

A Study on the Relationship between Early Classroom Management Practice, Bilingual Classroom Setup, Parent' Attitudes, and English Development of Kids in Guangzhou Bilingual Kindergartens

Han Wang^{1,2,*}, P. C. Lai¹

¹Universiti Tun Abdul Razak, Jalan Tun Razak, Kuala Lumpur, 50400, Malaysia

²Guangzhou City Construction College, Guangzhou, Guangdong, 510925, China

*Corresponding author: wanghan1992@hotmail.com

Keywords: English education, Bilingual kindergarten

Abstract: Under the influence of the trend of internationalization, with the increasing importance of English learning and the trend of younger English education in China, English education in private kindergartens has become one of the most discussed topics in early childhood education. It is of great significance to study the current situation of English education in bilingual kindergartens, analyze the existing problems and causes, and review and reflect on English education in bilingual kindergartens. This research adopts the questionnaire survey method to analyze and discuss the current situation of English education in bilingual kindergartens in Guangzhou, mainly from the aspects of teaching staff, classroom management, English environment creation, and parents' attitudes towards children's English education. In-depth analysis of English education in bilingual kindergartens has some problems. First, the understanding of the current kindergarten English education is biased; secondly, the level of English teachers is uneven; thirdly, the understanding of English environment creation is not thorough; fourth, the effect of classroom teaching is low; fifth. Teacher evaluation is unscientific; sixth. Lack of cooperation from family. The main reasons for the problems are analyzed from three aspects: kindergarten administrators, kindergarten English teachers and children's parents. The author hopes to help bilingual kindergartens improve the quality of English teaching through multi-dimensional research, so that more children can benefit.

1. Introduction

In recent years there has been a large number of bilingual kindergartens popping up throughout the country of China. In these bilingual kindergartens, both English and Chinese early childhood education are provided to the students. For many families, these bilingual kindergartens are the solution to learning a language from an early age.

2. Literature Review

This chapter will be divided into numerous sub-topics, namely (1) classroom management; (2) classroom setup; (3) English cognitive ability, and (4) parents' attitude.

2.1 Classroom Management

Classroom management “refers to all of the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that instruction in content and student learning can take place”^[1]. In kindergarten classroom management, there are always more than one teacher in each class, especially in the bilingual kindergarten. Bilingual kindergarten in Guangzhou usually requires higher tuition than traditional kindergartens, there is usually always a Chinese lead teacher, an assistant teacher, and a teacher who takes care of kids' daily life needs. Besides that, there may have a foreign teacher. It is generally understood that effective classroom management begins with a solid and meaningful curriculum^[2]. A well-structured classroom management plan is able to improve students' learning and behavior, as well as create a smooth working environment for teachers. Being that there is this many teachers in one class, the kids daily school life can be adjusted to their own needs and can be looked after better. With a difference from some other schools around the world, there may be a class with 10-20 students with at sometimes 1 teacher. This means that not only does that teacher have to work very hard and take care of all the kids, they also have to try their best to take care of each students needs. In this type of classroom setting, some students might get left behind, less attention and looked over. However, with the majority of kindergartens in Chinese mainland, having at least 2 teachers, this problem is better addressed. With the addition of a foreign teacher this can sometimes bring the total teachers to one class up to 4! Each student can be well looked after and this can help the cognitive development of each child knowing that they are apart of the class.

As Stoughton mentioned in the book, teachers understand that they will be evaluated by their administrators, co-workers, parents, and perhaps even the students themselves on the how well they control their classrooms^[3]. Taking control of the classroom not only means to manage the students, managing all the teachers in one class is one of the important part in classroom management. It is common to see that many lead teachers have not realized that they need to manage their teaching team in the classroom. This point is very important because although some of the studnets might be young, from the outside it can be very easily seen if the teachers are not in sync, or are not on the same page. Each teacher's teaching style and methods should be somewhat in unison with each other in order to not only create a smooth teaching environment but to also aid to the progress of each student^[4-5]. Therefore, the lead teacher for a certain class has a somewhat greater deal of responsibility of not only their students but the teachers, their teaching/learning environment, and classroom lifestyle. Building a strong teaching team in each class is what kindergarten managers and teachers have ignored in their career development.

Classroom management plays a central role in developing a secure and functional structure in a classroom, emergence of positive and negative behavior, and reaching the educational goals^[6]. For school administrators and experienced teachers, classroom management skills are the most basic and valuable set of skills that new teachers should have^[7-11]. All the kindergarten teachers should clearly define their roles and they need to realize that they are teachers instead that of a babysitter. Even so, a great deal of being a kindergarten teacher is taking care of the students, and looking after them, their education is still at upmost importance. Therefore, each teacher of each class should have the same mindset of what to do better to enhance the learning environment for the kids. A big problem may be that most Chinese teachers do not have enough of an English background to communicate with foreign teachers, which becomes the barrier to build a teaching team of the class. It is hard to improve Chinese teachers' English in a short time, however, are there any essential methods to help them

manage the teachers in the class?

2.2 Classroom Setup

Classroom setup is an important component in a learning environment because it is an essential part of classroom management to support both teachers' teaching and students' learning. Traditional definition of classroom setup talks about the physical atmosphere of the classroom, which can help promote and improve learning as well as prevent behavior issues^[12]. The structuring of the learning environment is essential for teachers and students. The physical arrangement of the classroom can affect both student and teacher behavior.

Everyday objects displayed in schools or classrooms can be distracting when they distract from studying. In one study, kindergarten children were randomly assigned to take an introductory science class in a classroom with many or no walls. Students in classrooms with wall screens are more distracted and perform worse with textbooks than students in empty classrooms. "Furniture arrangement in the classroom influences how comfortable students feel and the amount of interaction with other students and with the teacher^[13-14]

LePage et al. point out that in the past, most teachers reported that they learned how best to manage their classrooms once on the job, and not during their teacher preparation. Teacher education programs are increasingly paying attention to the explicit instruction of classroom management strategies^[15].

2.2.1 Classroom Patterns

In order to create an inviting, safe, supportive learning environment, using classroom management for the way teachers arrange the desks matters. What needs to be considered is not only the arrangement of the table, but also where the teachers will stand, where they will talk, where they will teach, and where the blackboard is. All of these components have a lot to do with the way a student will not only take in information, but also with how well they will pay attention in class. There are multiple ways that a classroom can be setup, here are a few.

Classroom arrangements can follow different patterns such as (From WIKI):

Traditional (students facing the instructor)

Stadium Seating (or Angled Rows with Desks Touching)

Modified U (or Horseshoe)

Groups (or Pods, Teams)

Combination (desks in various positions)

Roundtable (students and instructors facing the center)

There are some Classroom arrangements that always implicated in bilingual kindergartens, such as Modified U, Groups and Combination. However, this only comes from the observation since most studies about classroom patterns focus on K12 class settings. Some research suggests that seating location is related to academic achievement and classroom participation and class arrangement has the ability to affect the communal environment within the room. Though there is a lack of studies which have talked about kindergarten classroom settings, it is an important part to create an opening environment for children to learn. This aspect should be researched to see where the best effect on students, and using what method will help create and make the learning environment flourish. From the observation, most of the kindergartens in Guangzhou divides students into groups, that's why Group Independent learning has becoming a popular topic that the government suggests kindergartens to use.

2.2.2 Classroom Environment Decoration

Dr. James J. Asher states that “good language learners achieve fluency faster when they are immersed in activities that involve them in situational language use”, “Good language learners often start their language learning with a period of silence as they watch the effect of language on others” and “Good language learners show comprehension by successfully accomplishing language-generated tasks”^[16]. It is very important that a language teacher demonstrates or models first and gives students some time to understand before having them practice. When the language teacher is teaching these new words, sentences etc., they should also be very vibrant, colorful, outgoing. By using these methods to teach young students, it is easy to attract their attention, not only making them want to stay in the classroom, but also helping to improve the speed at which each child absorbs knowledge.

There are some positive effects on foreign language learning for young children in the research. Shan has mentioned that classroom environment can provide rule segregation and feedback for the development of the language monitor, and also recommended the importance of the formal classroom environment in second language acquisition. A supportive classroom environment, which includes the formal and informal learning environment, played an important role in increasing children’s English proficiency. Krashen found out that both formal and informal environments made great contribution to second language learning, claiming that “an informal environment provides the necessary input for acquisition while the classroom aids in increasing learned competence.” Secondly, “the classroom may serve as an ‘intake’ informal environment as well as a formal linguistic environment”^[17].

The creation of a good material environment plays a key role in children's English learning. He Surui(2017) mentioned that the creation of the material environment should be based on the development level of children's English, combined with children's existing life experience, age characteristics and English skills, targeted and planned arrangements. Specific activity props, operating materials and situational environments help children acquire English through natural penetration such as games, operations, observation, listening and reading.

It is also necessary to create an English corner. The English corner is an area where children can apply English in game activities through hands-on operations on objects, pictures, and daily necessities. Teachers provide space for children to carry out English game activities by placing materials. Children can play English games or hand-made activities in the English corner, so that they can actively apply English to their daily life.

Using the wall setting, in the environment of private kindergartens, the wall is the most conspicuous and largest picture area, which can directly stimulate children and play a subtle role in them. Teachers can make full use of the washroom, interior and corridor walls in the classroom, and write relevant English phrases, such as pasting pictures of washing hands and English (Please wash your hands) on the sink; in the library area Combined with English pictures (Please be quiet) and so on. Children may not know the words on these walls, but they know that they are in English when they see them, which stimulates children's English thinking ability and naturally penetrates into English.

Besides the classroom materials environment creation, He Surui (2017) also talked about the creation of the interpersonal environment. The creation of the interpersonal environment is to use English as much as possible for dialogue between teachers and children and between teachers in organizing children to carry out English teaching activities and daily life transition links in a certain period of time, so as to create more opportunities for children to imitate and interact with English, thereby enhancing their sensitivity to English and cultivating their awareness and ability to communicate in English.

2.3 English Cognitive Ability

In terms of the importance of English cognitive ability, Karl Marx has given some suggestions on how to learn a foreign language. He said when a person is learning a foreign language, he must not always be translating everything into his own. If he does this, it shows he hasn't mastered it. He must be able to use the foreign language, forgetting all about his own. If he can't do this, he hasn't really grasped the spirit of the foreign language and can't use it freely. So for kids learning languages at such a young age, they are not only learning a their own mother tongue, they are also leaning a foreign language at the same time. This is very important as regards to language learning because for the study of any kind of language, the cultivation of its thinking ability is crucial. Specifically for this young age group of children, before they know how to fully converse, they won't be needing to translate each sentence, word, phrase in their heads because of this style and time of language being taught to them. Therefore, the development of students' English teaching can not only expand students' cultural horizons, improve students' humanistic literacy, and have a deeper understanding of Western culture and mainstream ideas. This means that teaching and learning English, (in this case) can not only be done during formal English class. It also has to be done outside of class time, in the hallways, outside the classroom, in the lunchroom, outside of school. In actual teaching, students can really be trained in English thinking skills both inside and outside the class and this can have an enormous impact on them. Some of the bilingual educators and parents haven't realized the importance of building the cognitive ability in acquiring a new language. That is one of the important reasons that parents send their kids to bilingual schools.

Previous studies have shown that that children's English attainment is often confounded with environmental factors^[18-20], such as parents with higher education levels being more likely to provide more resources for their children's language learning. Or there could be some type of outside influence, English being spoke to kids at home, listening to English music, watching tv shows. All of these factors play a big role in learning a new language, and all relate to being inside a language learning environment.

Most studies in the field of teaching English to Chinese kindergarten kids have tended to focus on children's language improvement rather than the establishment of children's English cognitive abilities. As Krashen said in 1975 "Language acquisition in children proceeds by process which is called acquisition (hence forth a technical term). If the children are allowed the necessary input during some critical period, complete competence in the target language (first or second) appears to be inevitable." Being at such a young age as kindergarten students are, they amount of formal "textbook" learning of another language that they will be doing is very small in comparison natural language learning. I.e., being immersed in the foreign language environment, hearing it, seeing it every day or often enough where it become a part of their day and a portion of life. For these kindergarten English learners, it is more "acquire" a language than "learn" a language.

2.4 Parents' Attitude

Barbara (1996) has done the qualitative survey about parental attitudes toward bilingualism. The results shows that parents gave three major reasons for enrolling their children in the program: positive exposure to cultural diversity, early second language acquisition, and enhanced career opportunities. This is why more and more financially capable parents send their children to bilingual kindergartens, especially the kindergartens with foreign teachers. Most of the parents believe that foreign teachers can provide more authentic English teaching, which indicates that they would like to choose kindergartens which provide English environment being established by foreign teachers. This has been a determining factor in parents choosing what kindergartens that their children should go to. The current situation is that all the bilingual kindergartens have to face to is about how to take control

of foreign teachers' teaching ability. It is by no means a certainty that the presence of a foreign teacher will improve the quality of education as many of these teachers are hired more to be a foreign mascot than for their teaching skills. The view is in China that just having the resources of foreign teachers, and leading classes in a school is enough to bring not only parents in, but also more money in, however there is so many flaws to this. The strategy of these schools is to convince parents that the presence of foreigners, often non-native speakers with less ability than local English teachers will somehow give their children English fluency. In the past in some cases, there has been non-native English speakers teaching English, meanwhile some local Chinese teachers have a better grasp on the English language. This is where huge problems start to arrive not only in kindergartens but also in the reliability of the school, the curriculum and the management of the class^[21-23].

3. Conclusion

From Shan's research, "Chinese parents will gain higher personal satisfaction and self-esteem if their children gain better scores and academic achievement. Surprisingly, almost none of the parents advocated learning process and knowledge acquisition are as important as scores and academic achievement." The "Guidelines for Kindergarten Education" points out: "The important partners of kindergartens are parents of young children. Therefore, kindergartens should strive for the understanding, support and active participation of parents based on the principles of respect, equality and cooperation, and actively help parents to improve their educational ability." Studies have also shown that parents play a crucial role in the process of children learning a second language. Schultz's research points out that parental participation is the key to young children's first language learning. If parents can fluently communicate with their children face-to-face in a second language, it will be very easy for children to master and use the second language. Bachelor also pointed out. Good bilingual teaching is suitable for each child, and individual education should be given to each child according to the situation of language mastery and use. If parents can provide language tutoring according to the child's mastery of the second language, the effect of bilingual learning will be better. But nowadays parents rarely speak English with their children, and children also don't take the initiative to speak English at home. Therefore, parents cannot keep abreast of their children's English learning, and the English knowledge learned in kindergarten cannot be well consolidated, and children's English learning will not receive good results.

References

- [1] Chunyue Z, University S. *Develop and Explore Kindergarten Bilingual Education*[J]. *The Guide of Science & Education*, 2014 (05): 188-189. .
- [2] Susanna Loeb, Margaret Bridges, Daphna Bassok, . . . & Russell W. Rumberger. (2005). *How much is too much? The influence of preschool centers on children's social and cognitive development. Economics of Education Review*(1), . doi:10. 1016/j. econedurev. 2005. 11. 005.
- [3] Curran, M. E. (2003). *Linguistic Diversity and Classroom Management. Theory into Practice*, 42(4), 334–340.
- [4] Van Tartwijk, J., den Brok, P., Veldman, I., & Wubbels, T. (2009). *Teachers' practical knowledge about classroom management in multicultural classrooms. Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(3), 453–460. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2008.09.005>
- [5] Allen, P., Swain, M., Harley, B., & Cummins, J. (1990). *Aspects of classroom treatment: Toward a more comprehensive view of second language education. In B. Harley (Ed.), The development of second language proficiency (pp. 57-81). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.*
- [6] Reinke, W. M., Lewis-Palmer, T., & Merrell, K. (2008). *The classroom check-up: A class wide teacher consultation model for increasing praise and decreasing disruptive behavior. School Psychology Review*, 37(3), 315-332.
- [7] Brophy, J. (1988). *Educating teachers about managing classroom and students. Teaching and Teacher Education*, 4(1), 1-18.
- [8] Metin Ş., Aydoğan Y., Kavak, Ş. & Mercan, Z. (2017). *Effects of Classroom Management Profiles of Pre-School Teachers on Social Skills and Problem Behaviors of Children. Journal of Current Researches on Social Sciences*, 7(1).

ISSN: 2547-9644.

- [9] Ritz, M., Noltemeyer, A. vd. (2014). *Behavior Management in Preschool Classrooms: Insights Revealed Through Systematic Observation and Interview*. *Psychology in the Schools*, 51(2), 181- 197.
- [10] Kris, B. (1996). *Teacher talk " What is your classroom management profile? Retrieved July 12, 2002. (de indirildi) from the World Wide Web: [http:// education, indiana. edu / cas/ tt/ vli2/ what, html](http://education.indiana.edu/cas/tt/vli2/what.html)*
- [11] Korpershoek, H., Harms, T., de Boer, H., van Kuijk, M., & Doolaard, S. (2014). *Effective classroom management strategies and classroom management programs for educational practice*. Groningen: GION onderwijs/onderzoek.
- [12] Levin, J., & Nolan, J. F. (2007). *Principles of classroom management: A professional decision-making model*. Pearson Higher Ed.
- [13] Zhou Ping. *Characteristics and enlightenment of English education activity design for Spanish children [J]. Preschool Education (Education Science)*, 2017, (3):53-55.
- [14] Fan Liang, Cai Hongmei. *Application research of digital gamification learning in second language education[J]. Journal of Chongqing Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences edition)*, 2017, (4):67-70.
- [15] Li Jialin. *Exploration and innovation on the establishment of happy children's English classroom [J]. Curriculum Education Research*, 2018, (38):254-255.
- [16] Marzano, R. J., Marzano, J. S., & Pickering, D. J. (2003). *Classroom management that works. Research-based strategies for every teacher*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- [17] Shi Ni, XiLihong, Shi Furong, Wang Gaili, Zhang Yuling. *A Study on the design of preschool English teaching activities under the awakening theory [J]. Education Modernization*, 2018, (4):131-132.
- [18] Zhao Lin, Pei Sen, Liu Hua, Linda Siegel. *A new curriculum model for second language learning in China[J]. Journal of Shanxi Normal University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, 2006, (4):117-122.
- [19] Norling, M., Sandberg, A. *Language learning in outdoor environments: Perspectives of preschool staff. Tidsskrift for Nordisk Barnehageforskning [J]. 2015, 9(1), 1–16.*
- [20] Laura M. Justice, Hui Jiang, Katherine Strasser. *Linguistic environment of preschool classrooms: What dimensions support children's language growth? [J]. Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 2018, (42):79-92.
- [21] Dickinson, D. K., Caswell, L. *Building support for language and early literacy in preschool classrooms through in-service professional development: effects of the Literacy Environment Enrichment Program [J]. Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 2005, 22(2), 243–260.
- [22] Jennifer Whorrall, Sonia Q. Cabell. *Supporting children's oral language development in the preschool classroom. Early Childhood Education [J]. 2016, (44), 335–341.*
- [23] Cabell, S. Q. , Justice, L. M. , McGinty, A. S. , DeCoster, J. , Forston, L. D. *Teacher–child conversations in preschool classrooms: Contributions to children's vocabulary development[J]. Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 2015, (30), 80–92.