verbatim, I repeatedly listened to recordings to improve the transcriptions. Moreover, the transcriptions and the translations of interviews were sent to the interviewed mothers to check for inaccuracies. Only one interviewee sent me some additional comments to clarify her ideas as she felt that she failed to respond to one question properly.

Possible Limitation in the Study

Due to the small number of interviewed mothers and the areas in which the questionnaires were distributed in Taiwan, this study might have a possible limitation. This research study focused only on one urban area in metropolitan Tainan, Taiwan. There are more urbanized and rural areas as well as diverse ethnic groups in Taiwan (Government Information Office, 2010b). This study therefore does not claim to represent the views of all Taiwanese mothers. The use of surveys is also limited as a research methodology since it is difficult to explore the reasons and motivations behind the participants' responses. Another limitation concerns the nature of the questions which asked the participants to evaluate their own English proficiency in spoken and written English. It might have been hard for the participants to answer such questions, mostly due to mothers' self-confidence and their ability to effectively evaluate their own proficiency in spoken and written English. While a formal pilot study was not undertaken, the survey questions have a theoretical basis and most of the questions had been based on previous research. Feedback on the first draft of the survey was sought and obtained from two specialists in young children's bilingual development and from two directors of Taiwanese kindergartens. They assisted me to revise any unclear or ambiguous questions, suggested additional questions that could be used in the survey, and provided guidance about the proper expression to address the questions in the Chinese language. Furthermore, I presented the survey at a postgraduate forum at Macquarie University, and the academic faculty provided valuable feedback, such as suggestions for rewording of some of the questions. Therefore, I felt confident in using the survey without conducting a formal pilot study.

Conclusion

The overview of research design, procedure of data collection and methods of data analysis were explained carefully in this chapter. The results from the quantitative research and findings from the qualitative research are presented in the following chapters. The fourth chapter provides some initial statistical results. The fifth chapter compares the responses and English-proficiency of mothers who were and were not teaching English to their pre-school-age children. The sixth chapter examines mothers' English teaching practices and mothers' provision of resources for learning English as well as Chi Square analysis of the relationship between maternal education and reported EFL practices and provisions. The seventh chapter

investigates the mothers' motivations for teaching English to their young children at home. Chapter 8 explores the issues and challenges that concern Taiwanese mothers in their role as their children's first English teacher.

CHAPTER FOUR

INITIAL STATISTICAL RESULTS OF MOTHERS' IDEAS OF YOUNG CHILDREN'S EARLY ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) LEARNING

In this chapter I describe the initial findings from the survey regarding Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about the age at which young children should commence learning English as a foreign language (EFL), and their views about the most effective pedagogical approaches to teaching EFL to children prior to school age. The initial aim of this chapter is to provide a broad overview of the data and initial findings, as a point of departure for the more detailed analyses provided in the following chapters. This chapter sets out the results from the analysis of 10 statements from the survey. I begin by focusing on the participants' responses to one statement seeking information about the mothers' views about when young children should commence English language learning. As detailed in Chapter 2, there has been a widespread debate in Taiwan about when children should begin to learn English as a foreign language and the government has made its attitude clear to the general public. The responses to this statement are analysed to determine whether there is a discrepancy between the attitudes of Taiwanese government education authorities and the mothers of young children.

I then report on the responses to nine items which appeared in the survey in the form of statements about different aspects of children learning EFL prior to school. This series of statements probed mothers' ideas about appropriate English language pedagogy for young children. The statements were divided into two further groups for analysis. One group of statements focused on mothers' views which were oriented towards an emergent bilingual and biliteracy perspective, while the other group of statements was oriented towards a more formal instructional approach to EFL for young children. Much research has found that Chinese-background parents prefer didactic approaches for their school-aged children's literacy instruction (Li, 2006). Wu and Honig's (2010) research claimed that the majority of Taiwanese mothers did not support an "emergent literacy approach" to reading instruction for their preschool-aged children. Li, Corrie and Wong (2008) mentioned that early formal Chinese literacy teaching is regarded as valuable in Chinese contexts. These nine statements were included in the survey and analysed to determine whether in fact Taiwanese mothers of preschool aged children did prefer formal didactic teaching methods for their young children's early EFL learning.

As I have explained in Chapters 2 and 3, parental education has been regarded as a significant predictor of parents' attitudes towards EFL in Taiwan. I therefore analysed the participants' responses to determine whether there is a relationship between mothers' educational attainment and their beliefs about English language learning for children prior to school.

The initial statistical results reported in this chapter provide the point of departure for more detailed investigations in the forthcoming chapters.

Taiwanese Mothers' Ideas about When Preschoolers Should Commence Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

In this section I set out the number of responses to the item about the age of starting English language learning. As Table 5 shows, there was strong support for children learning English as a foreign language before they commence school, with 72% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

Table 5. *Responses to Statement about Early Commencement of EFL Learning*

	Mean (Std. D)	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Don't know/ Unsure (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Children should start learning English before the age of 6. (<i>n</i> =645)	3.78 (.86)	1.24	8.07	18.94	55.50	16.30

Taiwanese Mothers' Ideas about EFL Pedagogy in Early Childhood

In the next section, I explore whether Taiwanese mothers are oriented towards formal, didactic approaches or informal emergent approaches regarding their children's English learning prior to school.

Table 6. *Responses Suggestive of an Emergent Bilingual and Biliteracy Perspective*

	Mean (Std. D)	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Don't know/ Unsure (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
1. Children learn to read and write in English by talking to adults in English. (<i>n</i> = 640)	3.03 (1.04)	3.44	35.31	23.13	31.41	6.72
2. Children can learn to speak English by watching English TV programs and cartoons. (<i>n</i> =640)	3.73 (.81)	1.72	7.03	17.50	63.28	10.47
3. To learn English, children need to see people around them reading and writing in English. (<i>n</i> =644)	3.70 (.81)	0.62	12.27	15.84	59.47	11.80
4. Children learn to speak English by listening to tapes or CDs with English rhymes, songs, and stories. (<i>n</i> =644)	4.21 (.67)	0.78	1.40	5.28	61.34	31.21
5. Children can learn to read and write in English by playing English computer games. (<i>n</i> =641)	3.45 (.90)	3.1	13.0	25.0	52.4	5.6
6. A child learns English by using simple greetings and introductions. (<i>n</i> =644)	4.11 (.62)	0.47	1.24	7.61	67.70	22.98

The statements which achieved the highest agreement from the majority of Taiwanese mothers are statements 4 and 6, suggesting a strong belief in the benefits of children engaging with audiovisual and digital media, and learning of simple everyday terms. Statement 1 achieved the least agreement. Only around 37% of mothers agreed that children learn English by engaging in conversations with English speaking adults.

Table 7. *Responses Suggestive of a Formal Instruction Perspective*

	Mean (Std. D)	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Don't know/ Unsure (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
1. A child learns to read English by learning the letters and sounds of the English alphabet. (n=645)	3.61 (.91)	1.09	12.25	24.50	48.68	13.49
2. A child learns to read English by first learning KK phonics. (n=644)	2.88 (.98)	8.23	26.86	37.27	24.38	3.26
3. Teaching a child to recognize isolated words on sight will help him or her learn how to read. (n=640)	3.62 (.85)	1.09	11.72	20.47	57.66	9.06

Overall Table 7 suggests that mothers are more uncertain about the validity of the statements which are more didactic in orientation. The majority of the respondents, however, agree that a child learns to read by learning the letters and sounds of the English alphabet and isolated words on sight, but only around 28% agree that learning KK phonics will enable a child to learn English.

The Relationship between Mothers' Education and Views about Whether Children Should Start Learning English before Formal Schooling

The relationship between mothers' educational attainment and their beliefs about the early commencement of English language instruction and appropriate pedagogical practices with young children was investigated. Mothers' educational attainment was coded according to the following categories:

Code 1: up to high-school completion ($n=154$)

Code 2: 2-year vocational diploma ($n=124$)

Code 3: 4-year Bachelor degree ($n=215$) or

Code 4: post-graduate Masters or Doctoral degree ($n=75$).

Table 8 shows that the lowest educated mothers (rated as 1 and 2) are less inclined to agree with this statement than the higher educated mothers. More educated mothers (3 and 4) and less educated mothers (1 and 2) do not differ significantly in their rating of this question.

Table 8. *The Relationship between Mothers' Educational Levels and Views about Whether Children Should Start Learning English before Formal Schooling*

Survey question	Mother's education condensed					
	Overall	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	Univariate F
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	
Children should start learning English before the age of 6. ($n=645$)	3.79 (.86)	3.58 ^{cd} (.90)	3.67 ^{cd} (.88)	3.91 ^{ab} (.81)	4.08 ^{ab} (.75)	8.52**

Note: + $p \leq .1$ * $p \leq .01$ ** $p \leq .001$

a= significantly different from group 1

b= significantly different from group 2

c= significantly different from group 3

d= significantly different from group 4

The Relationship between Mothers' Education and Views about English Language Pedagogy for Young Children

Table 9 shows the effect of mothers' education on their responses to the survey statements oriented towards emergent literacy or formal instructional approaches.

Table 9. *The Relationship between Maternal Education and Ideas about English Language Pedagogy for Young Children*

		Mother's education condensed				
	Overall	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	
Survey questions	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Univariate F
<u>Responses suggestive of emergent literacy beliefs</u>						
Children learn to read and write in English by talking to adults in English. (n= 640)	3.04 (1.03)	3.02 (1.04)	2.97 (1.05)	3.03 (1.01)	3.25 (1.02)	1.23
Children can learn to speak English by watching English TV programs and cartoons. (n=640.)	3.75 (.78)	3.68 (.76)	3.80 (.81)	3.75 (.76)	3.79 (.82)	0.68
To learn English, children need to see people around them reading and writing in English. (n=644)	3.70 (.86)	3.69 (.75)	3.59 (.91)	3.74 (.87)	3.79 (.90)	1.16
Children learn to speak English by listening to tapes or CDs with English rhymes, songs, and stories. (n=644)	4.20 (.69)	4.08 (.68)	4.28 (.58)	4.23 (.69)	4.26 (.82)	2.49
Children can learn to read and write in English by playing English computer games. (n=641)	3.44 (.90)	3.57 (.82)	3.43 (.97)	3.36 (.93)	3.40 (.80)	1.61
A child learns English by using simple greetings and introductions. (n=644)	4.12 (.62)	4.03 (.54)	4.19 (.69)	4.12 (.57)	4.18 (.76)	1.85
<u>Responses suggestive of a belief in formal didactic approaches</u>						
A child learns to read English by learning the letters and sounds of the English alphabet. (n=645)	3.60 (.90)	3.72 (.75)	3.71 (.85)	3.54 (.99)	3.35 ^{ab} (.99)	3.70*
A child learns to read English by first learning KK phonics. (n=644)	2.85 (.98)	3.33 ^{bcd} (.96)	2.85 (.92)	2.63 (.94)	2.54 (.91)	20.14**
Teaching a child to recognize isolated words on sight will help him or her learn how to read. (n=640)	3.61 (.86)	3.77 ^{cd} (.71)	3.67 (.92)	3.53 (.90)	3.41 (.84)	3.96*

Note: + p≤.1 * p≤. 01 **p≤ .001

a= significantly different from group 1

b= significantly different from group 2

c= significantly different from group 3

d= significantly different from group 4

Table 9 shows there was no effect of mothers' education on the responses related to belief about emergent literacy. However, there is an overall effect of mothers' educational levels on their attitudes towards formal instruction. The highest educated mothers rated the statement "A child learns to read English by learning the letters and sounds of the English alphabet" significantly lower than the mothers in the two lowest education categories. The lowest educated mothers were also rated the statements "Teaching a child to recognize isolated words on sight will help him or her learn how to read" and "A child learns to read English by first learning KK phonics" significantly higher than the higher educated mothers. In other words, when compared with higher educated mothers, the lower educated mothers were significantly more likely to agree with statements suggesting a didactic approach to teach their young children EFL.

Conclusion

The results indicate that a majority of Taiwanese mothers agreed that English language learning should commence in the years prior to school; however, about one third of mothers disagreed with this view. The results also show that mothers had different views about the best ways to teach English as a foreign language to very young children. Moreover, the lower educated mothers were significantly more likely to agree with statements indicating a didactic approach than were the higher educated mothers. These preliminary findings firstly led to my interest in exploring the factors related to mothers' agreement or disagreement about learning and teaching EFL prior to formal schooling. Secondly, I was interested in finding out what kind of resources or practices mothers were using with their young children and whether or not their educational levels were related to the practices they reported. More detailed analyses of the data are presented in the following chapters, including the demographic and attitudinal characteristics which are associated with mothers' decisions about whether or not to teach their children English at home (Chapter 5, Article 1); and the relationship between mothers' educational attainment and their reported uses of English language teaching resources and practices at home (Chapter 6, Article 2). More detailed discussion of initial statistical results outlined above in this chapter are presented in Chapter 9, Discussion and Conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

FACTORS RELATED TO THE HOME EFL TEACHING

Preamble

The point of departure of the first article was to expend the initial findings to shed more light on the issues of mothers' value and their beliefs about early English as a foreign language teaching and learning in Taiwanese context. This chapter presents an article that addresses the first and second research questions of this study. Firstly, what proportion of Taiwanese mothers is engaged in teaching their children English at home prior to school commencement? Secondly, what demographic and attitudinal features are associated with mothers' decision to teach or not to teach their child English at home? This article was reviewed and accepted for publication by *Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education* and appears in its published format in the following chapter.

Lan, Y.-C., Degotardi, S., & Torr, J. (2011). Factors related to the home teaching of English language to preschool aged children: A Taiwanese study. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*, 5(2), 27-48.

Due to copyright laws pages 56-77 have been omitted from this thesis. Please refer to the following link for details of the article contained in these pages.

Lan, Y.-C., Degotardi, S., & Torr, J. (2011). Factors related to the home teaching of English language to preschool aged children: A Taiwanese study. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*, 5(2), 27-48.

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CHAPTER SIX

MOTHERS' PRACTICES OF THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN'S EFL LEARNING AT HOME

Preamble

The fact that many mothers had a positive attitude toward early English language learning and valued home-based EFL learning experiences was evident from the findings reported in Chapter 4 and 5 of this study. However, the mothers' reported pedagogical strategies and types of teaching resources remained undetermined. The researcher decided that the next step would be to understand more about the practices of the mothers. As stated in the literature review, mothers' practices are part of the whole environments for children's development. For these reasons and in order to gain more understanding of types of involvement activities mothers engaged in and their provision provided for their children's home EFLL, in the following Chapter 6, the researcher presented the second article relating to the practices of Taiwanese mothers and their preschoolers' EFLL at home. This issue is related to the fourth research questions of this study and is the focus of this chapter (Article 2). The following article was peer reviewed and subsequently published in the *Journal of Modern Education Review*. Due to formatting issues and to ensure ease of readability, the proofread version for publication of this article forms this chapter.

Lan, Y.-C., Torr, J., & Degotardi, S. (2011). Learning English as a foreign language at home: The practices of Taiwanese mothers and their preschoolers. *Journal of Modern Education Review*, 1(1), 10-21.

Due to copyright laws pages 80-91 have been omitted from this thesis. Please refer to the following citation for details of the article contained in these pages.

Lan, Y.-C., Torr, J., & Degotardi, S. (2011). Learning English as a foreign language at home: The practices of Taiwanese mothers and their preschoolers. *Journal of Modern Education Review*, 1(1), 10-21.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MATERNAL MOTIVATIONS OF TEACHING PRESCHOOLERS AT HOME

Preamble

The previous chapters, Chapter 4, 5 and 6, provided an analysis of the data from the closed-ended responses from the questionnaire. The convergence of the ideas regarding mothers' teaching English at home and mothers' practices drew my attention to the motivations behind their practices. In this chapter, the researcher looked more closely at mothers' motivation since it is important to understand maternal motivations as a means of gaining insights into their beliefs and practices. This chapter (Article 3) addressed the fifth research questions of this study (P.7). The findings reported in this chapter represented a contribution to research literature on maternal motivation. This article has been reviewed, accepted and published in August, 2012 in *Child Studies in Diverse Context*. This chapter consists of the final revised version of the article submitted to and accepted by the journal.

Lan, Y.-C., Torr, J., & Degotardi, S. (2012). Taiwanese mothers' motivations for teaching English to their young children at home. *Child Studies in Diverse Contexts*, 2(2), 133-144. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/105723/csdc.2012.2.2.133>

Abstract

Research has shown that mothers' attitudes towards early English language and literacy learning are important for children's English language development. Some researchers have indicated that in Taiwan most parents have a positive attitude towards English instruction and are motivated to teach English at home to their preschoolers. There is, however, little current data available to explain the motivations behind such parents' decisions to teach English to their child in the home before the commencement of formal schooling. We conducted a thematic analysis of the written survey responses of 263 Taiwanese mothers who explained why they taught their preschool children English at home. The findings indicate that English is highly valued for children's school readiness, future career opportunities, and because of its status as a global language. The mothers' motivations for teaching English include the desire to cultivate the child's interest, a belief in 'the earlier the better' for second language learning, and a belief in the need to review and practice English. These findings have the potential to inform educational policies and implementation strategies, as they can reveal whether mothers' motivations align with national priorities for English language education.

Key words: early childhood, English teaching, maternal motivation, Taiwan

Taiwanese mothers' motivations for teaching English to their young children at home

In response to the widespread status of English as a global language, the Taiwanese government has recently implemented several language education policies designed to improve the English proficiency of the Taiwanese population (Su, 2006), for example reducing the age at which compulsory English language instruction at school commences (Wang, 2002). The government's motivations for promoting English in this way include the view that English is a global language which is essential for the international political and economic development of the country (Tseng, 2008). In a parallel move, there has been an increasing emphasis on the importance of the years prior to school for children's education and wellbeing, with western perspectives on early childhood pedagogy being introduced into early childhood services, with varying outcomes (Hsieh, 2004; Lee & Tseng, 2008; Lin & Tsai, 1996).

Interestingly, the Taiwanese Ministry of Education has prohibited English-only preschools and tends to prohibit "cram" schools for children under 6 years of age ("Minister defends plan for cram school limit," 2011; Yeh, 2011), despite pressure from some parents who believe "the earlier the better" for teaching English to children (Chang, 2006; Hsieh, 2006; Oladejo, 2006; Shang, Ingebritson & Tseng, 2007; Tsai, 2001). As an alternative to these institutions, the Ministry of Education has encouraged mothers to co-learn English with their preschool child at home, using informal play-based methods such as picture books, songs and games, rather than formal skills-based methods (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2004). This policy is based on two general issues. First, there are concerns that the introduction of formal English instruction to children under 6 years of age will negatively affect the development of their first language and culture (Chang, 2007; Chen, 2006; Hsieh, 2006). Secondly, there is a wish to ensure that very young children are not placed under undue pressure to perform academically (Cheung, 2002; Lu & Chen, 2005).

Issues surrounding English language instruction are thus contentious in this social, political and educational context. However, despite concerns about potential negative outcomes of teaching English in the early years, it appears that Taiwanese mothers are taking an active role in teaching English to their pre-school children. A recent study of 466 mothers indicated that 61.4% were attempting to teach English to their child (Lan, Degotardi & Torr, 2011). It is therefore significant to seek as much clarity as possible about the motivations of mothers who do decide to co-learn or to teach English to their children at home, and to

determine whether or not these motivations are consistent with those underpinning Taiwan's policies regarding preschool English language instruction.

An understanding of parental motivations is significant for a number of reasons. To begin with, investigations of motivations provide insights into parenting behaviours, their teaching practices and their priorities for their children. Chinese parents are often characterized as highly competitive and driven by the need for their children to achieve academic success at all costs, including through English as a pathway to material prosperity. This, however, seems at odds with the previously mentioned concerns about the pressures involved in the early teaching of English (Cheung, 2002; Lu & Chen, 2005). This research will provide empirical data from the mothers themselves to confirm or challenge some prevailing perceptions about what motivates Taiwanese mothers who teach their preschool aged children English at home prior to school.

Secondly, investigations into the motivations underlying the early teaching of English have significant implications for educational institutions. Early childhood educators in contemporary Taiwan are expected to take families' home practices and expectations into account, on the basis that "if educators can become aware of the normative attitudes of Taiwanese parents, they will be better able to establish partnerships with them" (Beckert, Strom, Strom, Yang, Huang, & Lin, 2004, para. 6). Different motivations are likely to result in different expectations from mothers for their children's English development, including different teaching strategies and different demands on preschoolers and school systems. If schools have a better understanding of mothers' ideas and beliefs about English language education, they will be better placed to open up the channels of communication. Furthermore, when early childhood education is approached from a socio-cultural theoretical perspective, children's learning is best understood with consideration to the beliefs, priorities and activities of the learning communities that children are involved in (Hedegaard, 2012). Because parents' motivations will shape the opportunities and activities that they provide to their children, an understanding of these motivations will allow teachers to better understand the perspectives of both children and their families in respect to how they approach English learning in the school.

Thirdly, an understanding the motivations of mothers who engage in home teaching of English will potentially inform government policy in this area, especially as Taiwan moves towards the implementation of an early childhood curriculum. In order for the Taiwanese government to tailor its messages appropriately to its intended audience, it is necessary for the

authorities to understand the motivations behind mothers' decisions. This will enable policy makers to inform public education programs to meet parents' expectations, or to communicate more effectively with parents if their expectations are not aligned with educational policy directions. For example, parents may want their young children to be taught English via the didactic methods of cram schools, as they are afraid that their children will be disadvantaged when they start school if this does not occur. By understanding the mothers' motivations, the government can communicate their educational policies more effectively to parents, reducing the likelihood of public disapproval and backlash.

The motivation to teach and learn English as a second language can be conceptualised in different ways. Two frequent distinctions that are made in the literature contrast *intrinsic* as opposed to *extrinsic* motivation, and *integrative* as opposed to *instrumental* motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

Intrinsic motivation refers to any motivation that comes from within the individual and involves enjoyment of learning a second or foreign language for its own sake without external pressure (Brown, 2006; Wu, 2003). Extrinsic motivation refers to the situation where learners are motivated to achieve a particular goal, to benefit someone or to gain advantages such as better employment, a higher salary, or a promotion (Brown, 2006; Chen, Warden, & Chang, 2005; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005; Gardner, 2001; Warden & Lin, 2000; Wu, 2003).

Gardner and Lambert (1972) proposed a model to measure the motivational orientations of language learners. Integrative motivation occurs when a language learner wishes "to learn more about the other [i.e. target] cultural community because he is interested in it in an open-minded way, to the point of eventually being accepted as a member of that other group" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p.3). On the other hand, instrumental motivation, like extrinsic motivation, is said to occur "if the purpose of the language study reflects the more utilitarian value of linguistic achievement" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p.3).

These two conceptual distinctions are frequently regarded as well matched. Chambers (1995) claimed that instrumental motivation is extrinsic; whereas integrative motivation is to a certain degree intrinsic (cited in Gao et al., 2004). However, in Taiwanese/Chinese contexts, these two distinctions may not be sufficient to capture all types of motivations driving Taiwanese/Chinese EFL learners under the present educational system. Other types of motivation, referred to as "required motivation" (Warden & Lin, 2000, p.540) or "Chinese

Imperative” (Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005, p.623) motivation, have been identified in the above two empirical studies conducted in Taiwan.

In Taiwan, English as a foreign language (EFL) setting, integrative or intrinsic motivation can be low since English is not part of the daily lives of most people. However, English is a compulsory subject in the school curriculum and proficiency in English is necessary to pass examinations. Both Chen, Warden, & Chang (2005) and Warden and Lin (2000) refer to the “Chinese Imperative” (p. 623) and the “required motivation” (p.540) respectively. They suggest that the need to score highly in examinations has been internalized within the current Chinese cultural environment and that this need plays a more important role than integrative motivation in English language learning.

Empirical studies focusing on the motivations of second language learners have mostly been conducted in a western context or based on data from university students, high school students or adults in EFL contexts. Less is known about the motivations of young foreign language learners, nor the motivations of mothers teaching English as a foreign language to their own children. Compared with some previous studies which have viewed motivation in second language acquisition as an abstract and hypothetical concept, no specific research on the motivations which drive Taiwanese mothers to teach their preschoolers English at home has been found in the literature. However, similar motivational distinctions to those described above may underpin the practices of such mothers.

This study is concerned with mothers’ motivations for teaching English to their children, rather than their motivations for learning English themselves. The study reported here aims to determine the specific motivations leading to the mothers’ actions, thus expanding on our understanding of this aspect of Taiwanese mothers’ parenting practices.

Methodology

Participants and Data Collection

The data presented in this paper derive from a larger study which aimed to determine Taiwanese mothers’ beliefs about teaching English to preschool aged children in the home context. A survey was distributed to mothers of preschool aged children, asking them to respond to statements which probed their attitudes towards prior-to-school and home English teaching, effective English teaching and learning practices, and their current practices. A section of the survey, two open-ended questions, asked mothers to state whether they were currently engaging in home English teaching activities with their young children and their

reasons for doing so. We used open-ended questions to gain information because we wanted to give the respondents the freedom to bring out any motivational factors which were relevant for them. With closed questions, there is no opportunity to go back to the respondents to clarify their views. Open-ended questions place no restrictions on the types of ideas that are expressed, therefore producing more comprehensive and richer data than those that could be obtained from the closed questions (Walter, 2010). As Creswell (2005) notes, open-ended questions are the best for researchers “to probe a little deeper and explore the many possibilities that individuals might create for a question” (p.364). The questions in Chinese and English are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Two Open-ended Questions in Chinese and English.*

Q 46. in Chinese	目前，我教我的小孩學習英文嗎？是 <input type="checkbox"/> 否 <input type="checkbox"/> 為什麼？
Q46. in English	<i>Are you teaching your child English? Yes<input type="checkbox"/> No<input type="checkbox"/> Why or why not?</i>
For Additional information in Chinese	如果我們有遺漏重要部份，或是您也想表達您對幼兒英語言及識字發展的寶貴見解，敬請不吝賜教，填寫於下方欄內。
For Additional information in English	<i>If we have overlooked asking you something important, or you would like to express your views about young children’s English language and literacy development, please comment:</i>

One thousand one hundred and eighty questionnaires were distributed to mothers whose children attended 11 early childhood educational institutes and 2 church Sunday schools located in Tainan City or County. Of the 647 returned surveys, 466 mothers responded to at least one of the 2 open-ended questions. There were 286 mothers who clearly indicated that they were engaging in home English teaching and learning practices with their child, and 263 of these provided written responses to indicate their reasons. Since this study was focused on the qualitative analysis of mothers’ motivations, we analyzed the responses of those mothers who were engaging in home English teaching and learning with their child and who chose to provide a written response explaining their reasons for doing so. These 263 responses became the data to be analysed in the present study. The hand-written responses were usually short paragraphs, ranging from a couple of words to 300 Chinese characters, or about 10 sentences. A research assistant transcribed the responses into electronic format and the first author translated these into English.

The participant mothers did not vary greatly in age, with the majority of them (approximately 85%) aged from 31 to 39 years. In term of mothers' levels of education, their highest educational attainments were as follows: high school or lower (15.8% of mothers), vocational diploma (19.2% of mothers), bachelor degree (45% of mothers) and post graduate degree (20% of mothers). They were drawn from the full range of SES backgrounds. Their children all were aged from 3.5 to 5.5 years. The participants were all located across the metropolitan area of Tainan, Taiwan.

Validation of the data

Because of the different language structures, Chinese language cannot always be translated directly into English. It was therefore important to check the accuracy of the translations to ensure that the gist of the Chinese response had been captured in translation. The three authors (one native Chinese speaker and two native English speakers) discussed the translated meaning of each response to reach a consensus of the meaning. Furthermore, some responses in colloquial or poorly structured Chinese were given to two Taiwanese translators, who are both PhD students in English literature and linguistics, in order to clarify the meanings.

Method of Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to analyse and categorise the responses. This analysis was conducted in three phases, with the authors working together to secure a degree of analytical plausibility. First, the authors discussed the responses in order to detect initial patterns and trends in the data. Once this was complete, each separate response was pasted on to a single sheet to facilitate inductive categorization. The first author then assigned a code to each response taking into account the content of the mothers' justification of her teaching practice. These initial codes were then refined in the final stage of analysis in which the constant comparison method (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was employed to develop and define each code and determine the themes to illustrate theoretical connections between them. In this stage, the authors discussed each response's underlying meaning, taking into account both the Chinese script and the English translation, and compared each response to previously discussed ones. In this way, definitions were derived from the data and these emerging definitions progressively facilitated the coding process and enabled the relationships between each code to become clear.

Findings

Six codes or themes emerged from the analysis of the mothers' responses to the open-ended questions about the most important reasons for teaching their child English at home. These codes were united under a superordinate theme which provided evidence of the mothers' belief in the value of English as a global language and one worth investing in. None of the respondents challenged this view.

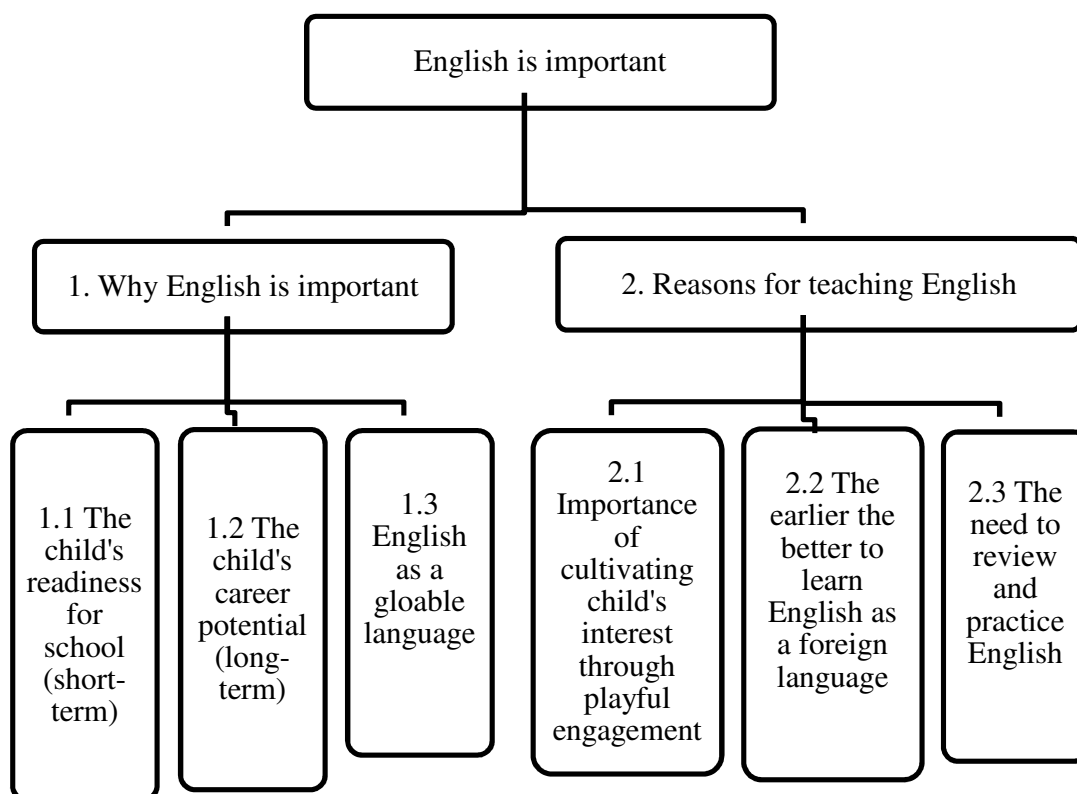
From there, two main categories were identifiable in the data:

Category 1: Why it is important for their child to be proficient in English

Category 2: Why they have chosen to teach English to their child at home prior to school.

Within each category, 3 themes were identified, making 6 themes in total. Each theme expresses a motive evident in the mothers' responses for teaching English to their preschool aged child at home. We shall now discuss each theme in turn.

Figure1. Themes and Codes Identified in the Responses.



Category 1: Why it is important for their child to be proficient in English

Three main motivations for promoting their child's English proficiency were evident in the data, the majority of which could be described as primarily extrinsic or instrumental in nature.

1.1 The child's readiness for school

The first motivation related to the notion of school readiness. In Taiwan, English language instruction is a compulsory subject at the elementary school level. Some mothers commented that it was important for their child to learn English in order to prepare them for the demands of formal school learning: 對往後的正式英文課程(學習)，應會有幫助才對。(Mother 216) *(That should be helpful for their later learning in formal instruction setting.)*

The motivation appeared to be based on a concern that the child needed a head start prior to school to enable the child to cope with the demands of school.

是，不想讓小孩輸在起跑點。(Mother 634)

(Yes. I don't want my child left behind at the starting point.)

1.2 The child's long term career potential

Some mothers stated that they were motivated by long term goals for their child. They expressed the view that, if their child becomes fluent in English, he or she will have better future career opportunities relative to others who are not proficient in English. Such motivations appear instrumental in nature.

不會輸在起跑點，增加在社會的競爭力。(Mother 609)

(Not to lose at the starting point, more competitive abilities.)

可以 help 自己多瞭解世界，同時可幫助就業。(Mother 552)

(It can broaden your perspective and be more competitive for the future career.)

對未來會有幫助，未來出國留學也用得到。(Mother 514)

(Yes. It will be helpful in the future and for studying overseas.)

1.3 The status of English as a global language

The mothers strongly linked the ability to speak English to membership of the “global village”. They regarded knowledge of English as an integral part of the globalization process

which brings access to cultural, financial and social resources. The motivations appeared to include both integrative and instrumental elements. Mother 108 expressed 英文是世界通用的語言，身處地球村，有認識與了解的必要。(English is a global language. Living in a global village, it is necessary to learn English.)

English proficiency was seen as a vehicle for increasing their knowledge of others, indicating a general valuing of cross cultural understanding: 時勢所趨，也可以了解他國文化。(Mother 013) (It is the trend. By the way, it is as the tool to know another culture.)

Category 2: Reasons for choosing to teach English to their child at home prior to school.

The three themes above were related to mothers' motivations in wanting their child to become proficient in English. Three closely related themes emerged which described the mothers' motivations in choosing to teach their child English at home prior to the commencement of formal schooling. These themes are as follows.

2.1 It is important to cultivate the child's interest in English through playful engagement

Here many mothers expressed an awareness of the value of integrated motivation. Some mothers explained that their child had already shown an interest in learning English. The child's interest motivated the mothers to further cultivate that interest by teaching their children English songs and by reading English picture books together.

我的小朋友對英文很有興趣，也勇於嘗試，而不排斥語言的情況下，小朋友透過歌曲、圖畫書，特定學習教材認識各種語言，我的小朋友在沒有壓力 的情況下，反而培養出尋找知識樂趣，當然也包括英文程度提升！(Mother 580) (My child shows high interest in English. He learns by songs, picture books, some teaching materials. He enjoys learning in a happy way without stress and develops a habit of seeking knowledge. Of course, that includes making progress in his English ability.)

老二因為很喜歡英文，所以會教他一些英文歌曲或單字。(Mother 049)

(My second child loves English very much so I teach him some English songs and words.)

Several mothers identified a shared interest with their child, which led to a collaborative approach to learning together. Mother 572, for example, stated陪他一起學習，他很喜歡。(He learns with my company and support; he loves that.) and Mother 628 said自己喜歡而且小孩也喜歡。(Yes. Both my child and I like English). Many mothers recognized that young

children learn in different ways than older children. Mother 482 responded 不用傳統教學方式，讓小孩在遊戲和唱這種方式熟悉第二種語言，不排斥學習，自然而然的說或唱，只是讓她提早接觸不同的語言。 (*I don't use the traditional teaching methods; instead, by playing games and singing songs, she gets familiar with the second language at an early age.*)

2.2 The earlier the better to learn English as a foreign language

Many mothers were motivated by their belief that the earlier children are exposed to an additional language, the more quickly they will learn that language. Some mothers explained this in terms of early brain development, both in relation to critical periods for development and the facilitation of cognitive development:

希望在她腦部發展最快吸收最快時教他第三語言。(Mother 046)

(*I hope I teach her the third language during the rapid period of brain development.*)

讓他在遊戲中學英文。中文英文對小孩而言，即統為語言區塊，刺激語言區塊與協專注力，不管何種語言都 ok。(Mother 630)

(*No matter which language he learns helps stimulate the brain language section and help for his concentration.*)

Others felt that early learning would promote more effective L2 acquisition. Mother 272, for example, stated that 愈早接觸效果愈佳，發音也漂亮。(The earlier, the better. Early learning makes the pronunciation like the native speakers.).

2.3 The need to review and practice English

A final theme which emerged from the data was the motivation of some mothers to provide their child with the opportunity to practice and review the English language instruction which their child already receives from kindergarten English lessons or from an external private English coaching school. Some coaching schools expect mothers to review lessons at home with their child, and this requirement was reflected in statements like 因為課後英文的部份需要家長協同完成作業。(Mother 438) (*It is required for parents to assist child's homework.*) Other mothers stated that they tried to “match” the coaching schools lessons or kindergarten homework at home for consistency in their child's learning and clearly valued their own input in their children's learning:

學校教的會幫她複習，為了讓他更熟練。(Mother 036)

(I help her review what she has learned at school in order that she is familiar with what has been taught.)

是，因為父母親是需要與小孩一同學習，否則父母親無法幫助孩子複習功課，這樣小孩學習效果就會較不佳。(Mother 146)

(Yes, children need to learn things with their parents' company or parents cannot help their children to review what they have learned. Without parents' help, children's learning is less effective.)

Discussion

This study aimed to determine the specific motivations which drive Taiwanese mothers to attempt to teach their preschoolers English at home. The findings suggest that a range of motivations may underpin their decision making. One factor which emerged strongly from the data was the importance of what has been referred to as “Chinese imperative motivation” or “required motivation”. This appeared to be the most significant factor driving Taiwanese mothers to engage in home teaching of English.

The term “需要” (*requirement/required*) appeared at least 42 times in the written survey responses. Many mothers asserted that they were teaching English at home because it is “required” by the English “cram” schools their preschool children attended, for consistency of the children’s learning. The expression “requirement” in the present study, however, appears to have a slightly different meaning compared with the use of the term “requirement” described in the studies of Warden and Lin (2000) and Chen, Warden, and Cheng (2005). In these latter studies, the word refers to the fact that within the Chinese cultural context, students are required to study English as it is a compulsory subject, and to pass different kinds of examinations. In the current study, when the mothers used the term “requirement”, it referred to their role in providing support for their children, because they believed that parents are responsible for their children’s academic success. This finding indicates that the surveyed mothers’ attitudes may be similar to those found by Hadley (2003) and Wang and Tamis-LeMonda (2003), demonstrating that Taiwanese mothers valued school achievement and were willing to sacrifice their own needs to enhance their children’s opportunities for academic success (Chao, 1996).

It is perhaps surprising to note that motivation which could be considered integrative or intrinsic from the point of view of the mothers themselves was only identified in a few responses. This could be seen when mothers indicated that they enjoyed teaching and learning

English with their children (e.g. Mother 628). In this study, intrinsic motivation was instead associated with the mothers' attempts to promote their children's long-term interest and engagement. Many mothers sought to cultivate their child's intrinsic motivation through interesting activities, songs and games. This finding suggests that mothers' motivations align with those of the Taiwanese government which promotes the value of mothers teaching English to their preschool aged children in the home.

It is possible that English language learners in Taiwan might change their motivational orientation as they play out different roles in their lives. As university students become parents, their personal aspirations may change and they may focus more on the intrinsic value of learning another language, which then motivates them to become aware of interest and engagement as internal motivators for their young children's English language learning. Thus, hopefully, the absence of intrinsic motivation in the Taiwanese English as a Foreign Language environment presented in Warden and Lin's study (2000) would be mitigated by the increasing awareness of the value of intrinsic motivation for learning an additional language.

There was strong evidence that most mothers value English proficiency highly, and want to facilitate it in their children. On the one hand, mothers see a utilitarian purpose for their children to learn English. The mothers want their children to learn English for personal short-term or long-term benefits, such as to succeed in formal schooling and to be competitive when establishing their future careers. This finding is consistent with those of other studies about Taiwanese parents' attitudes towards early English language learning (Oladejo, 2006; Shang, Ingebritson & Tseng, 2007; Tsai, 2001). This finding, moreover, appears to support the view that instrumental motivations for learning English are predominant in many Asian contexts, such as Taiwan (Warden & Lin, 2000), Hong Kong (Lai, 1999), Japan (Yashima, 2002), China (Gao et al., 2004) and Korea (Park, & Kwon, 2009).

In this study, the impact of globalization on mothers' motivations was emphasized. This finding has also been evident in a variety of studies of EFL contexts, where English language learners appear to acquire an identity as "world citizens" (Lamb, 2004). Bradford's (2007) study has noted that many Asian people value English as a tool for competing successfully in the international community. Bradford's participants also agreed that English is used to communicate with a variety of people from other countries and that English proficiency will increase their knowledge of other cultures (Bradford, 2007). This sounds similar to the statements of many of the mothers in this study. However, the integrative motivation evident

in this study is somewhat different from the traditional concept of integrative motivation described by Gardner and Lambert (1972), where learners were highly motivated to interact with the target language community. This difference may be because, unlike the situation where L2 learners are living in a culture where they do not speak the dominant language, the Taiwanese setting is largely non-English speaking so there are limited opportunities for the actual use of English. Nevertheless, the mothers of these young learners regarded success in mastering English language as of vital importance and as one way of becoming an integral part of a worldwide community. In this way, the study is consistent with the integrative motivation identified in the studies of Lamb (2004; 2007), McKay (2003) and Warschauer (2000).

The distinctions that were made in previous motivational studies, such as those between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, instrumental as opposed to integrative motivations, and required referred to Chinese imperative motivations, are helpful in understanding the different types of motivation driving Taiwanese mothers to teach their preschoolers English at home and in understanding why the mothers want their children to learn English prior to the commencement of formal school. This present study shows that mothers can simultaneously hold future-oriented values for their children, such as their belief in the power of globalization and the future opportunities it offers, while also caring about and providing for children's current interests, play-based learning opportunities and engagement.

An unexpected finding was the range of ways in which the word "teaching" was used in the survey, suggesting that this word has many nuances in Chinese. The manner in which the mothers interpreted the word "teach" appeared to vary and suggests that we need to re-examine how "teach" was defined. The common interpretation of "teach (教)" among these mothers appears to include the provision of basic knowledge, as well as interactions which will scaffold children's learning and increase the effectiveness of their teaching practices.

Limitations

The exploratory nature of this study should be acknowledged. This study focused only on mothers of children aged from 3.5 to 5.5 years in Tainan City and County. The participants may not be fully representative of the larger Taiwanese population, especially those living in rural areas and from different cultural backgrounds. Though this study provided evidence from mothers of young children about their motivations, and reasons for teaching English language to their children, the data were obtained from written survey responses. It was therefore not

possible to probe further to understand more fully their motives and reasons. Furthermore, some mothers were more able to express themselves in writing than others. Despite these limitations, this study does present the first attempt to explore the mothers' motivations for home English teaching in a Chinese context.

Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

The findings of this study may be relevant to other Chinese societies such as Mainland China and Hong Kong, where issues surrounding the place of English in contemporary society are a major focus of interest and concern. In the case of Taiwan, the government is actively promoting policies aimed at improving the English proficiency of its citizenry. The more we can understand the motivations of mothers who are attempting to implement the government's policies, the more possible it will be to tailor government information and educational materials to meet the needs and desires of mothers of young children. Alternatively, if the motivations of mothers do not align with those of the Taiwanese government regarding early childhood English education, further consultation and refinement of their policies will be necessary. The limited evidence available indicates that mothers from different social and cultural backgrounds in Taiwan may have different motivations when deciding whether or not to teach English to their preschoolers. Future research may investigate whether Taiwanese mothers' educational level and their English abilities are associated with their views about English language pedagogy for young children and their use of English learning resources and practices in the home. In depth interviews of mothers would complement the findings of this study.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

MATERNAL ROLES OF TEACHING PRESCHOOLERS AT HOME

Preamble

In the earlier chapters of this thesis, maternal practices and their reported provision of resources for their young children's EFL learning have been examined to gain more understanding of the issues, beliefs and values shaping maternal practices in Taiwanese context. An unexpected finding from Chapter 7 suggested the need to re-examine the interpretation of "teach (教)" and what it means to mothers. The following chapter focuses on how Taiwanese mothers interpret and enact their roles in relation to their children's EFL learning at home and what factors impact upon them (research question six, refer to p. 7). This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of data obtained from individual interviews with 6 Taiwanese mothers. Findings from the interviews are presented in this chapter (Article 4). It seeks to reveal mothers' understanding of their own roles and their perception of their children's roles relating to home EFL teaching and learning, while also highlighting contributing factors and difficulties that may account for mothers' teaching practices. The article was been reviewed, accepted and will be published in September, 2013 in *Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*. The chapter consists of the final revised version of the article submitted to and accepted by the journal.

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Taiwanese mothers as their child's first English teacher: Issues and challenges

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Abstract

Research has suggested that, in relation to children's education, the traditional separation of roles of parents and teachers is gradually changing in Chinese cultures. Whereas teachers were once regarded as having ultimate authority in all matters pertaining to the formal education of children, parents are now being encouraged to participate more fully in their children's education and to regard themselves as their children's first teacher at home. There is, however, little data available about whether mothers do indeed perceive themselves as a "teacher" of English language and literacy to their pre-school-aged child in the home context. Nor is it clear how they enact this role and responsibility in their everyday interactions with their children. This study is designed to investigate Taiwanese mothers' views about their role in their child's English language learning. Six mothers of children aged from three to six years participated in an extended semi-structured interview. Findings reveal that the mothers used the term "teaching" to refer to their practices with their child, but that their views about appropriate practices and their confidence and perceived capability as a parent-teacher varied considerably. The findings contribute to our understanding of how mothers respond to and are affected by educational policies regarding English as foreign language (EFL) development in very young children.

Key words: Taiwanese mother, early childhood, EFL, mothers' beliefs

Taiwanese Mothers as Their Child's First English Teacher: Issues and Challenges

The issue of family involvement in children's education has become a focus of recent educational reforms in the Asia-Pacific region, including Korea (Bae-Suh, 2012) and Taiwan (Cheng, 2001; Hung, 2007; Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2006a). The Taiwanese government has encouraged increased parental involvement in educational planning and decision making (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2006b). Taiwanese parents are not only encouraged to participate in their child's education at elementary and junior high school levels, through supervision of children's learning activities inside and outside school, and direct communication with teachers, but are also being encouraged to regard themselves as their children's "first teacher" at home, before their child commences formal schooling (Beckert, et al., 2004; Chen & Luster, 2002). For example, under the national legislation, parents are expected to be actively involved in teaching values and ethics to their children. Meanwhile, early childhood educators have the task of convincing parents to see themselves as their children's first teachers, such as the preschool learning arrangement at home to prepare children for the classroom. This approach appears to contrast with more traditional values, according to which qualified teachers, rather than parents, are seen as having authority and responsibility for all matters pertaining to children's education. In the home context, the processes of "teaching" and "disciplining" are typically seen as being inextricably connected. The Chinese notion "Guan Jiao" (管教) is heavily emphasized in Chinese culture (Chan, Bowes & Wyver, 2009). The term "guan" means to govern and discipline, while "jiao" means to teach or to train. Thus the idea that the responsibility of parents is to both teach and discipline their children is deeply embedded in Taiwanese culture. This is evident in the well known Chinese expression "yang bú jiào, fù zhī guò 養不教,父之過", which is loosely translated to mean "bad parents rear, but do not teach, their children." The term "teach" in

this context does not refer to formal academic teaching, however, but rather more general discipline in life.

It is frequently suggested that in Taiwan, as in other Chinese cultures, Confucianism is highly influential in shaping educational theory and practice (Hsieh, 2004; Shih, 2010; Yim, Lee, & Ebbeck, 2011, 2013). According to this philosophy, children are seen as malleable, and in need of direct teaching and explicit instruction if they are to learn effectively (Johnston, & Wong, 2002). Personal effort is highly valued. Children are expected to study hard even at the pre-elementary school level. Some preschool and kindergarten teachers assign homework to be completed by children in order to revise what they have learnt during the day. Homework may take the form of completing worksheets and drag-and-match activities, reviewing Chinese phonics and reading storybooks in Chinese or English languages. Homework can also be seen as a strategy for promoting parents' involvement in their child's education. For example, in the Project approach, which was adopted by many early childhood educators in Taiwan (Liu & Chien, 1998), young children need their parents' help in finding resources and materials to complete their projects. This view of how parents can be involved in their children's learning has implications for the manner in which mothers interpret their role as their child's teacher at home.

English language learning is highly valued in Taiwan. Some research indicates that many Taiwanese parents would like to see their children start learning English language prior to the commencement of formal school (Chang, 2006; Oladejo, 2006; Shang, Ingebritson, & Tseng, 2007). To this end, some parents send their children to whole-English or Chinese-English bilingual institutes or English coaching schools, despite the fact that whole English early childhood institutions are prohibited (Din, 2005; Chou, 2009; Lan, Degotardi & Torr, 2011). To fulfill the spirit of the Article 5 of "Children and Youth Welfare Act of 2003", the

Taiwanese government prohibits explicit teaching of English language in prior to elementary school.

The Taiwanese government, however, suggests that if parents would like to introduce English language to children and enhance their interest in English in the years prior to formal school, parents can “co-learn” with their children using informal and playful methods, such as playing English games, singing nursery songs and shared reading of English language picture books (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2004). The extent of parent interest in the home teaching of English is reflected in the fact that the author of one of Taiwan’s best-selling books is a mother who explains how she taught English to her children at home (Wang, 2008). Recent research has suggested that parents are indeed adopting home-teaching methods. Lan, Degotardi and Torr (2011), for example, found that many Taiwanese mothers of three to six-year-old children are positive toward EFL teaching and learning prior to formal schooling and believe that early childhood is an important time for EFL learning. Lee (2010) found that Taiwanese parents of successful third- grade English learners tended to engage their children in shared book reading. Lan, Torr, and Degotardi (2011; 2012) also report the importance of shared book reading, but also found that parents wished to cultivate the child’s interest in English through playful engagement as well as through the use of learning resources, such as English language books, toys and computer media for EFL learning. This view of children and how they learn has implications for the manner in which mothers interpret their role as their child’s first English teacher and raises questions about how Taiwanese mothers construe the Taiwanese government’s emphasis on their role as their child’s first English “teacher.” Although previous research has investigated Taiwanese mothers’ beliefs, parenting goals and behaviors in general (Beckert, Strom, Strom, Yang, & Shen, 2005; Chen & Luster, 2002), mothers’ beliefs and expectations regarding their preschool aged children’s English language

education have received scant empirical attention. Yet, as Oladejo (2006) argued, aligning reforms with parents' perceptions is crucial for formulating a stable language education policy in Taiwan. He strongly recommends that, prior to the implementation of educational reforms, parents' perceptions and expectations should be investigated and considered. Little research has focused specifically on whether Taiwanese mothers conceive of themselves as English "teachers" of their preschool aged children, and if so, how they enact that role in everyday life. Do they interpret teaching in traditional Confucian, teacher-directed terms? What do they see as their responsibility regarding their child's English language education, and what do they see as their child's own responsibility and duty? What challenges do they face when attempting to teach their child English? The exploration of these questions forms the basis of this study. As many mothers of young children in Taiwan are employed outside the home, it is also important to determine the pragmatic issues involved for them as they try to enact the government's suggestion of introducing English to their child and enhancing their English learning interest in the home prior to school commencement. Specifically the following research questions are addressed:

- How do Taiwanese mothers of preschoolers interpret and enact their roles and responsibilities in relation to their child's English as a foreign language (EFL) development in the years prior to elementary school?
- What challenges do mothers encounter when they assume a teaching role during everyday interactions with their children?

Methodology

Data Collection

The participants were six mothers who had children aged between three and six years at the time of the study. They were recruited during the course of a larger study which

surveyed the beliefs and practices of Taiwanese mothers in relation to their child's development of English and Chinese language and literacy. Participants were recruited through licensed day care centers and kindergartens in Tainan City and Tainan County, in the southern part of Taiwan where the study was conducted. Before commencing the interviews, the first author explained the goals of the study to the mothers and obtained their informed consent to participate in the study. The mothers were assured their participation was completely voluntary and that all responses would be kept strictly confidential. Moreover, the mothers were assured that the findings from the study may be published in referred and professional journals or at conferences and that pseudonyms will be used in the reports to protect privacy. All the interviews covered a similar set of topics, including mothers' views about how English is best taught to preschoolers, about how they support their child's English language learning in the home, and about their child's own attitudes and behaviours surrounding their English language development. The interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewees, and ranged in length from 24 minutes to 2 and a half hours. The participants were encouraged to follow issues and angles of particular interest to them. One mother delved into other areas of interest, such as her new future career as well as the issues about new immigrant mothers. One mother tended to respond to interview questions by using very short answers or phrases. Three interviews took place in a quiet room located in the mothers' working places, two were in family living rooms and one interview was in a quiet room in the kindergarten attended by the participant's children. The interviews were conducted in a relaxed and conversational manner.

Participants

Table 1 shows the age, highest educational qualification, profession and number of children of the 6 participants. All 6 mothers were married to husbands who were equally

highly educated and employed fulltime as teachers or professors. Both Mandarin and Taiwanese languages were spoken by five of the families. All of the mothers were able to speak English but only 3 of them reported that they could do so fluently and confidently, having lived and studied in the USA for at least 3 years.

Table 1. *Participants' Demographic Information*

Name	Educational Level	Number of children	Language spoken at home	Age	Mother's vocation	Length of Interview (hrs: mins)
Ah-Sing	Master	2	Mandarin and Taiwanese	31-39	Assistant Professor in a University of Technology	01:04
Yi-An	Master	2	Mandarin and Taiwanese	40-49	Lecturer in a University of Technology	00:45
Li-Li	Bachelor	1	Mandarin and Taiwanese	40-49	Special education teacher in a public primary school	02:36
Shu-Feng	Master	1	Mandarin and Taiwanese	40-49	Associate Professor in a University of Technology	01:22
Ling-Ling	Master/	2	Mandarin	31-39	High school teacher	01:07
Huei-Huei	Master	3	Mandarin and Taiwanese	40-49	English teacher and owner of an English coaching school	00:24

Data Analysis

Since the three authors are one native Chinese speaker and two native English speakers, the interviews were transcribed verbatim in Chinese and translated into English so that the authors could discuss the interview data together to examine and compare the data within and

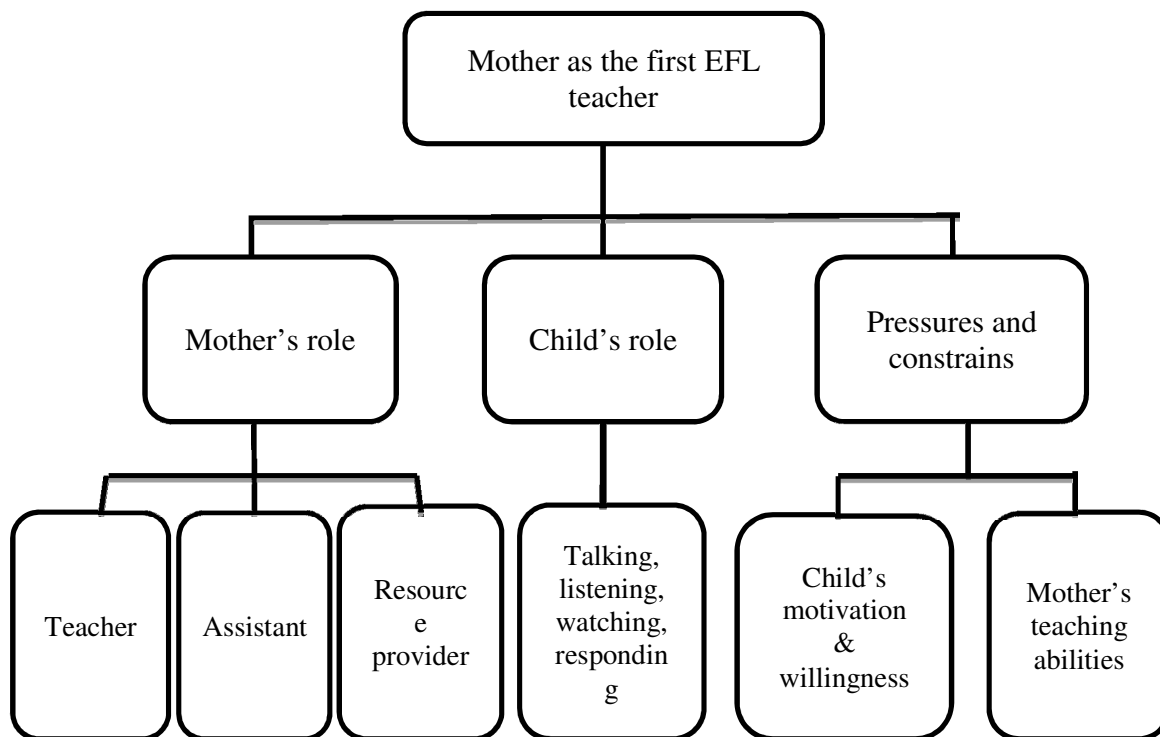
across the categories to finalize themes. The transcriptions and the translations of interviews were then returned to the interviewees to ensure that the original and translated transcripts accurately expressed their views. One interviewee added several sentences as she felt that she had not responded adequately to one question in the original interview.

The transcribed interviews were then analysed according to the grounded theory methods developed by Glaser and Strauss (1977; see also Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Initially the authors reviewed the interview data independently times to get a broad understanding and conducted open coding of the interview transcripts. We met regularly to discuss the translations of interviews to detect the initial pattern and trends in the data. Then, the common patterns were pasted on an Excel sheet to facilitate inductive categorization. A code was then assigned to each pattern taking into account the context of mothers' role for their child's EFL learning. The initial codes were compared and contrasted, to build up a number of concepts which appeared to be emerging from the data. These were then gradually amended to eliminate redundancies and to propose a number of categories. These categories were then grouped according to different features and dimensions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Finally, a number of patterns related to the research questions were identified and were then organized thematically. The resulting themes are described in the following section.

Findings

Themes clustered around the participants' ideas about teaching English to young children. Three broad categories were identified; the mothers' role, the child's role and the pressures and constraints experienced by the mothers in attempting to fulfill their English teaching role. Within each category, 1 to 3 themes were identified, making 6 themes in total. Each theme captures a particular view about the processes and challenges associated with adopting the 'first EFL teacher' role. Each theme will be discussed in turn.

Figure 1. Themes and Codes Identified in the interviews.



Mothers' Perception of Their Role in Their Child's Learning

The mothers described their engagement with their child's English development in terms of the roles they saw themselves enacting. These roles included (i) mother as teacher, (ii) mother as assistant and (iii) mother as resource provider. We discuss each in turn.

Mother as teacher. Several mothers explicitly described their English-based activities with their child as “teach” or “teacher”, with responses suggesting that they believed that they had the capacity to actively instruct their child in the area of EFL learning. They expressed confidence in their own English proficiency and in their capacity to teach their child English. This can be seen in Ling-Ling's statement which posits a direct cause-effect relationship between her pedagogical input and her child's subsequent knowledge of English: 因為我們都沒有教過他，所以他都不會 (*We never taught him colors, so he did not know the answers*).

These highly articulate mothers, like school teachers, set their child relatively formal learning tasks and activities with specific outcomes in mind, such as an increase in the child's vocabulary, or comprehension of English texts, or progress towards native-like pronunciation. These confident mothers tended to foreground their own role in bringing about their child's learning, and saw themselves as having equivalent effectiveness as school teachers. For example, Li-Li noted 父母是第一步啊，如果父母沒有辦法的時候，你才從學校老師那邊學 (*Parents are at the starting point. If the parents cannot [teach their children], they learn from school teachers.*)

Not all the mothers, however, felt capable of acting as an "English teacher" for their child. One mother stated that she had no idea about teaching English as a foreign language and would prefer to send her children to an English coaching school when they are older. Ah-Sing explained 我們可能沒有那個方法，那我相信補習班的老師。應該說我會把我定位在輔助的角色。那她正規的學習方式是在補習班。 (*I do not have the pedagogy of teaching English. So I choose to trust the teacher at the cram schools. I just play the role of helper. She will learn mainly at the English cram school.*) Yet in her decision making, this mother nevertheless demonstrated through her language an understanding of educational principles and practices, even though she disavowed having the requisite expertise in the specific area of English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching.

Mother as assistant. Contrast to the role of teacher, some mothers expressed that they adopted a role of assistant by reinforcing activities or concepts that had been actively taught at school. Some mothers tended to assume a more auxiliary, rather than proactive, decision-making role in their children's English learning, by assisting their child to complete tasks and homework set by external educators. This assistance consisted mainly of supervising the child's homework and helping the child to memorize what he or she learnt at preschool or

English coaching school. Shu-Feng said that 他拿作業回來，我還要陪做作業，要慢慢學習
怎麼樣在家裡帶那種正規功課 (*He has homework and I sit with him while he finishes it. I
am learning how to help him at home with that kind of formal school assignment.*) Mothers'
assistance can take a very direct form. Huei-Huei, when supervising her son's completion of
his homework from the English coaching school, described how she held his hand to help him
to complete a school-based task. 剛才在幫他複習功課，也有一點點寫，只是.....其實我是
牽他的手 (*I was helping him with his homework. There was a small writing exercise. He
writes because I hold his hand to write.*)

Mother as resource provider. Mothers were recognized as resource provider as mothers
searched for English language learning resource to support and to influence their child's EFL
learning. All the mothers spoke of the ways they provisioned the environment to support their
child's English (or Chinese) learning, suggesting that they regarded resources such as books,
DVDs, tapes, and educational toys as having an important influence on their child's English
language development. It was evident through the mothers' descriptions that they devoted
much time and thought into choosing and accessing English teaching resources. They believed
that such resources play a key role in teaching their child English. Mothers generally decided
what books to purchase, although they sometimes let children choose their own books from
the library. However, even in the case of library borrowings, mothers exercised control over
their children's choices. Shu-Feng decided what books her son could borrow from the library,
as she pointed out that he always chose books about trains and she wanted him to read books
on other topics 他怎麼挑他還是那一類型的，所以有時候我會主動性幫他. (*He always
chooses books about trains so I offer my help to choose the books.*) Other factors which
mothers said they took into account when purchasing English language books included the
reputation of the authors, the beauty of the illustrations, interesting plot lines and books with

repetitive language patterns. Ling-Ling always checked information from the Internet before she bought or borrowed the books. Li-Li bought imported English teaching materials not only because they are very cheap but also they include guessing games and activities for children to operate with their hands. She believed that imported English language books were both informative and helpful for children's literacy development. 我會覺得跟生活連結的東西是讓孩子能夠最快學到東西的(*Those that are related to real life are the most helpful for children to learn from, according to my professional opinion.*)

The Child as Learner of English

Just as the mothers' use of the term "teacher" shed light on how they see their role in their child's English language learning, so too their descriptions of their child's behaviours and activities shed light on how they perceive what "learning" is and how it occurs. Mothers used a range of expressions to describe the child's role in the language learning process. The child was not usually represented as one who initiated or actively sought out language learning experiences for themselves; rather the child's role was usually characterized in terms of degrees of involvement and interest in activities chosen for them by others, usually by their mothers or English teachers. Mothers referred to the following activities which their child engaged in to learn English:

- Talking with native English speakers. Two mothers (Huei-Huei and Yi-An) believed interacting with native English speakers was necessary for their children to gain excellent English pronunciation.
- Listening to stories and songs. All the mothers referred to the value of English language stories and songs, especially those provided by English DVDs and videos.

- Responding to flash cards. This was seen as a positive activity for children to learn English.
- Watching television programs. Mothers believed that their child could learn English through watching television programs and cartoons.
- Filling out worksheets. Mothers noted the value of repetition and memorizing for their child's English development.

Challenges Associated with the Teaching Role

It was clear from the interviews that all the mothers were strongly committed to their child learning English as they believed it to be in the best interests of their child. They wished to enhance their child's readiness for school, by reducing potential stress and fear of learning foreign languages. 我覺得她是在學齡前學得，是可以讓她在進到小學這個剛開始的階段，會比較沒有那麼大的壓力、沒有那麼辛苦 (Mother Yi-An) (*I think what she learns at preschool age is for her to be less stressful when she starts the formal schooling.*)

It was also clear, however, that mothers experienced considerable difficulties in their efforts to teach English to their child. Yi-An noted that mothers may not be the most effective teachers of their own children: 總覺得自己的小孩很難教，給別人教比較快 (*It is difficult for me to teach my own children. You may see their learning results in a shorter time if you have them be taught by other teachers.*) There was the suggestion that the nature of the relationship between a mother and child may in itself affect a child's motivation and willingness to learn, in the more formal sense implied by the term "teach". 小孩子的學習態度會比較沒有那麼的強，學習意願，她可能想說媽媽...隨便啦，就愛聽不聽的 (Mother Yi-An) (*I think the children's learning attitude may not strong enough/ positive. Their*

learning willingness may be influenced by the teaching role. They might be careless about what their mothers teach.)

As noted in the profile of the interviewees (Table 1 above), all the mothers were engaged in full time employment outside the home. This impacted upon their ability to engage in the teaching practices encouraged by the Taiwanese government. Some mothers highlighted their tiredness and lack of time to engage with their children. Shu-Feng explained 我有時候是心有餘力不足 (*Sometimes, my mind wants to do it but my physical body fails.*) The pressure of household chores and the need to care for other family members made it difficult for some mothers to spend time teaching their child English. Ling-Ling said 我覺得整天那個瑣事很多，整天忙的團團轉 (*I am also taking care of my children and have to do so many chores every day. I am busy all day with tedious things.*) One mother had decided to discontinue her higher degree education in order to give herself more time to devote to her children.

At least one mother described how a lack of money to purchase English educational toys and other resources limited her capacity to provide for her child's English development. Huei-Huei: 也是沒有那麼多錢啦 (*Oh. I don't have much money for those [educational toys]. They cost money.*)

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was designed to explore whether and if so how 6 Taiwanese mothers of preschool aged children construed their role as their child's "first English teacher". The study was motivated by anecdotal evidence such as best seller books and recent Taiwanese government initiatives which have prohibited whole English and Chinese-English bilingual kindergartens but encouraged mothers to introduce English to their children through informal means at home. We were interested to explore this issue as there has traditionally been a clear

delineation in many Asian cultures between parental roles and responsibilities on the one hand and teacher roles and responsibilities on the other (Kim & Kwon, 2002; Yang & McMullen, 2003). In a major social transition, parents are being encouraged to involve themselves in their child's education and early childhood teachers are expected to convince parents "to see themselves in a new context – as their children's first teachers who should arrange preschool learning at home" (Beckert et al, 2004). Given the "English fever" prevalent in many Asian countries, we were especially concerned to explore mothers' teaching practices in the home and whether they adopted the new role assigned to them.

Our first question concerned the extent to which Taiwanese mothers of preschoolers interpreted and enacted their roles and responsibilities in relation to their child's English language development in the years prior to elementary school. The mothers in this study were all highly educated, articulate and committed to their child's English language development. Several of the mothers adopted an explicit teaching role, making decisions about appropriate English books and audiovisual materials to engage their child, and requiring the child to complete worksheets and undertake other learning activities. They closely monitored their child's learning and were confident in their pedagogical decision making. Other mothers however appeared less willing to accept a role as their child's "English teacher". They confined their activities to assisting their child to complete educational activities set by a professional teacher. For example, one mother explained that she lacked confidence altogether in her ability to teach English as a foreign language and decided to send her child to an English coaching school.

Our second question sought to understand the challenges associated with attempting to teach English at home on both mothers and their preschool aged children. It was clear from the interviews that mothers found teaching children at home was neither a straightforward nor

easy role to play. Mothers spoke of their tiredness and difficulty in finding the time and energy to engage with their child in this way. They had to make financial and personal sacrifices to enact the role of their child's first English teacher, similar to previous studies that have examined Chinese parents' attitudes to their children's education in general (Ji, & Koblinsky, 2009; Ho, Chen, Tran, & Ko, 2010) and immigrant Korean mothers' sacrifices for children's benefits and academic excellence (Park, & Jegatheesan, 2012). They also had to deal with interpersonal difficulties in their relationship with their child. The competing and often mutually exclusive roles of teacher-pupil and mother-child had to be bridged to successfully implement the government's suggestion of home-based teaching of English. This proved a difficult task and raised many issues surrounding the changing nature of traditional Taiwanese society, underpinned by Confucian values of respect for and unquestioning obedience to parents (Luk-Fong, 2005). There was evidence that mothers also appeared to be influenced by western values and practices, such as the importance of children's interest and engagement in their learning, and the effectiveness of play-based learning materials.

Despite their difficulties, the mothers never questioned their ability to make a positive difference to their child's English language development, whether in a teaching or assisting capacity, suggesting not only a strong belief in the value of academic achievement but also in the value of effort and hard work. They also expected their children to work hard, which may appear to contradict a play-based informal pedagogy. At the same time, they valued a warm and responsive relationship with their child.

Limitations of the Study

Like all interview based studies, it is impossible to generalize the findings of this study to the wider Taiwanese community. The participants were all highly educated and articulate professionals. The views and ideas of mothers from diverse backgrounds are also needed to

provide a more balanced view of the current situation in Taiwan. Secondly, each mother was only interviewed once. It was not possible to follow up the mothers as their children grew older and enter a formal educational setting. Thirdly, the present study did not investigate the children's actual English language outcomes, so it is impossible to make judgments as to the effectiveness or otherwise of the pedagogical practices reported by the mothers.

Implications for Policy and Practice

This study has investigated some of the challenges faced by mothers attempting to implement the Taiwanese government's English language policy for children under 6 years of age. It suggests that mothers endorse the government's policy of encouraging mothers to teach English to their child themselves. It has identified some of the factors affecting mothers' desire and capacity to play this role. The findings suggest that more support may be needed for mothers working full time, for example more flexible work arrangements and the availability of part time work during the year prior to their child commencing school. The findings could also inform parenting education programs provided by the government as part of their implementation of this policy.

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CHAPTER NINE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This thesis was designed to explore Taiwanese mothers' ideas about their preschool aged children's EFL learning at home. The study was motivated by the increasing focus on the English language in the Taiwanese educational system, in Taiwanese government language policies and in the broader Taiwanese society, and the implications of this focus for Taiwanese parents and their young children. The primary purpose of this study was to gain more knowledge and deeper understanding about parents' ideas and expectations in relation to their children's English education. Children's English education is a highly contested area in contemporary Taiwan (and in many other Asian countries), as it foregrounds issues surrounding traditional cultural beliefs and values, appropriate early childhood education and care, social and economic equity and access, and the gap between government educational reforms and public perceptions. The study was undertaken to gain insight into parents' ideas and practices regarding the English education of their own child prior to the commencement of formal schooling, rather than to make judgments about what is "correct" or best in terms of outcomes for children. To increase the likelihood that educational reforms in Taiwan will be successfully implemented, policy makers, regulatory bodies, and educators need to understand parents' ideas and expectations for themselves and their children. Increased understanding will potentially lessen the gap between government mandates and actual parental practices, and assist educational authorities to equip parents with evidence-based knowledge and/or further training to guide their own practices in supporting their children's EFL learning. Each of the published or in press articles above (chapters 5 to 8) provides a discussion of the findings of the particular research question(s) addressed in the publication. In this chapter I shall provide a discussion of the findings as a whole.

The design of the research study was primarily a mixed methods approach, consisting of a survey and interviews. A survey was distributed to identify mothers' ideas, motivations, and their self-reported practices regarding home-base English teaching and learning. The survey was also designed to investigate whether mothers' ideas about early EFL learning are consistent with those underpinning the Taiwanese government's policies regarding preschool

English language instruction. A small group of survey respondents then participated in an interview in order to explore more fully the issues set out above.

In this chapter I shall firstly describe briefly the findings relating to each of the research questions. I shall then provide a more general discussion of the findings from the thesis as a whole, and interpret these findings in terms of the research literature. Lastly, I shall focus on the key findings to outline the contributions of the study to the academic literature and discuss the implications for early childhood educators and policy makers, the limitations of this study, and future research directions.

Discussion of Main Findings

Factors Related to the Home EFL Teaching.

This section considers the results in terms of Research Questions 1 and 2: What proportion of Taiwanese mothers was engaged in teaching their children English at home prior to school commencement? What demographic and attitudinal features were associated with mothers' decision to teach or not to teach their child English at home?

More than 61% of mothers were teaching English to their young children at home. Maternal education played an important role in determining language and literacy ideas and practices. In this study, more highly educated mothers were providing English language learning experiences for their young children in the home context. Those mothers who were teaching their child English reported higher oral and written English proficiency than those who were not. Mothers who were using a private preschool were more likely to be teaching English at home than those who had enrolled their children in a public one. Though those aged 30-39 were most likely to report that they were teaching English, the association between maternal age and teaching might not be linear in this study. The majority of mothers strongly agreed that it was important for Taiwanese people to be bilingual and English was needed to get a good job. The most significant difference in mothers' attitudes was related to their ideas about when English language learning should start. Non-teaching mothers were concerned that learning two languages during the preschool years might be detrimental to their child, while those teaching mothers believed that early childhood was an important time for English language learning. These findings contribute to our understanding of the influence of social contextual factors on mothers' engagement with their children's EFL learning at home. The findings indicated that Taiwanese mothers are not an homogeneous group, that policies and parental education needs to be tailored to individuals and that "one-size fits all" policies are

not appropriate. This is supported by the suggestions from previous research that authorities should educate parents with practical and effective strategies to help their child's early EFL learning rather than to "quench their English fever" (Chao, 2004) and the authorities should provide more parent-child co-learning activities to support both the parents' and children's English development (Liu, 2010).

Mothers' Ideas about Appropriate EFL Pedagogy for Young Children

This section considers the results relating to Research Question 3: What were Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about how young children learn English as a foreign language at home?

A majority of mothers agreed that English language learning should commence in the years prior to formal school. Mothers held a strong belief in the benefits of children engaging with audiovisual and digital media and learning of simple everyday terms. The majority of mothers also agreed that a child learned to read by learning the letters and sounds of the English alphabet and isolated words on sight. Only about 28% of mothers agreed that learning KK phonics will enable a child to learn English. Further, there was a relationship between mothers' educational level and their ideas regarding the instructional teaching statement.

The findings about the teaching strategies for EFL learners, such as listening to favorite nursery rhymes, stories and songs and watching English TV programs, are consistent with the findings of the previous studies by Linse (2006), Verdugo and Belmonte (2007), Wong (2006) Wu (2008) and Xu (1999). The findings relating maternal teaching practices to maternal education are also consistent with much research evidence from Western countries (Bingham, 2007; Leppanen et al, 2004; Skibbe, Justice, Zucker & McGinty, 2008) as well as other Taiwanese research (Chang, 2008; Tsai, 2001; Wu and Honig, 2010).

More details will be discussed in the section on Taiwanese mothers' educational background as an important factor related to their ideas and practices.

Mothers' Practices in Supporting Their Young Children's EFL Learning at Home.

This section considers the results in terms of Research Question 4: What teaching practices and resources did Taiwanese mothers utilize to teach English to their children, and were these practices related to maternal education?

In terms of mothers' teaching practices, nearly 35% of the mothers reported that they read to their children in English and 24 % of the mothers used flash cards for their children's

English language learning. In terms of the provision of resources for learning English, nearly 73% of the mothers provided toys and 60% of the mothers provided computer games or CD-ROMs for their children's English learning. Nearly 60% of mothers stated that they owned more than 10 English picture books at home. Maternal educational level was related to mothers' reported teaching practice, such as reading in English to children as well as related to the provision of resources, such as books owned at home and educational toys. However, maternal educational level was not greatly related to their reported use of English flash cards and the provision of computer games.

The influence of maternal education was evident in the level of maternal practices and provision, but not in mothers' use of flash cards and computer games. The findings are consistent with some other research which suggested there was a significant relationship between maternal education and the number of books owned at home (Wu, Honig, 2010) and parental attitudes towards the Internet were not related to education or income but to the parents' experiences with the Internet (Chan & Shen, 2004).

Maternal Motivations of Teaching Preschoolers at Home.

This section considers the results in terms of Research Question 5: What motivated Taiwanese mothers to teach their child English?

Mothers attempted to promote their children's long-term interest and engagement in EFL learning. Most mothers highly valued the capability of English proficiency in their children. Mothers held future-oriented values for the children, such as child's readiness for and academic achievement at school, future opportunities, and the power of globalization. Further, the mothers involved in this study cared about and provided for children's interests, play-based learning opportunities and engagement.

This finding accords with other research which has shown that parents' objectives are to develop their children's interest in learning English to succeed in formal school (Oladejo, 2006; Shang, Ingebritson & Tseng, 2007; Tsai, 2001) and to be competitive in the international society (Bradford, 2007; Lamb, 2004; 2007, McKay, 2003; Warschauer, 2000).

Maternal Roles of Teaching Preschoolers at Home.

This section considers the results in terms of Research Question 6: How did Taiwanese mothers interpret and enact their roles in relation to their young children's EFL at home and what challenges did they encounter?

In terms of the maternal roles in mothers' engagement with their child's EFL learning, mothers acted as a teacher, an assistant and a resource provider. While many of the mothers in these studies provided for play-based or interactive media experiences, the qualitative interview responses suggested that many viewed the child's role in the language learning process as one in which a child passively engaged in the activities chosen by mothers. The mothers also identified talking with native English speakers, listening to stories and songs, responding to flash cards, watching television programs, and filling out worksheets as activities in which children engaged in to learn English. Mothers found that teaching children at home is neither a straightforward nor easy role to play. The difficulties they encountered involved the child's motivation and willingness for EFL learning and mothers' own teaching abilities, such as their tiredness and lack of time to engage with their child in EFL learning.

This finding is consistent with the findings in a previous study about the mothers' difficulties in supporting children learning EFL at home (Lee, 2008).

Themes Emerging from this Study

In the above section I have discussed each of the research questions in turn. In the next section I shall discuss the more general themes which emerged from the study as a whole.

Taiwanese Mothers' Ideas about Children's Early English as a Foreign Language Learning

Age at Which Children Should Commence Learning English as a Foreign Language.

Of the mothers of children aged from 3-6, a majority (72%) stated that EFL should commence before the age of 6. As discussed in Chapter 5, The statements such as "*the younger the child, the greater the ability to learn a second language*" and "*children can start learning English prior to school*" were highly supported by the teaching mothers. Moreover, from the qualitative findings, responses from the open-ended questions, and interviews, mothers provided their reasons for believing in the importance of starting at an early age. For example, many mothers believed that the earlier children are exposed to an additional language, the more quickly they will learn that language and the more effective L2 acquisition their children will gain. Some mothers also stated that early learning makes the pronunciation like the native speakers and good for early brain development. On the other hand, there were

10% of mothers who did not agree and around 19% of the mothers who did not know or were unsure about starting EFL learning at an early age. Among the non-teaching mothers (referring to Chapter 5), their attitudes were more likely to agree with the statement that “children should learn Chinese for at least five years before they start to learn English” and “if children begin to learn English before they start school, they will not learn Chinese properly.” It is also clearly found from the qualitative and quantitative studies that all mothers, including those who emphasized early EFL learning, agreed that children should start their Chinese language and literacy learning early and soundly since Chinese language learning is essential and very important for their children’s learning in the Taiwanese context.

The explicit reasons why some mothers did not agree that children should start learning English before the age of 6 have not been specifically investigated in this study. However, one interviewee did express her concern about confusion and possible interference as a result of learning to read and write in two languages at the same time. This corresponds with the findings of Baker and Sienkewicz (2000) that some parents and scholars expressed concern that confusion may be caused by teaching children to read and to write in two languages at the same time. The arguments against the early introduction of EFL as discussed in Chapter 2, including the refutation of the “critical period hypothesis,” and concerns about the negative impact upon children’s emotional, social and physical development, were not found in any participants’ response to the open-ended questions, nor mentioned by the interviewed mothers. It can thus be suggested that what Taiwanese mothers are really concerned about are their children’s wellbeing, educational achievement and their career opportunities in the future. The mothers who participated in this research did not support Cheung’s (2002) argument that the early introduction of EFL would negatively impact upon children’s emotional and physical development. Mothers also did not support Lu and Chen’s (2005) argument that introducing EFL at too young an age would negatively impact upon their social identity.

Pedagogies for Preschool Aged Children to Learn English as a Foreign Language.

From the initial statistical results, an overwhelming majority of mothers in this study (92.55%) believed that the most effective way for young children to learn English is by listening to English tapes or CDs containing rhymes, songs, and stories. A majority also indicated that other effective methods include using simple greetings and introductions (90.68%) and by watching English TV programs and cartoons (73.75%). From those two

qualitative studies, audiovisual resources were seen to be the most useful, natural and cheerful methods adopted among the families. Mothers generally believed that listening to tapes or CDs or watching TV programs or DVDs provided a crucial input for children's language learning. Some mothers reported that their children got familiar with English language at an early age through listening and singing English songs. For example, Mother Li-Li's son has listened to a variety of tapes since birth. Mother Yi-An's daughters shared the same experience as listeners at the ages of 1 and 2 years. These results are consistent with other research indicating that Taiwanese mothers believe that audiovisual resources can help young learners to become familiar with the sound patterns of English and thus to increase their listening ability (Linse, 2006; Wong, 2006). Their use of audio learning materials is also consistent with views about language development in general. According to Snow (1993), children's interest in rhymes and other forms of sound play is related to their ability to segment the phonemes which make up words. According to Stainthorp and Hughes (2000), there is abundant evidence to support the view that "sensitivity to the phonological aspects of languages is highly correlated with reading success, particular in the early stages" (p. 42).

In addition, the use of digital technologies as resources was also popular among the Taiwanese mothers. The results discussed in Chapter 6 suggest that a majority of Taiwanese mothers provide English language toys and computer games to assist their children to learn English as well. These findings suggest that mothers in the present study may believe that the use of audiovisual and digital technology resources in English in the home will provide their children with an enjoyable and pressure-free means to develop their awareness of the English language sound system, as Wang (2008) has suggested. Interestingly, many mothers in this study expressed a concern about their own teaching ability as well as their own English proficiency, so it is possible that the mothers believe that the use of audiovisual media or digital technology resources can compensate for their own perceived low teaching or English competence. Similarly, while most mothers reported having a range of children's English language books at home (see Chapter 6), only about a third of mothers read children's English language books to their children. This further supports the idea that mothers have more confidence in their ability to make use of resources, such as TV programs, CDs, tapes etc., than in their own English proficiency.

While more interactive and playful methods of EFL learning were supported in this study, many of the results suggested that mothers still adhered to more didactic, formal

methods. In this study, the maternal view of alphabet learning and identifying words first could be regarded as a starting point for EFL learning, and the construction of meaning will be conveyed later on. The statistical results of the present study showed that almost two thirds of the mothers (62.17%) agreed that a child learns English by first learning the letters of the alphabet and matching them with the sounds of the English language (see chapter 4). Furthermore, most of the interviewed mothers were focused on letter knowledge and centered on alphabetic codes first when they taught their children's EFL. This finding suggests that mothers were aware of the letter-sound relationship, which has been considered important for learning to read the English language in some studies (Chan, Hu, & Wan, 2005; Wang, Perfetti, & Liu, 2005; Yu, 2006). Teaching letter names has been shown to have significant and positive effects on letter naming, word recognition and oral and written spelling for English as a second language speaking kindergarteners (Levin, Patel, Margalit, & Barad, 2002).

Further, the use of phonics, revealing the connections between letter patterns and the sounds they represent, rather than phonetic symbols, such as KK phonics, in teaching pronunciation has been recommended to be incorporated at the elementary level in the English curriculum guidelines of Nine-year Joint Curricula Plan (Chern, 2002) in Taiwan. Less than one third of mothers (27.64%) agreed with the use of KK phonics during the first stage of children's English learning, possibly reflecting a move from this more traditional English teaching method. The mothers who agreed that KK phonics is necessary for children to learn English at such early stage may be drawing on their own experiences learning English and/or Chinese. In connection to this, the possibility of influence from mothers' own experiences learning English and/or Chinese is discussed in the next section.

Two thirds of the mothers (66.72 %) agreed that teaching a child to recognize isolated words on sight will help him or her learn how to read. Mothers may think that success in reading isolated words is important for literacy, as words are the foundation of sentences and grammar (Bijeljac-Babic, Nassurally, Havy, & Nazzi, 2009). In Taiwan, explicit grammar instruction is emphasized in English language learning. As Horwitz (1988) and Loewen et al. (2009) have noted, most foreign language learners perceive that learning grammatical rules is helpful. This may have influenced the mothers who agreed that teaching isolated words would assist children to learn English.

The Influence of Changing Social and Cultural Values

Another important issue emerging from the study concerns the relationship between mothers' ideas and their self-reported practices. The complex influences in a society in transition from traditional values and practices under the influence of more western values could explain the inconsistency between mothers' ideas and practices regarding home-based English teaching and learning. Social and cultural contexts influence mothers' practices to support their children's language learning. In a major social transition, mothers appeared to be influenced by western values and practices. The government also advocated the emergent literacy approach in both Chinese and English language learning. Mothers said they believed in the importance of children's interest and engagement in their learning, and the effectiveness of play-based learning materials.

However, mothers' self-reported practices appeared to be inconsistent with their ideas. From the interview data, mothers actually favoured a more didactic approach and engaged in direct teaching. For example, they said that children learnt by listening to stories and songs, responding to flash cards, watching television programs and filling out worksheets. These activities appeared to place the child in a relatively passive position as the recipient of knowledge "out there", rather than as an active constructor of his or her learning. This more direct teaching approach was possibly practiced "unconsciously" by mothers' involved in their child's EFL learning, though mothers claimed they appreciated the emergent literacy approach. Thus, it is not difficult to understand why mothers strongly agreed with the statement "mothers can teach their children English, even if they don't know English themselves" (referring to page 59 and page 63, Chapter5). This idea may be influenced by the practices which are employed in Chinese literacy and language learning. The finding that early formal literacy practices are valued in teaching Chinese literacy has also been found in previous studies (Li, Corrie & Wong, 2008) and mothers did not support an emergent literacy approach to reading instruction to their children in Chinese language (Wu & Honig, 2010).

Some cultural values, such as Confucian values, and the philosophy of Chinese culture which are still highly relevant today, were reflected in mothers' practices. Mothers considered their role/ job as providing learning materials and financial support to facilitate their children's English learning regardless of the capability of teaching their children formally or informally at home. This finding supported the attitude found in previous studies, which examined Chinese parents' attitudes to their children's education in general (Ji, & Koblinsky, 2009; Ho,

Chen, Tran, & Ko, 2010) and those found by Chao (1996), Hadley (2003), and Wang and Tamis-LeMonda (2003), showing that Taiwanese mothers valued school achievement and were willing to sacrifice their own needs to enhance their children's opportunities for academic success. Further, that children were expected to work hard suggests the philosophy of Chinese culture, like effort and hard work, is valued by mothers. In other words, social and cultural contexts influenced the mothers' ideas about how their children learn languages.

The Influence of Taiwanese Mothers' Educational Background

The relationship between maternal educational attainment and their reported teaching practices and provision of resources have been confirmed and discussed in Chapter 6, suggesting that English learning home environment experienced by the children of higher educated mothers is different from that experienced by the children of lower educated mothers in terms of practice, like reading to children in English, and provision of English educational toys and ownership of children's English language books.

While almost three-quarters of the mothers (71.8%) agreed with the introduction of English language to children before the age 6, more highly educated mothers (those with at least a Bachelor degree) more strongly agreed that children should begin learning English in preschool compared with the lower educated mothers. This finding is consistent with previous studies that in Taiwan parental education level is positively related to parents' support for EFL learning and English instruction in preschools and kindergartens (Oladejo, 2006; Tsai, 2001; Yeh, 1994).

There was a relationship between mothers' educational background and their level of agreement with statements suggestive of a formal didactic approach to English teaching. While mothers overall tended to agree that it is important to learn letters and sounds, postgraduate qualified mothers were significantly less likely to agree with the statement that a child learns to read English by learning the letters and sounds of the English alphabet, compared with mothers without a university degree. In addition, the lowest educated mothers were significantly more likely to agree with statements relating to the importance of phonics and sight-words than the higher educated mothers. Lower educated mothers tended to agree with the notion that "a child learns to read English by first learning KK phonics," whereas in the other three education groups, mothers tended to disagree ($M=2.85, 2.63, 2.54$ for group 2, 3, 4 respectively). One possible explanation for this may be historical, as mentioned above, in terms of English learning experience at the time of participant mothers' generation. In other

words, lower educated mothers emphasized more didactic teaching approaches than emergent approaches.

However, there was no relationship between mothers' educational level and their agreement with statements about emergent literacy (please see page 52 for the list of these statements). A possible explanation for this is that the value of good quality interaction and emergent approaches influenced by the western culture are now emphasized in the Taiwanese context. These results may relate to the Taiwanese social context, where English remains a foreign language due to the lack of English speaking environments. Thus, the opportunities for talking to adults who can speak fluent English or to English native speakers for young learners are quite limited outside the classroom.

The Influence of Mothers' Own Experiences Learning English and/or Chinese in the Taiwanese Context.

Mothers' ideas were influenced and guided by their own learning experiences. The majority of the mothers in this study were aged over 31. Most people in this age group would have commenced their English learning in middle school, starting with the introduction of the 26 alphabet letters and using KK phonics to assist in pronunciation.

Mandarin is not a Roman alphabetic language. Taiwanese children learn Mandarin by starting with its phonetic system. In Taiwan, a system of phonetic symbols is taught and learnt during the first weeks of Year One throughout all primary schools. In some cities, this also corresponds with the commencement of English instruction. This national system of phonetic symbols (i.e. ㄅ, ㄆ, ㄇ, ㄏ, referred to as *bopomofo*) has been used since the 1910s to transcribe Mandarin for people, especially for young school children, learning to read, write or speak Mandarin. (Noticeably this system of phonetic symbols taught at Taiwanese schools is different from the Roman alphabet pinyin system which is used in mainland China.) Drawing on their own Chinese learning experience, mothers may think that teaching EFL must begin with KK Phonics. In other words, a child who is first trained in KK Phonics would have a better chance at mastering English. Being unable to decode the pronunciation of a word might hold the learners back from becoming independent readers.

The way that Taiwanese children learn traditional Chinese characters by committing to memory everything from the appearance of characters is a sight-word approach since many Chinese characters are ideograms. Sight word methods used in English language learning is comparable with the methods for learning Chinese.

With these experiences of both English and Mandarin language learning, it is not hard to imagine that there are mothers who agree that young children should learn KK phonics at the first stage of English learning and the children should learn English through sight words.

The Relationship between Government Guidelines and Mothers' Ideas

Consistent with studies by Chang (2006), Hsieh (2006), Oladejo (2006), Shang, Ingebritson and Tseng (2007), and Tsai (2001), this study suggests that there is a disparity between the Taiwanese government's policy about EFL learning prior to formal school, and mothers' idea about the optimal time to commence learning EFL. While the government asserts the potential negative outcomes of teaching English in the early years, the mothers (parents) have a positive attitude towards the early instruction of English language learning for their children. The assertion of pursuit of child's well-being and the great benefits of early language and literacy learning was one of the consistent views between the government's guideline and mothers' ideas and practices. Moreover, mothers who emphasized early EFL learning also regarded Chinese language and literacy learning as essential and very important for their children's learning. That finding may suggest that mothers may not think early EFL learning would interfere with children's acquisition of Chinese and mothers support the critical period hypothesis for learning languages, which has been popularized in Taiwan. This disparity calls for a need to conduct parent workshops to convey or tailor government's guideline to its intended audience or workshops on topics of interest to parents, which are valuable to parents, such as information about strategies or instructional methods used at home to support their children's EFL learning. I discussed the need in the next implication section.

Summary: This Study's Contributions to the Academic Literature

While the issue of maternal beliefs has been explored in relation to early bilingualism in ESL contexts, there has been a paucity of literature addressing mothers' beliefs about their children's EFL learning at home. Such research is important in light of government policies regarding the appropriateness of early English language instruction for preschool aged children. The highly competitive Taiwanese education system and the value attached to English language proficiency make this an important issue for Taiwanese parents.

The findings of this research, based on two quantitative and two qualitative analyses of both survey and interview data, contribute to our understanding of mothers' beliefs about

language and literacy development and their values and self-reported practices in the home context. Findings from this research support previous research documenting Taiwanese mothers' beliefs and attitudes towards their children's EFL learning at a young age (L.-C. Chang, 2006; Y.-F. Chang, 2008; Lee, et al., 2006; Oladejo, 2006; Tsai, 2001; Yeh, 1994), showing that mothers used mixed strategies to enhance their children's learning and to increase their interest (Hung, 2008; Hung, 2010; Lee, 2008; Wu, 2007). The findings of this study also support the widespread recognition that Chinese background mothers have a strong belief in the value of education (Li & Rao, 2000). This research also identifies the factors that relate to the home teaching of English language to preschool aged children and the motivations of mothers who engage in home teaching.

These mothers played the role of scaffolding their children's EFL learning and development by initiating their children's interests in English language learning and by searching for and providing language learning resources. These findings contribute to our understanding of mothers' engagement with their young children's EFL learning at home in EFL contexts. This finding extends the literature from parents or mothers of school children (Hung, 2008; Hung 2010; Lee, 2008) to the mothers of children aged 3 to 6.

A majority of mothers in this study value home-based EFL learning experiences and try to facilitate their children's English development at home prior to formal schooling. Our results showed that mothers subscribed to different ideas about their children's EFL learning. While some mothers subscribed to relatively didactic teaching ideas, consistent with traditional Confucian educational philosophy that children need direct teaching and explicit instruction (Johnston & Wong, 2002), many adopted a more informal approach, under the influence of western ideas about early childhood pedagogy and practice.

Another important contribution of this research is its demonstration that mothers' beliefs and attitudes towards EFL learning, their engagement and provisions for their child's home EFL experiences are affected by their cultural values. For example, the starting time of EFL learning is one of the main motivational concerns mentioned by the participant mothers. They generally suggested that it is important for children to achieve positive results in different kinds of examinations, to have good career opportunities and to be competitive in the future. Mothers of young children in this study also believed that success in mastering the English language was the vehicle for them to become an integral part of a globalized world. The mothers' emphasis on their children's academic success and good English skills as a

pathway to better career opportunities is rooted in the awareness that, in Taiwan, as Lu (2011) mentions “ English ability decides, directly or indirectly, one’s qualification for an advanced education and a superior job” (p.157).

Programs for mothers to facilitate their child’s EFL learning were desired by mothers in this study. Chao (2004) has suggested that the authorities should educate parents with practical and effective tips for helping their child’s early EFL. For the parents of older children, Wu (2002) also urged that parents need further training to equip themselves with English knowledge and the right tips to guide their children’s EFL learning. This finding adds to the growing body of evidence that mothers have a general interest in adult education programs to seek information about how they can support their young children’s English language learning.

Implications of the Study

In light of the findings of the present research, three major implications are discussed. Firstly, an understanding of parents’ beliefs and practices can assist policy makers and educators by maximizing the chance of success of new policies and processes. Since the social and cultural values and beliefs held by the mothers are deeply-rooted, it is hard to implement a new policy effectively and successfully without taking mothers’ beliefs into account. This research about mothers’ beliefs, motivations and practices will hopefully provide authorities with a better understanding of parents’ views, thus enabling them to communicate their educational policies more effectively to parents. For example, the recently proposed amendment prohibiting “cram” schools from recruiting children under the age of 6 years, proposed by educational experts to improve the development of young children’s mental and physical health, drew strong criticism from the general public and failed to pass the Executive Yuan to take effect in the bill (Yeh, 2011). That suggests that parents should be supported through explanations of the benefits of the educational reforms or amendments persuasively, especially if these new reforms or amendments are counter to parents’ beliefs and expectations.

Secondly, the criticism and conflicting expectations about the early EFL learning raise another issue, that is, the value and significance of education in Taiwanese society. Education is fundamental. It has frequently been noted that to educate a mother is to educate a family, the basic unit of a harmonious society. Parents have to be equipped with knowledge of appropriate early childhood development, knowledge of how to create a happy and supportive learning

home environment, and some basic skills in good quality interaction with their young children. Parental education for preparing parents for appropriate developmental knowledge and providing a happy learning environment is required to be aligned with and to successfully promote the educational goals for Taiwanese preschool aged children.

As discussed in Chapter 5 and key findings about mothers' willingness to learn, mothers are seeking free programs or workshops to get assistance for their child's EFL learning at home. A third implication is the importance of providing parents who are concerned with their child's English language development with more supports. Since maternal educational attainment has been proven to be a significant predictor of mothers' EFL practices and there are systematic differences in mothers' beliefs and practices about early EFL learning, programs could be developed for different groups according to the different needs and purposes to maximise the benefits. Programs, such as targeted parent programs, are desired especially for mothers with low English proficiency or low educational achievement. Moreover, programs for mothers could serve as a means of facilitating young children's EFL learning at home, as well as improving the mothers' and children's achievement of EFL learning. Mothers' practices and supports could be adjusted according to their children's interest in and ability to learn English. In this way, mothers' concerns about children's academic achievement and future career prospects could be reduced, leading to an improved relationship between mothers and children and greater wellbeing of mothers. The findings generally suggest that governments should formulate educational policies, provide professional programs, and allocate resources for those mothers who are most in need in order to achieve positive results.

Limitations of the Study

There are two primary limitations of this research. One is the scope of data collected. Both surveys and interviews were conducted in Tainan City, Taiwan. That the survey and the interviews were conducted in a single city has previously been discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5. Furthermore, all the interviewed mothers have professional knowledge and experience of teaching. Five of the six interviewed mothers were directly involved in their children's EFL learning. It is not unusual for these mothers who are teachers themselves to start teaching their children the English language and how to learn EFL when their children are very young. Nieh (2004) pointed out that parents who have higher educational backgrounds and have professional occupations are more proactive in helping their children's

English learning. We did not interview mothers who did not have professional knowledge of teaching; therefore, it is not possible to generalize the findings of this research to the nation as a whole.

The other limitation is the data collection instrument. Although the questionnaire provided useful information from the Likert-scale items, there was no chance to follow up on mothers' written responses to the open-ended questions to clarify their meanings (also see Chapter 7). Some of the questions may have been ambiguous, resulting in a range of interpretations (also see Chapter 6).

Directions for Further Research

In spite of these limitations, this research provided a large-scale ($n=647$) snapshot of Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about their young children's EFL learning, and expanded these data with detailed interview responses. This research not only provides information about Taiwanese mothers' beliefs regarding the ongoing debate around early EFL learning, but also suggests possible areas for further investigation.

Future research may involve a larger or more diverse population to widen the scope of this research and to examine the conjectures rising from this research. It is unavoidable to have disparities among socioeconomic groups and among urban and rural residents in the Taiwanese context. It therefore would be useful to investigate the views of mothers from other cities/areas, more urban and more rural than Tainan City, where the present study was conducted. In addition, as detailed above, maternal education attainment has been demonstrated as a significant predictor of mothers' beliefs and practices and in this study, the highly educated and articulate professional interviewees had potential to assist in their children's EFL development at home, the views from lower educated mothers and mothers who are not teaching themselves may provide more insights into their beliefs about children's EFL learning.

As this study found that maternal education programs were desired by many mothers, further research could study whether different kinds of intervention programs could help or strengthen the effectiveness of home EFL learning. Maternal education has its possibilities of modifying maternal practices through a change in maternal knowledge or in maternal perceptions of the teaching/ learning role. The maternal education programs can adjust maternal ideas to new information to resolve discrepancies and conflicts between old ideas and new information or between mothers' own ideas and ideas/policies from the government.

However, like the home-based Chinese language and literacy programs promoted by Taiwanese government for over a decade, it is important for professionals to conduct parent workshops to provide information and strategies to support home-based EFL teaching and learning, and also to make mothers feel that they are valued and they are important in their children's development and education.

This research is based on mothers' reports. No child outcomes were assessed to understand more about the children's interests and the efficacy of mothers' teaching practices. Future studies could investigate whether the children whose mothers teach them English at home, or who start learning English before formal schooling, have better English abilities in later years than those who never received such instruction. Future research may also explore whether children's interest in EFL learning is cultivated by home teaching and whether it enables them to develop as independent learners, whether children become effective and balanced bilinguals, and whether children become confused while learning Chinese and English languages at the same time at a young age. Such research could provide an important reference point and offer positive suggestions for the policy makers and educators to rethink their current recommendations.

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**Approval for Study by Macquarie University Ethics Committee
(Human Research)**



1. INTRODUCTION

Ms Yi-Chen Lan
12/2-4 Lachlan Avenue
North Ryde
NSW 2113

FINAL APPROVAL

Title of project: "Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about English language and literacy development in young children"

The following table shows the results of the regression analysis for the dependent variable "Number of children in the household" (N = 1,000). The independent variables are "Age of the head of household" and "Gender of the head of household". The results are presented in the following table:

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

- [illegible]

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for this project this year your responsibility is to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a copy of this final approval letter.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE, CLACKAMAS, OREGON
MCCOY UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Enrico Cossentino, Ph: (02) 9350 4348 Fax: (02) 9350 4355 E-mail: enrico@cossentino.it or enrico@enrico-cossentino.com
<http://www.enrico-cossentino.com> or <http://www.enricocossentino.com>

Yours sincerely,



PP

Dr Margaret Stuart
Director of Research Ethics
Chair, Ethics Review Committee (Human Research)

Cc: Associate Professor Jane Tom, Australian Centre for Educational Studies

ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (HUMAN RESEARCH)
LEVEL 2, RESEARCH HUB, BURDON STREET
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
NSW, 2109 AUSTRALIA
Ethics Secretariat: Ph: (02) 9850 8848 Fax: (02) 9850 4485 E-mail: ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics

2

Appendix 2

Cover Letter to Directors (English version)

Dear Director,

How are you?

I am Yi-Chen Lan, a lecturer from Tainan University of Technology, on study leave. I am a PhD candidate at the Institute of Early Childhood at Macquarie University, in Sydney, Australia. My supervisors are Associate Professor Jane Torr and Dr. Sheila Degotardi. At present, I am conducting a research study titled *Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about young children's English language and literacy development*.

The research aims to understand what Taiwanese mothers believe about their young child's English language and literacy development. The findings will potentially help mothers to foster their young children's English language learning, according to their beliefs. I plan to use surveys and interviews to collect information for my study.

I am writing to ask whether you would be willing to assist me in finding mothers to fill in the survey. The only requirement is that mothers have a child aged from 3-6 years. I am seeking the assistance of several kindergartens and church Sunday Schools.

If you are willing to help, I would like you to ask the teachers in your centre to give out the surveys to mothers, and to provide a box in the classroom for mothers to return the surveys anonymously. If you are willing to help, I will provide the surveys and the boxes, and answer any questions you or the teachers have. Each survey will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. You may contact my supervisors for further information if you wish (jane.torr@mq.edu.au and sheila.degotardi@mq.edu.au).

The survey collection would occur in January 2009. Please note that the responses to the surveys will be kept completely confidential.

If you agree to assist, please fill in the details below and reply to my email address (yi-chen-dora.lan@students.mq.edu.au). I will then contact you in November to confirm the arrangements for my visit.

I agree to ask the teachers in my centre to distribute and collect the surveys.

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Date:

Best Regards,

Yi-Chen Lan

Appendix 3

Cover Letter to Directors (Chinese version)

博士課題研究申請

敬愛的園長及老師們，您們好！

我是 台南科技大學通識中心講師——藍頤真，目前留職停薪在澳洲雪梨麥覺里大學攻讀幼教博士學位，指導教授為該校幼教系副教授兼系主任 Jane Torr 以及 Sheila Degotardig 博士。

此刻，我正在進行一項有關「台灣母親對幼兒的英語語言及識字發展之信念研究」。此研究目的在探討台灣母親對幼兒的英語語言及識字發展之信念為何，以期達到幫助母親能依其信念培育其幼兒的英語學習興趣及讀寫能力的潛能發展。

為能蒐集詳實資料，此研究將採用問卷調查及訪談等研究方法。問卷調查部份，急需 500 位家中現有 3 至 6 歲小孩的媽媽幫忙填寫，因此需要 貴單位（包括幼稚園以及教會主日學校）的大力協助。

如果您們同意，我將於 2009 年 1 月將問卷送達 貴單位，再煩請老師們把問卷發給幼兒攜回交由母親填寫，並請於貴校學期結束前協助收回，我再去 貴單位取回。如蒙 您們同意，請回覆此電郵並勾選下列意見，再次感謝您們的大力支持和幫助！

☐樂意協助，並邀請學園幼兒們之母親參與你的博士研究。

問卷請寄（地址）：

聯絡電話：

聯絡人：

☐很抱歉，恐無法幫忙。

藍頤真敬上

申請人：澳洲麥覺里大學幼教系博士生 藍頤真

日期：2008 年 11 月 1 日

Appendix 4

Information and Consent Form for Interview (English version)

Dear Parent,

You are invited to participate in an interview for a research project on English language and literacy development.

We would like to know your ideas for a study titled *Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about English language and literacy development in young children*

This investigation is being undertaken as part of a PhD study at the Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University by myself, Yi-Chen Lan. My supervisors are:

Associate Professor Jane Torr, (61-2-98509831), email jane.torr@mq.edu.au
Dr. Sheila Degotardi (61-2-98509895), email sheila.degotardi@mq.edu.au.

If you agree to participate, I would like to interview you for about 30 – 45 minutes. The interview can take place either at your daycare centre, kindergarten or church Sunday school, or at your home, which ever is most convenient for you.

All interviews will be audio taped for the purposes of data analysis. Only the research team will have access to these audio tapes and transcripts. All identifying information will be removed from transcripts and pseudonyms will be used when transcribing the taped interviews and disseminating the findings.

If you would like to know more about the study, please feel free to contact me or my supervisors.

Thank you for participating. We appreciate your time, support and contribution towards early childhood English language and literacy development research.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Yi-Chen Lan

Associate Professor Jane Torr

Dr. Sheila Degotardi

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through its Secretary (+61 4 98507854; email ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au). Alternatively, you may contact Associate Professor Shu-Fen Chang , Applied Foreign Languages Department, Tainan University of Technology, Taiwan. She can be contacted at 2532106#351. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Interview Participation Consent Form

Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about English language and literacy development in young children

I have read the information sheet and I agree to participate in an interview to be conducted between January and February 2010, at either a day care centre, a kindergarten or church Sunday school, or my home.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason and without adverse consequence.

I also understand that any information I share with the researchers will remain confidential.

I am aware that I can contact Ms. Yi-Chen Lan (Taiwan 0928717827; Australia 61-2-98509337 or email: yi-chen-dora.lan@students.mq.edu.au), Associate Professor Jane Torr (61-2-98509831) or Dr. Sheila Degotardi (61-2-9850-9895) if I have any questions about the study.

I have kept a copy of this form for my information.

Participant's name: _____

Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's name: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through its Secretary (+61 4 98507854; email ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au). Alternatively, you may contact Associate Professor Shu-Fen Chang, Applied Foreign Languages Department, Tainan University of Technology, Taiwan. She can be contacted at 2532106#351. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

PARTICIPANT'S COPY / RESEARCHER'S COPY.

Appendix 5
Information and Consent Form for Interview (Chinese version)
訪談

敬愛的母親，

您好！

敬邀您參與一項對幼兒英語文讀寫發展研究的訪談。
我們想知道 您對「台灣母親們對幼兒英語文讀寫能力發展之信念」
這項研究的看法。

這項調查是我本人在澳洲雪梨麥覺里大學幼教系博士課題研究的一部分。
我的兩位指導教授 分別是: 副教授 Jane Torr, (61-2-98509831; email: Jane.torr@mq.edu.au) 和
Sheila Degotardi (61-2-98509895; email: sheila.degotardi@mq.edu.au)博士。

如果您願意接受這項歷時 30-45 分鐘的訪談，我們可以在您認為最方便的時間及地點進行。

為了能更精確分析資料，訪談過程中,請容許我錄音。只有本研究團隊有權讀取錄音內容及其
整理出來的數據和資料。為保護受訪者的隱私權，從訪談資料到調查結果一律採用匿名方式。
如果您對此研究有疑問或更多指教，請儘管與我和兩位指導教授連絡。

謝謝您的參與！再次感謝您對早期幼兒英語文讀寫發展之研究所花的時間與心力。

藍頤真 副教授 Jane Torr Sheila Degotardi 博士

敬上

這項研究的道德倫理部份已獲麥覺里大學道德倫理評審委員會評審通過,如果您有任何抱怨,或者對參與此項研究的
道德倫理部分有任何疑問的話,您可以致電給道德倫理委員會秘書(61-4-98507854)或發送電郵至
ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au) 或是,您也可以找台南科技大學應用外語系張淑芬副教授投訴,她的連絡電話是
2532106 轉 351。對於您的投訴,我們會暗中審慎調查,並通知您調查結果。

Interview Participation Consent Form (Chinese version)

訪談同意書

台灣母親們對幼兒的英語語言及讀寫能力發展之信念

我已讀過接受訪談之訊息，且同意於 2009 年 1 月至 2 月間選擇我與研究員共同方便之時間接受訪談。

我接受訪談是自願的。我可以在任何時候，不需任何理由退出此研究。且不會有任何不利的後果。

我了解我在訪談中的一切言談會受到保密。

我知道如果我有任何有關參與此研究的任何問題，我可以詢問藍頤真 (台灣 0928717827，澳洲 61-2-98509337，電郵 yi-chen-dora.lan@students.mq.edu.au)、副教授 Jane Torr, (澳洲 61-2-98509831)、或 Sheila Degotardi 博士 (61-2-98509895)。

本人持有此同意書份

參加者姓名: _____

參加者簽名: _____

日期: _____

研究員姓名: _____

研究員簽名: _____

日期: _____

參加者/研究員存本

這項研究的道德倫理部份已獲麥覺里大學道德倫理評審委員會評審通過，如果您有任何抱怨，或者對參與此項研究的道德倫理部分有任何疑問的話，您可以致電給道德倫理委員會秘書(61-4-98507854)或發送電郵至 ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au 或是，您也可以找台南科技大學應用外語系張淑芬副教授投訴，她的連絡電話是 2532106 轉 351。對於您的投訴，我們會暗中審慎調查，並通知您調查結果。

Appendix 6

Questionnaire used for the survey study (English version)

Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about English language and literacy development in young children

Survey

Please return by 19 January 2009

Thank you for agreeing to fill in this Survey. The findings will help us to understand what Taiwanese mothers want for their children's education.

This investigation is being undertaken as part of a PhD study at the Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University, Australia, by Yi-Chen Lan (PhD student), together with supervisors Associate Professor Jane Torr (+61 2 9850 9831) and Dr. Sheila Degotardi (+61 2 9850 9895).

The Survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Please note that all information you provide will be confidential. Only the research team will have access to the surveys. We may publish the findings in journals or at conferences, but all identifying information will be removed.

When you have finished filling in the Survey, please place it in the box I have provided in your child's daycare centre. We appreciate your time and support.

If you would like to know more about the study or have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Yi-Chen Lan (Cell Phone: 0928717827).

Please read each statement and indicate whether you agree, disagree, or don't know. There are no right or wrong answers.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Parents are their children's first teacher.					
2	People in Taiwan need to know English to get a good job.					
3	The younger the child, the greater the ability to learn a second language.					
4	Children should learn Chinese for at least 5 years before they start to learn English.					
5	Schools are responsible for teaching children to read and write in English.					
6	Only gifted children learn to read and to write English before receiving formal instruction at school.					
7	Children learn to read and write in English by talking to adults in English.					
8	It is important for Taiwanese people to be bilingual.					
9	Children can learn to speak English by watching English TV programs and cartoons.					
10	To learn English, children need to see people around them reading and writing in English.					
11	Reading to children helps children learn to read and write.					
12	Children learn to speak English by listening to tapes or CDs with English rhymes, songs, and stories.					
13	A child's early scribbles relate to later writing development.					
14	A child learns to read English by learning the letters and sounds of the English alphabet.					
15	A child learns to read English by first learning KK phonics.					
16	Teaching a child to recognize isolated words on sight will help him or her learn how to read.					
17	Children can learn to read and write in English by playing English computer games.					
18	Only native English speakers can teach children to read and write properly in English.					
19	My child loves to read picture books.					
20	A child learns English by using simple greetings and introductions.					
21	It is easy to find materials, like English basal readers and tapes, to teach young children English.					
22	I enjoy reading Chinese newspapers, books and magazines.					
23	My child can read some English alphabet letters and some Chinese characters.					
24	I can speak English fluently.					
25	I can read and write in English.					
26	I want my child to learn to read and write properly in Chinese before learning English.					
27	Children should start learning English in preschool.					
28	Mothers can teach their children English, even if they don't know English themselves.					
29	If children begin to learn English before they start school, they will not learn Chinese properly.					
30	Children get confused if they have to learn both Chinese and English before they are in 3rd grade.					
31	I would like to attend free workshops/programs provided by the government which teach me to assist my child's English learning before 5.					
32	I would like to attend a free mother-and-young child English-learning program, provided by government.					

33. How many Chinese children's books for your children do you own?

☐ none ☐ fewer than 10 ☐ between 10-30 ☐ more than 30

34. How many English children's books for your children do you own?

☐ none ☐ less than 10 ☐ between 10-30 ☐ more than 30

35. How often do you go to the library with your children?

☐ never ☐ once a week ☐ once a fortnight ☐ once a month
☐ less than once a month

36. Do you show your children flash cards to teach them to read and write in Chinese?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, how old was your child when you started doing this? _____

37. Do you show your children flash cards to teach them to read and write in English?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, how old was your child when you started doing this?

38. Do you read to your children in Chinese? ☐ YES

☐ NO

If yes, how old was your child when you started doing this?

39. Do you read to your children in English? ☐ YES

☐ NO

If yes, how old was your child when you started doing this?

40. Does your child ask you to read to him or her in Chinese? ☐ YES

☐ NO

41. Does your child ask you to read to him or her in English? ☐ YES

☐ NO

42. Does your child look at Chinese books on his/ her own? ☐ YES

☐ NO

43. Does your child look at English books on his/ her own? ☐ YES

☐ NO

44. Do you have toys for your child's English learning? ☐ YES

☐ NO

45. Do you have CD-ROMs and/or computer games for your child's English learning?

☐ YES ☐ NO

46. Are you teaching your child English? Why or why not?

If we have overlooked asking you something important, or you would like to express your views about young children's English language and literacy development, please comment:

Mother's age: ☐ under 21 ☐ 22-30 ☐ 31-39
☐ 40-49 ☐ above 50

Mother's occupation: _____

Mother's highest education: ☐ Year 9 certificate ☐ High school certificate
☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☐ Doctoral Degree

Household income, including all earners in your household:
☐ below NT \$ 300,000 ☐ NT \$300,000- 1,000,000
☐ NT\$ 1,000,001-1,700,000 ☐ NT\$ 1,700,001-2,300,000
☐ above 2,300,001

Living in: ☐ Tainan City ☐ Tainan County
☐ other [please name] _____

Number of children in the family _____

INTERVIEW: Invitation to participate

Thank you for filling in this Survey.

I would like to know more about your ideas. Would you be willing to be interviewed for this study? What you tell me will help me to make recommendations about the best ways to educate young children.

If you agree to participate, I would like to interview you for about 30 – 45 minutes. The interview can take place either at your daycare centre, kindergarten or church Sunday school, or at your home, whichever is most convenient for you.

The interview will be audio taped for the purposes of data analysis. Only myself and my supervisors will have access to these audio tapes and transcripts. All identifying information will be removed from transcripts and pseudonyms will be used when transcribing the taped interviews and in disseminating the findings.

If you would like to know more about the study, please feel free to contact me Yi-Chen Lan (Cell phone: 0928717827) or my supervisors, Associate Professor Jane Torr (+61 2 9850 9831) and Dr. Sheila Degotardi (+61 2 9850 9895). They work at the Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

If you would like to be interviewed and share your opinions and experiences with me, please fill in the following details. I will then contact you. If you fill in this form, then change your mind, you can do so without having to give a reason.

To thank you, we would like you to accept a small gift from Australia, such as a koala key ring, moisturiser, pen or propolis.

☐ Yes, I would like to be interviewed.

Mother's name: _____

Child's name: _____

Child's sex: _____ Child's date of birth: 20 (Y) _____ (M) _____ (D)

Language spoken in home: _____

Language spoken by child: _____

Telephone No. (day/night): _____ (cell): _____

Email: _____

Postal address: _____

Your signature: _____

Appendix 7

Questionnaire used for the survey study (Chinese version)

台灣母親對幼兒的英語語言及識字發展 之信念

問卷調查

請於 2009 年元月 19 日前擲回

感謝您撥冗幫忙填答此問卷。此問卷旨在瞭解台灣母親對其幼兒教育之看法，也是本人在澳洲馬覺里大學幼教系博士研究的一部分，兩位指導教授為該校幼教系副教授兼主任 Jane Torr (61-2-98509831) 及 Shelia Degotardi 博士 (61-2-98509895)。

此問卷約需 10-15 分鐘，填寫資料絕對受到保密，僅供本研究團隊研究之用，調查結果預計發表於期刊或研討會，所有引用一律採匿名方式處理。

如蒙惠允，問卷填妥後，請交給幼兒班級老師或置於園內專屬之回收箱。再次感謝您對此份問卷所有的協助。

如有疑問或其他指教，亦懇請不吝指教。本人聯絡電話：藍頤真/0928717827

本研究的道德倫理部份已通過麥覺里大學道德倫理評審委員會審查，如果您有任何抱怨，或者對參與此項研究的道德倫理部分還有任何疑問的話，您可以逕電道德倫理委員會秘書(61-4-98507854)或發 E-mail 至 ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au 詢問，或找台南科技大學應用外語系張淑芬老師投訴，她的連絡電話是 2532106 轉 351。對於您的意見，我們會審慎調查，並將調查結果通知您。

請依您的看法，勾選下列問題的答案。謝謝您的協助！

	非常 不同意	不 同 意	無所謂 同意或 不同意	同 意	非常 同 意
1. 父母是小孩的第一位老師。					
2. 在台灣，懂英文才能找到好工作。					
3. 年紀越小，越容易學會第二語言。					
4. 小孩應至少學了 5 年中文，才可學習英文。					
5. 教小孩識讀英文是學校的責任。					
6. 只有資優生才能於小學前學英文。					
7. 小孩是藉由和大人英文交談，才能學會識讀英文。					
8. 在台灣，雙語的能力是很重要的。					
9. 孩子可藉由看電視節目和卡通學習英文。					
10. 小孩要學英文，需周遭有人會英文。					
11. 唸書給小孩聽有助於小孩的讀、寫能力。					
12. 小孩可藉由聽英文詩、歌曲、故事學會說英文。					
13. 小孩早期拿筆塗鴨與之後寫字發展有關聯。					
14. 學英文，要先學自然發音。					
15. 學英文，要先學 KK 英標。					
16. 教小孩認識單字，有助於他學好(唸好)英文。					
17. 藉由玩英文版電腦遊戲，小孩可藉機學英文。					
18. 只有以英文為母語的人，才能教好小孩識讀英文。					
19. 我的小孩喜歡閱讀繪本。					
20. 小孩學英文可從簡單的與人打招呼和我介紹開始。					
21. 兒童英語教材，如英文讀本、錄音帶等的借閱（或購買）很容易。					
22. 我喜愛閱讀中文書籍、報紙、雜誌。					
23. 我的小孩認得一些英文字母和一些中文字。					
24. 我的英文說得流利。					
25. 我可以讀、寫英文。					
26. 我希望我的小孩學英文之前能先學好中文。					
27. 上小學前就可開始學英文。					
28. 即使母親本身不懂英文，也可以讓自己的小孩在家學英文。					
29. 上小學前就學英文，中文就會學不好。					
30. 小學三年級前若同時學中、英文會造成混淆。					
31. 我願意參加政府所舉辦的免費工作坊，如教導母親如何協助學齡前幼兒學習英					

個人資料

母親年齡： ☐ 21 歲 以下 ☐ 22-30 歲 ☐ 31-39 歲
☐ 40-49 歲 ☐ 50 歲 以上

職業： _____

學歷：☐國小 ☐中學 ☐高中職 ☐大學 ☐碩士 ☐博士

家庭年收入： ☐ 30 萬以下 ☐ 30 萬- 100 萬(含) ☐ 100 萬 – 170 萬
☐ 170 萬 – 230 萬 ☐ 230 萬以上

居住地：☐台南市 ☐台南縣 ☐其它（請說明）_____

家中有幾位小孩？ _____位

感謝您協助填寫此問卷！

敬邀

訪談

為更進一步瞭解您對此研究課題的看法，在此鄭重邀請您參與關於此課題的訪談。您的寶貴意見將有助於對幼兒教育方式做出最好的建議。

如您願意接受歷時 30-45 分鐘的訪談，我們可以在您最方便的時間及地點進行。為能更精確分析資料，訪談過程中，請容許錄音。所有錄音內容及其整理出來的數據和資料只有本研究團隊有權閱讀。為保護受訪者的隱私權，從訪談資料到調查結果一律採用匿名方式。如果您對此研究有疑問或有其他指教，請儘管與我和兩位指導教授聯絡。

為感謝您提供的寶貴時間和意見，並於訪談結束致送一份來自澳洲的小禮物（包括：無尾熊小玩偶、綿羊油或蜂膠），以表謝意。

若您願意接受訪談，敬請填妥以下資料，我將與您聯絡。謝謝您的協助！

若您改變心意，不需要任何理由即可中途退出研究。

若您想對本研究有更進一步了解或指教，請不吝與我本人連絡（在台手機：

0928717827; e-mail: yi-chen-dora.lan@students.mq.edu.au）或與我的兩位指導教授聯絡。

她們分別是幼教系副教授兼系主任及講師（見封頁）。

☐ 樂意接受訪談

母親姓名：_____

幼兒姓名：_____ 姓別：_____

幼兒生日： 20 _____（年） _____ 月 _____ 日

家中大人使用語言：_____

小孩使用語言：_____

聯絡電 _____（日） _____（夜） 手機：_____

話：_____

E-mail：_____

住址：_____

簽名：_____

這項研究的道德倫理部份已獲麥覺里大學道德倫理評審委員會評審通過，如果您有任何抱怨，或者對參與此項研究的道德倫理部分有任何疑問的話，您可以致電給道德倫理委員會秘書(61-4-98507854)或發送電郵至 ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au 或是，您也可以找台南科技大學應用外語系張淑芬副教授投訴，她的連絡電話是 2532106 轉 351。對於您的投訴，我們會暗中審慎調查，並通知您調查結果。

Appendix 8

General Open-Ended Questions asked in the Interviews (English version)

Key sample questions for interview:

1. Mother's Background and Beliefs:

How many languages do you speak?

What language(s) do you speak with your child at home?

Do you think children should learn a foreign language?

Why or why not? Probe.

If yes:

Which language(s) should children learn?

Who should teach these languages?

When should children start to learn a foreign language?

Should parents teach their own children a foreign language?

Are there any problems with parents teaching their own children? (Prompts:
e.g. parents' lack of language proficiency, loss of Chinese language, literacy
and culture, stress on busy parents, child's resistance etc.)

Do you teach/support your child's English language and literacy development?

- If yes, why?

What are the most important things you are doing to help your child learn to read and to write in Chinese?

What are the most important things you are doing to help your child learn to read and to write in English?

- If no, why not? Please express your views.

What are the most important things you are doing to help your child learn to read and to write in Chinese?

2. Chinese Home Literacy Environments

How often do you read to yourself?

Do you read for pleasure? For work?

How many hours per day do you read to yourself?

What do you read (e.g. newspapers, magazines, fiction books, information books, religious texts, work reports etc)?

Do you subscribe to children's newspapers, magazines, or periodicals?

Do you or anyone in the home have a library card? How often is it used for you? How often is it used for the child?

What kind of books do you like from the library?

What kind of books do you choose for your child or for joint book- reading practice?

What's the most important consideration for you to choose the books or reading materials for your child?

Does your child read books or write at home whenever he wants to read and write?

3. Chinese Home Literacy Practices

Do you spend time in one-on-one conversation with your child?

Do you discuss the plot or the story with your child after reading together?

Do you encourage your child to express ideas in his/her way? How do you encourage your child to express ideas?

Do you encourage your child to remember the words by heart and write the words the child read? At what age of your child did you do so?
 What home literacy program does your child enjoy most?
 What do you think “literacy” means eg read and write, look at pictures? Do you think it starts when your child goes to regular school?
 What do you do to help your child gain more stimulation on language acquisition?
 Does anyone else in your home read and write with your child? If yes, who, how often and in which language?
 Do you think home literacy practices help the child’s academic achievement? In what aspect does the child make progress due to the home literacy practices?
 Do you help your child review/ reinforce “school learning?” (School here means daycare centre/ kindergarten.)

4. English Home Literacy Environments

Do you buy English books, rhymes, music, CDs, DVDs, and electronic educational toys for your child’s English language learning?
 How do you select the educational materials?
 Does anyone in the family speak English to the child?
 Will you choose the whole English language day care centre or kindergarten for your child? Why? Why not?
 Will you choose the bilingual (Mandarin and English) day care centre or kindergarten for your child? Why? Why not?
 Will you send your child to English language coaching school? Why? Why not?
 If yes, at what age?
 Do you think it is necessary to employ native English speakers to teach English at home, in the English coaching schools, in the elementary school?

5. If mother teaches English to child at home: English Home Literacy Practice

How do you assist your child to learn English?
 How do you arrange the time for your child’s English learning at home?
 Do you teach your child alphabet letters? Numeracy in English?
 Do you ask your child to copy words from the book, just like your Chinese learning experiences?
 Do you like to use the favorite storybook stories with both the English and Chinese versions? If yes, Can you tell me about an example?
 Is your child able to identify which words are written in English and which are written in Chinese?
 What are you most concerned about in relation to your child’s English language learning?

6. [If mother does not teach English to her child at home.

Do you believe “learning to read and write in two languages at the same time leads to confusion and possible interference in the literacy learning process?”
 If you believe that, can you show me or tell me about an example of confusion?

Appendix 9

General Open-Ended Questions asked in the Interviews (Chinese version)

訪談問題

母親背景與信念

1. 你會說幾種語言?
2. 你在家說哪種語言?
3. 你認為小孩該學外語嗎? Why?
探查: 若是,
 - 該學何種語言?
 - 由誰來教?
 - 小孩該何時學外語?
 - 該由父母自己來教嗎?
 - 父母自己教有哪裏問題? (提示: 父母本身本不擅長該語言; 會喪失中文能力與文化; 父母忙有有壓力; 小孩抗拒等等)
4. 您教授 (或支援) 您小孩英語語言 及讀寫發展嗎?

若有,為何?

- 對幫助您小孩中文讀寫發展方面, 目前你所做的最重要的事是什麼?
- 對幫助您小孩英文讀寫發展方面, 目前你所做的最重要的事是什麼?

若沒有,請說您的看法

- 對幫助您小孩中文讀寫發展方面, 目前你所做的最重要的試事什麼?

家庭中文識讀環境

1. 您本身閱讀的頻率為何? 您多久閱讀一次?
2. 您閱讀是純屬興趣或者是工作需要?
3. 您本人閱讀時間一天約幾小時?
4. 您閱讀哪些? (報紙? 雜誌? 小說? 資訊書籍? 信仰方面? 工作上的報告? 等等)
5. 您幫您的小孩訂閱兒童報紙、雜誌或期刊等等嗎? (巧連智、國語日報、週報等?)
6. 有辦借書證嗎? 您多久借書一次? 用借書證為小孩借書的頻率?
7. 您喜歡去圖書館借哪一類書?
8. 您為小孩選擇哪一類的書? 或親子共讀時您以歡哪一類的書籍?
9. 選擇這類書最大考量為何?
10. 小孩在家時,任何時間只要他想看書寫字,就都沒問題嗎? 書、筆、紙 都隨手可得嗎?

家庭中文識讀練習

1. 會和小孩一對一對談嗎?
2. 親子共讀之後, 會和小孩一起討論故事、情結嗎?
3. 會鼓勵小孩以他/她自己的方式表達意見嗎? 你如何鼓勵他的?
4. 會鼓勵小孩 把它所閱讀的字記(背)起來嗎? 或練習字體抄寫嗎? 小孩多大時開始這樣做?
5. 這些識讀活動中, 您小孩最喜歡那一項?
6. 您認為“識字讀寫”是什麼意思? 例如: 讀? 寫? 看圖畫? 您認為識字讀寫是上了小學才開始學的嗎?
7. 您如何幫助您小孩在語言認知上獲得更多的刺激?
8. 家中還有其他成員會陪小孩一起讀寫嗎? 若有, 是誰? 多久一次? 使用何種語言?
9. 您認為在家識字讀寫的各種練習有助於小孩以後的學術成就嗎?

10. 小孩有哪些方面的進步是因為這些在家中識讀練習所影響的?
11. 會幫小孩複習或加強在學校(幼兒園)所學習的嗎?

家庭英文識讀環境

1. 會買英文書、韻文、CD、DVD 或具有教育性的電子教育玩具給小孩以幫助他學英文嗎?
2. 如何選擇這些具有教育性的材料?
3. 家中有人會和小孩說英文嘛?
4. 會選擇全美語幼兒園嗎? 為什麼?
5. 會選擇雙語(中英)幼兒園嗎? 為什麼?
6. 會送小孩去上英文補習班嗎? 為什麼? 若會,幾歲開始上補習班?
7. 您認為在家、英語補習班、小學學英文,聘請以英語為母語的外國人是必要的嗎?

如果母親教小孩英語

1. 您如何幫助您小孩學習英語?
2. 您如何安排小孩在家學英語的時間?
3. 您教小孩 ABC 英文字母嗎? 用英語教 123 嗎?
4. 您會要求小孩練習抄寫? 從書上學來的字嗎?會以妳以前學習中文的經驗運用在小孩的學習上嗎?
5. 您喜歡用古今中外受歡迎的經典故事書嗎? 如果是,你可以舉例說明嗎?
6. 您的小孩能夠分別這是英文字或是中文字嗎?
7. 有關你小孩英文語言學習方面您最關切的是什麼?

如果母親不教小孩英語

您相信{同時學讀寫兩種語言}會導致渾淆和干擾?
如果您認為如此,可以舉出一個渾淆的例子嗎?