

The Lived Experiences of the Kindergarten Teachers in Public and Private School in China Basis for the Enhancement

Lixia Ma¹ Maria Theresa Cardano²

¹ Master. Candidates of Arts Sciences and Education, Trinity University of Asia. 275 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue Quezon City. 1102 NCR

² Dr. Department Head of College of Arts Sciences and Education, Trinity University of Asia. 275 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue Quezon City. 1102 NCR

First Author Email:lixianma@tua.edu.ph

Second Author Email:mtdcardano@tua.edu.ph

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ABSTRACT

A research study investigates the educational experiences of Chinese teachers working in public and private kindergarten institutions by understanding their struggles with language teaching and their response methods. Phenomenological qualitative interviews were conducted with ten kindergarten teachers who had at least two years of teaching experience. Important findings that emerged from the study involved strategies for classroom management, alignment with curriculum standards, emotional regulation practices, and parent school collaboration practices. Three major problems that teachers reported in their work included misalignment between instructional goals and school standards, short attention spans of students, and difficulties in communicating with parents. Educators used game-based learning; positive reinforcement of learning augmented with reflective teaching practices to address these challenges. The findings emphasize that teachers' emotional resilience and strong partnerships with parents are vital to an effective classroom. The findings of this research point out a demand for context specific training and supportive programs that provide a place-based framework for creating high quality teaching practices in inclusive early childhood language learning environments.

Keywords: language teaching, emotion management, teaching challenges, professional development, home and kindergarten co-operation

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INTRODUCTION

In early years children need to be developing appropriate language in order to grow socially, emotionally and cognitively. Communication skills and academic readiness of kindergarten students aged three to six can be enhanced through effective language instruction [1]. The work of early childhood educator is not easy due to their inconsistent instructional objectives with their learning activities, unclear assessment methods, lack of budget, and the challenge in implementing the teaching strategies which match correctly the needs of the students [2]. Effective teaching needs both strong parent communication skills and ability to handle different classroom behavior types. The abilities of six-year-olds and younger children to focus last for brief periods require sustained interest in interactive play activities to support mental concentration and language acquisition according to research findings [3]. The research analyzes teaching experiences of ten kindergarten teachers across public and private institutions who hold at least two years of teaching experience. The research step by step investigates both teaching impediments and methodological approaches teachers utilize. The study aims to guide the creation of proper teaching methodologies and educational policy development for Chinese language education.

1.1 Research Objectives

1. To explore the lived experiences of kindergarten teachers in China regarding language teaching in public and private early childhood settings.
2. To identify the major challenges faced by kindergarten teachers in implementing effective language instruction.
3. To analyze how teachers manage classroom dynamics and cultivate rule awareness to improve language learning.
4. To examine the role of home-kindergarten cooperation in enhancing children's language development.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of kindergarten teachers in China regarding language teaching in public and private early childhood settings?
2. What challenges do teachers encounter in planning and delivering language instruction to young children?
3. How do teachers manage children's behavior and cultivate rule awareness during language lessons?
4. What role does cooperation between parents and teachers play in supporting children's language development?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to Early Childhood Language Education

Young children require proper language development from the start of age three up to age six because this period sets the foundation for their intellectual development alongside their social abilities and emotional capabilities. Children develop vocabulary quickly along with communication abilities throughout this stage because these skills determine upcoming academic outcomes along with social relationships [4]. Reliable language education at the early stages contributes to developing both linguistic skills and thinking abilities and emotional management competencies [5]. Chinese public kindergartens operate based on national protocols while private institutions maintain flexibility within their educational framework [6]. Every teacher needs to handle different learning requirements while bringing valuable linguistic experiences to their students. The strategies combined with interactions employed by teachers affect language outcomes for children based on their real-life teaching experiences. To effectively improve educational practices, an important consideration is teachers' lived experiences. Qualitative approaches that include phenomenological approaches are most likely the appropriate way to explore the real-world problems teachers experience. The approach offers rich and detailed insights about the development of effective practices for early language instruction.

2.2 Lived Experiences of Kindergarten Teachers in Language Instruction

The kindergarten educators' real world teaching practices provide useful data for student of effective language instruction. Teachers learn through phenomenological methodology and reflective praxis the ability to assess day to day interactions, the emotions involved, and the instructional strategies [7]. Sometimes hands on experience is more useful than abstract theory. Educators have a dual role in regulating their emotions, which subsequently governs the environment of the classroom, thereby contributing to enhance the development of the students. While public kindergarten curricula in China are standardized, preventing changes in instructional flexibility, private institutions provide more freedom and mix different ways of teaching [8]. Although teaching across institutions, including teachers of both contexts, are situated in similar circumstances, they face the same challenges of supervising students' behaviour, and teaching accordingly to the needs of each student. Furthermore, the teaching approaches are very much influenced by social and cultural expectations. On the other hand, traditional values talk about structure and discipline, whereas modern educational reforms advocate for creativity and student independence. Responsive teaching driven by changing parental expectations is good for early childhood language education.

2.3 Challenges in Language Teaching in Early Childhood Settings

Several challenges related to delivering early language instruction have an effect on the quality of teaching and children's developmental outcomes [9]. Children aged three to six years may have short attention span, impulsive behaviour and be noncompliant which requires interactive methods of teaching that would be fitted to their stage of development. In many cases, standardized educational materials do not address the needs of children individually, which leaves teachers caught up between

demands of the curriculum and scarce classroom resources. The use of inappropriate or mismatched tools of assessment can lead educators and parents to miss some of the subtle progress in language development and thus complicate both evaluation and communication. Emotionally demanding situations that teachers confront also involve emotionally demanding situations that involve strong self-regulation necessary to maintain empathy and teaching effectiveness. In the absence of proper support, prolonged stress can result in burnout, which can negatively impact instructional quality. Gamified learning, combined with positive reinforcement and reflective practice, are powerful strategies that are helpful not only for student engagement, but also for education and professional growth among educators in such demanding early childhood education contexts.

2.4 Managing Classroom Dynamics and Cultivating Rule Awareness

Preschool classroom management is of utmost importance as it provides supportive environments that facilitate student development and learning [20]. Behavioral guidance is very important in facilitate children three to six years of age obtaining regulation of self and social skills. Educators set boundaries and expectations for young learners and help them realize what the appropriate behavior is and guide them into more positive interactions and emotional growth [10]. The Montessori philosophy creates disciplined children by allowing them to become autonomous through favorable educational settings. Transdisciplinary educational methods that incorporate positive reinforcement along with gamified learning and differentiated instruction foster student engagement and rule adherence [11]. Learning activities that match students' developmental stage enhance their ability to participate actively. Students learn more easily when classrooms are properly managed because it reduces anxiety and decreases distractions while increasing participation during language-focused activities. Behavioral strategies with strong implementation lead to better disciplinary results which support language learning and develop students in early childhood education.

2.5 The Role of Home-Kindergarten Cooperation in Language Development

Pre-school children are advantaged by intense collaboration between families and kindergartens with consistent language support in all learning environments [12]. Epstein's model underscores partnership between education professionals, families, and communities as the key to academic achievement and all-around development. In young childhood, such collaboration builds language development through effective communication. Teachers and parents in synchrony on educational objectives lead to enhanced vocabulary, communication, and literacy in children [13]. Successful approaches involve parent-child reading sessions, two-way feedback, and continued contact, facilitating parents to facilitate learning at home [14]. For China, family participation is consistent with the Confucian ethic, with education highly prized and parents expected to actively facilitate their child's achievement. Teachers are responsible for facilitating parents in contributing to early language acquisition, with cultural norms exerting a strong influence on home-kindergarten collaboration and expectations [15].

2.6 Research Gap

Even though early childhood education research has grown substantially researchers have documented insufficient evidence through qualitative studies about authentic Chinese kindergarten teacher voices and their experiences. Current academic work neglects to combine emotional labor with classroom management approaches and home-kindergarten relationships although these three elements fundamentally affect successful language learning practice development. Studies must prioritize local investigation of Chinese educational and cultural environments in order to reflect authentic settings accurately. Research based on phenomenological inquiry addresses present gaps that provide direct knowledge to enhance teacher training programs and educational policies which improve early childhood language instruction throughout China.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research implemented a qualitative phenomenological design to uncover how Chinese kindergarten teachers in public and private institutions experience language instruction. Through its phenomenological approach researchers gained comprehensive observations about the ways educators make sense of language teaching challenges during regular operations which cross-validation through quantitative research would likely miss.

3.2 Participants

Criterion sampling was used to choose ten kindergarten teachers who taught in early childhood education for at least two years. Kindergarten teachers from public and private institutions in Shenzhen, Guangdong accepted as participants through their diverse educational backgrounds. Ninety percent of the nine female and one male group of teachers aged 25 to 32 years old decided to take part in the study on a voluntary basis.

3.3 Data Collection

The research period spanned from April to July 2024 during which time researchers conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews. Interview questions allowed participants to provide extensive details about their classroom teaching difficulties and schoolwide relationships and family-based communication. All interviews spanned between 45 to 60 minutes through face-to-face meetings as well as video calls. Before recording the sessions the participants provided consent while the researchers documented the audio of every interview for subsequent verbatim transcription.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researchers utilized thematic analysis following principles of phenomenology. Multiple transcript assessments by researchers allowed identification and categorization of common and unique elements into thematic clusters. The process required researchers to find common patterns and individual experiences for an in-depth comprehension of the phenomenon.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Permission for this research was approved through the Institutional Ethics Review Committee (IERC). The research purposes alongside participant rights and the freedom to terminate their involvement were explained to each participant. Participants received pseudonyms for a secure protection of data while all information stored securely.

3.6 Trustworthiness and Rigor

Member checking together with peer debriefing and an audit trail system established trustworthiness in this study. The detailed descriptions in the study made it easy for readers to determine its applicability to similar educational settings in early childhood.

4 RESULTS

Ten kindergarten educators shared relevant observations about language teaching which incorporated behavior management and rule awareness together with teaching innovation along with home-kindergarten interconnection. The teachers provide solutions to problems stemming from different learning goals, omitted developmental stages, evaluation shortcomings, communication obstacles and restricted resources. The observations demonstrate useful personnel approaches and professional enrichment in fostering inclusive developmentally appropriate language education in early childhood.

4.1 1. Thematic Reflection

4.1.1 Theme 1: Communication and understanding

The co-researchers indicated that communication is predicated on listening, which they regard as the most fundamental form of interaction in the educational process. Teacher Joan emphasized the significance of children's expression, stating, "I believe the best approach is to guide children to articulate what they want to say or what they have seen." Her perspective resonates with the "art of listening," as advocated by the renowned German educator Karl Witte [16]. Listening to children's voices will not only allow teachers to better guide the self-expression of their students but also to aid their holistic development.

4.1.2 Theme 2: Cultivation of rule awareness

The first-grade entry children typically do not understand rules well which creates substantial challenges for teachers in classroom management and teaching implementation. Linda confided in me, "There is a particularly unruly boy in the class who has no sense of rules." In response, she designed interactive and gamified teaching activities to capture the children's attention and guide them toward rule compliance. Concurrently, she employed a positive reinforcement strategy in behavior

management, using incentives and praise to enhance the children's motivation to follow rules. This approach helps children gradually develop a stronger sense of rules, promotes their active participation, and fosters progress in language learning. This practice aligns with Maria Montessori's strong advocacy for cultivating a sense of rules in children. Montessori profoundly discussed the relationship between "freedom" and "self-discipline," emphasizing the importance of rule awareness (Maria Montessori, 20th century) [17].

4.1.3 Theme 3: Behaviour management

In addressing the challenges of managing young children's behavior, Teacher Rita shared her reflection: "When interacting with a highly active child, my stern demeanor hindered the effectiveness of communication." In fact, when adults observe seemingly inappropriate behaviors in young children, these are often natural manifestations of children's efforts to learn social norms and self-regulation skills. Chen and Zhang [18] further examined in the Chinese journal *Journal of Educational Exploration* how teachers can employ diverse strategies to manage children's behavior. They suggested that teachers adopt an egalitarian and gentle communication style, using positive reinforcement and emotional support to help children understand rules and behavioral expectations. This approach not only enhances children's comprehension but also strengthens the trust between teachers and students.

4.1.4 Theme 4: Optimising the teaching and learning environment

Teacher Kathy emphasized the importance of using direct and simple language when communicating with children. According to Maxwell and Bolstad [19], creating an inclusive educational environment is essential. Such an environment not only accommodates the diverse learning needs of young children but also fosters their active participation and motivation to learn. Ma and Zhao [20] further elaborated on specific strategies for optimizing kindergarten environments. These strategies include providing rich learning materials, creating spaces for exploration and discovery, and encouraging cooperative interactions among children. Enhancing the educational environment also involves the thoughtful arrangement of educational spaces, where the physical setting of kindergartens can interact with children. Teachers can use children's representational works and visually supportive materials to convey learning content, thereby promoting the holistic development of children.

4.1.5 Theme 5: The importance of calm and decisive behavior

The co-researchers revealed that remaining calm and communicating promptly with parents is crucial when encountering emergencies at work. Tammy shared her experience of dealing with "a child who got hurt," emphasizing that she remained calm and took immediate action throughout the process. According to Walden et al. [21] emotion management stands vital for organizations with service focus since it requires teams to control reactions while adapting their responses to socially proper emotional developments. The effective dialogue between Tammy and parents brought forth their complete support which allowed for a smooth conflict resolution. The situation shows how teachers achieve both speed and efficiency in their emergency communications with parents.

4.1.6 Theme 6: Innovation in Educational Strategies

In the process of exploring innovative educational strategies, Teacher Lili's experience is particularly noteworthy. She emphasized, "It is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of each child before drawing conclusions." This reflects the necessity for teachers to fully grasp the individual differences and needs of young children when devising educational strategies, an insight that resonates with the views of psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky profoundly noted, "Individual development is rooted in the soil of collaboration and teaching. Well-organized teaching can lead to intellectual development in children, triggering a series of developmental processes that would be impossible outside of teaching [22]. This indicates that innovative educational strategies, based on a thorough understanding of each child and tailored to their specific needs, can effectively promote comprehensive development.

4.1.7 Theme 7: Teachers' professional growth and enhancement

The co-researchers unanimously agreed that teachers' professional capabilities are closely linked to their personal growth. Teacher Wendy proposed, "Respect children and reflect on and adjust teaching

methods.” This not only reflects a profound understanding and reflection on teaching practice but also represents an important manifestation of teachers’ professional development. Wang [23], in her research on innovative pathways for teacher professional development, suggested that the development trajectory of teachers is a multi-layered and multi-stage process, involving the refinement of personal style, deepening of educational philosophy, and enhancement of teaching skills. During the teaching process, teachers should continuously acquire new knowledge, experiment with new methods, and reflect on and adjust their practices. Teachers’ ongoing learning and improvement not only contribute to their professional development but also provide high-quality educational experiences for young children.

4.1.8 Theme 8: Language skills development

Relevant research indicates that the development of language skills is a core area in early childhood education. Teacher Cherry, when discussing communication, pointed out that “when dealing with social interaction issues among children in senior classes, their quarrels and imitation of inappropriate behaviors” highlight the importance of language education in guiding proper interactions and communication skills. For instance, Fekonja, Umek and Kranjc [24] emphasized in their study the significant role of peer communication in children’s language development, arguing that interactions among peers are more natural and meaningful, and can more effectively promote the enhancement of children’s language abilities.

4.1.9 Theme 9: Participation of children with special needs

Almost every co-researcher has had experience teaching children with special needs. During the interviews, they noted that these children can be more challenging to teach, requiring significant patience and understanding. Communication with parents can also be more difficult. Winnie shared her experience with children with special needs, emphasizing the importance of “patient guidance, acceptance, and inclusion, as well as positive reinforcement to help them actively participate in classroom interactions and express themselves.” This aligns with the findings of Pérez-Salas et al. [25], who highlighted that a positive teacher-student relationship can have a significant impact on the school participation and social willingness of children with special needs. Children with special needs often exhibit heightened sensitivity, social anxiety, or communication barriers, which can severely impact their ability to engage in group activities. To address these challenges, teachers should first gain a thorough understanding of the children’s unique needs. Second, they should learn to identify and support the educational needs of children with special needs. Finally, maintaining close communication with parents and fostering cooperation between home and kindergarten is essential for the holistic development of the child.

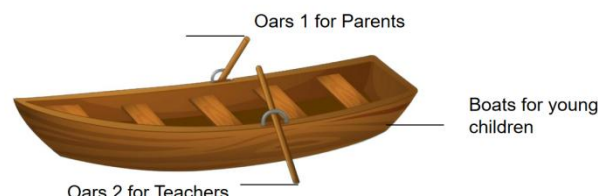
4.1.10 Theme 10: Importance of co-operation between home and kindergarten

The researchers repeatedly emphasized the importance of cooperation between home and kindergarten, which involves multi-directional communication and collaboration among kindergartens, teachers, parents, and children. Sissy said, “Communicate with parents in a timely manner and ask for their support and understanding.” He Li Jun’s [26] research further confirmed the positive role of home-kindergarten cooperation in children’s language development. This means that home-kindergarten interaction and collaboration can enhance children’s language skills and lay a solid foundation for their future learning. For example, through regular parent-teacher conferences and communication, teachers can share children’s progress and areas for improvement in language learning, and parents can provide corresponding guidance and encouragement at home based on this information. This collaborative effort not only strengthens children’s language abilities but also promotes their social and emotional development.

4.2 Eidetic Insights and Symbolism

The key themes distilled from a series of reflections in the study reflect the challenges and coping strategies in language teaching. In the process of educating children, Epstein [27] pointed out that parental involvement has a significant impact on the effectiveness of early childhood education. The relationship between parents and teachers is likened to “a boat and its oars,” highlighting the complementary roles of both parties in early childhood education. Young children are metaphorically described as small boats navigating the ocean of knowledge, while teachers and parents serve as dual

oars propelling the children forward. Teachers guide the children's journey through professional teaching methods and strategies, while parental support is another indispensable force driving the children's development. By establishing trust and maintaining open communication, teachers and parents can jointly promote the growth of children and lay a solid foundation for their future.



5 DISCUSSION

The research analyzed instruction methods of language education among Chinese kindergarten teachers who work in public and private institutions for children between three and six years old by implementing phenomenological approaches to study their actual teaching experiences. The main topics analyzed throughout the study were classroom management together with emotional regulation alongside professional growth along with collaboration between home and kindergarten institutions. The teachers acknowledged three principal difficulties in their work environment: student behavioral disturbances alongside short-term attention capability and developmental variability and assessments without alignment [28]. Teaching professionals showed their capacity to change by using novel flexible approaches to instruction despite facing those obstacles. The ability to manage emotions played a key role since it allowed teachers to maintain stability in learning environments while both students and teachers grew reflectively [29]. Teachers built their pedagogical abilities mainly through actual classroom practice because hands-on experience proves to be essential for developing expertise according to research [30]. The creation of strong relationships between home and kindergarten environments received particular emphasis because it helps with child language development specifically affecting children who learn differently. Regular reading sessions between parents and children together with consistent dialogue brought about stronger relationships between teachers and parents. According to the metaphorical “boat and its oars” model children need the cooperative connection between each other to progress in their language learning [31].

6 CONCLUSION

Chinese educators who work in country-owned and private educational facilities for preschoolers between three and six years old share their educational experiences in this investigation. Ten experienced teachers used phenomenological qualitative approaches to explain major challenges teachers face such as disrupted attention and behavioral issues alongside mixed-level learners and limited resources and inadequate assessment methods. Such difficulties produced both emotional turmoil and unfulfilling professional experiences among teachers. Teachers managed these difficulties by adopting three specific teaching methods which included praise as well as lottery-based motivation and personalized instruction approaches. The research proved that dedicated parental engagement in their children's education leads to better language development through regular communication connections and shared educational activities. The studied data establishes the requirement for teacher assistance which includes specialized professional development focusing on emotional support and building relationships. Research needs to study lasting effects of teacher-parent cooperative teaching methods while comparing variations between regions in order to support culturally sensitive language education throughout China.

6.1 Author Contributions

1. Conceptualization : Dr. Maria Theresa D. Cardano and Ma Lixia jointly proposed the research concepts and direction, laying the foundation for this study. Dr. Maria Theresa D. Cardano , Dr.Borines, was

responsible for the overall research design and the construction of the theoretical framework, while Ma Lixia provided valuable suggestions and feedback from a practical operational perspective.

2. Methodology : Dr. Maria Theresa D. Cardano, Dr. Borines, was in charge of developing the research methodology, including the selection of appropriate research designs, data collection, and analysis methods. She ensured the scientific validity and feasibility of the research methods, thereby providing a solid guarantee for the smooth progress of the study.
3. Data Collection : Ma Lixia was responsible for collecting the research data. Through interviews with kindergarten teachers, she gathered a wealth of first-hand information, providing a robust data foundation for the study.
4. Data Analysis : Ma Lixia was responsible for analyzing the data collected. Utilizing professional data analysis methods, she extracted key themes and insights, offering strong support for the research findings.
5. Writing - Original Draft : Ma Lixia was in charge of drafting the research manuscript. Based on the research results and analysis, she meticulously documented the research process and findings, laying the groundwork for subsequent review and editing work.
6. Review & Editing : Dr. Maria Theresa D. Cardano, Dr. Borines was responsible for reviewing and editing the manuscript. She made detailed revisions and improvements to the manuscript, ensuring its logical coherence and academic rigor.

All authors have read and agreed to the version of the manuscript to be published.

6.2 Data Availability Statement

The data generated and analyzed in this study are available from the authors upon reasonable request.

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6.4 Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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