

LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN: A WHOLE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to explore the effects of Whole Language Curriculum on preschool children's language and literacy development. Researchers designed developmentally appropriate curriculum for preschool children to guide children build language ability and related corresponding coping strategies during their learning and playing. There were 30 children (24 6-year-olds and 6 5-year-olds) in the study, and qualitative research methods were applied to collect data, including: observation record, reflection dairy, scripts for interview dialogue, children's worksheet and daily life activity plans. The results of the research are generalized as below: 1. Applying whole language approach with thematic instruction into children's routine activities can enhance children's language ability. 2. With children's language growth in reading habit, environment words recognition, listening, comprehension, oral expression, writing, and self confidence cultivation, preschool educators and their parents also change their former thoughts toward the whole language approach and offer sufficient support in children's learning. At last, several suggestions are proposed for preschool teachers, parents and further researchers.

Keywords: Whole Language, Preschool, Curriculum, Literacy, Children.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, Taiwan parents consider preschool as reading and writing pre-school study class before entering elementary school, and some kindergartens even include Grade-1 curriculum into the preschool curriculum. The characteristic and function of whole language is that children can use the hints he/she understands in the talking situation to comprehend the meaning of speech (Ryder, Tunmer, & Greaney, 2008; Gritten, 2008; Goodman, 1990; Goodman, 1986). Similarly, children can use all information in the written communication context to comprehend the meaning of certain paragraph in the text. While reading, they can learn letters or vocabulary, or guess the meaning of words through picture books or their previous understanding of the story content or the story's basic structure without the need to know every new word in the text to grasp the meaning. Due to the teaching dilemma, the philosophy of integrating whole language into teaching declines gradually, which enables the researcher to re-consider the arrangement and design of language programs in the classroom with the intention to further study and implement philosophy of whole language in the classroom in order to raise the researcher's professional knowledge and ability.

Research Motivation

The concept of whole language is originated from research on reading and writing germination, which emphasizes on that language is "whole", "integral", and unable to be divided into syllables, words, terms, sentences, and etc., since those fragments cannot piece the real language together. In addition, language learning needs to be whole and contain "language" that is meaningful for the learner himself/herself, which is why it is called "whole language" (Huang, 1997).

Goodman (1986) indicated that the teaching program of whole language should set up the framework based on children's literature. A lot of whole language teachers do not use textbooks completely; rather, they use children's literature solely to construct the program (Porteous, 2013; Pryba, 2015). The researcher is deeply interested in it; and, by systematically collecting and classifying children's writing or creative works for more thorough and detailed observation and record, she expects program arrangement and design can take root in putting whole language teaching environment into practice to raise self-teaching expertise and obtain parents' approval and identification accordingly (Torriani, 2010; Thomson, 2011).

Research Purpose and Questions

In this study, on the basis of exploration of whole language theory and practice, the researcher began with continuing the existing old experiences of whole language teaching model and environment to search for the problems and difficulties while recording process of teaching. In accordance with the research purpose, the researcher proposed the questions to be discussed as listed below:

1. Through which activities does the teacher implement whole language teaching process and what are the corresponding strategies?
2. In studies on implementing whole language teaching, how do students change?

Definition of Nouns Childhood Educator

In this study, childhood educator refers to the qualified teacher who is working in the affiliated kindergarten in the elementary school.

Whole Language

Whole language is a kind of educational philosophy and faith that covers five systematic concepts, including language, learner, teacher, program, and classroom. As for the philosophy of whole language, Huang (1997) considered that whole language is derived from writing germination, emphasizing on that language is whole and undividable into fragments such as syllables, words, sentences, and etc. Language will be language only when it is composed by the complete sentences. The important spirit of whole language lies in the word "whole", which elements are: in the complete lingual and societal situation, we should respect that the learner as a whole individual who learns the integral language (translated by Li Lien-chu, 1998; Wynn, 2008).

What whole language stresses is that language is part of our life that highlights the function of language's meaning delivery, claims that language learning is centered on

comprehension, and the process of learning should take children's mental development, interest, and needs into considerations for them to actively take responsibility for their own learning in the true and meaningful situation.

LITERATURE DISCUSSION

Definition and Theoretical Foundation of Whole Language

Whole language contains multiple meanings, which combines our viewpoints regarding language, learning, children, and teachers that emphasize on everyone's engagement in recognizing and learning every day (translated by Li Lien-chu, 1998; Huang Chi-jen, 1997; Huang Jui-chin; 1993). Li Lien-chu (2006) even considered that whole language means the thinking method involving personal and group in the process of education (Li, 2006; Hagberg, 2007; 2010).

Huang (1997) tried to propose the following definition: whole language teaching is a philosophy that combines theory and practice tightly, and it is also a faith system that integrates learning and teaching, and respecting teacher and students. It emphasizes the teaching implementing listening, speaking, reading, writing, and the whole program integration under the real situation context, with content of literary works and real life materials. Based on cooperative learning, in the interactive process of meaning construction, the functional, meaningful, and purposeful substantial learning is proceeding in order to provide students' the applicable whole education. To sum up, "whole language" is a kind of lingual teaching viewpoint that combines psychological linguistics, social linguistic, and writing and reading germination research outcomes (Raines & Canady, 1990). It emphasizes children are center of learning that starts from the meaningful events in living for children to get bathed in the natural and realistic linguistic environment to learn undivided linguistic knowledge and actively construct their own language ability (Lin Fong-yi, 2006; Hainic, 2012).

Philosophical Foundation

(1). Humanism

Humanistic teaching philosophy emphasized on the following faiths:

- (a) Open courses, the learners can select readings in a variety of books step by step.
- (b) Valuing the children's rights to participate in selecting teaching materials.
- (c) Emphasizing on respecting children's developing instead of making them driven by external power.
- (d) The importance of learning interest superior to content selecting
- (e) Learner's self-assessment is the method to evaluate reading progress

(2). Progressivism

Progressivism proposes that "education is life", and considers that language is the best tool for children to express thoughts, learn things, and socialize with other people, but it has to occur in the most real situation (Chao Han-hua, 1994; translated by Lin Bao-shen, Liao Tsun-chu, 1990). Regardless of written or oral language, whole language teaching has to respect children's autonomy.

Psychological Foundation

(1) Recognition Oriented

Cognitive theory promoted by Piaget in 1960s considers children as the active learner, and emphasizes on the role of active constructor in the learning process. In this sense, whole language corresponds to the same constructive learning view-point (Li Lien-chu, 2006). In addition, Piaget also considered children's learning is accomplished in a series of continuous assimilation and adaptation. Such team co-learning model can be provided in the whole language classroom.

(2) Society Oriented

Vygotsky pointed out the constructive role played by the teacher and peers in learning, since children's language learning and thinking development are influenced by others' support in the social environment, and their method to learn language can duplicate such model.

Linguistic Learning Theory

Chomsky's (1965) pointed out that everyone has innate Language Acquisition Device. As long as linguistic stimulation exists, the individual can learn the complex language naturally, which is consistent with concept of whole language teaching. In regard of concept of language teaching, it considers that writing and oral languages are naturally learned from the whole to part, and it should concentrate on the meaning of the whole before emphasizing on grammatical rules (Flores, 2013; Piazzoli, 2013).

To sum up, whole language integrates three major theoretical schools--philosophy, psychology, and language learning, and further develops a set of theories of one's own. Whole language claims that children engage in the meaningful and self-related learning activities in teaching environment that is open, diverse, and filled with language, and it provides opportunities for children to read extensively so as to raise their language ability (Folkman, 2010; Wright, & McCarthy, 2008).

The View of the Whole Language Classroom

Design of Whole Language Classroom Environment and Material Equipment

The best approach for language learning is "to actually use it" (Chen Shi-chi, 1997; Gritten, 2008), and whole language classroom environment exactly focuses on providing children a lot of reading and writing chances in the classroom environment.

Environment

Environmental print signifies the diverse kinds of words displayed in the classroom, and the words indicated in the whole language classroom may include:

- (1) Indicator and label of the learning area, learning materials and equipment.
- (2) Various messages made public, like the bulletin board.
- (3) Guidance and instructions that guide students' behaviors or activities, like the rules of the classroom.
- (4) Other word related to learning activities.

Materials

Take classroom of kindergarten as example. The materials in the classroom are diverse, and include various kinds of different reading and writing materials for children to understand the purpose of each writing style.

During supplying materials, display of materials should be paid attention to in order to meet the viewing height of children for them to fetch and use conveniently and conduct extensive reading and writing. In addition to sufficient materials, another key point is that teacher should provide time, space, and activities for children to listen, discuss, narrate, read, and write to raise their language ability (Li Lien-chu, 2006).

Whole language program and learning activities

Whole language program is one that has the learner use language and think, which Goodman calls "Dual-goal Program" (translated by Tsai Hui-chi, 2003; Li Lien-chu, 2006).

On judging whether the program is whole language, the observer has to go further into the classroom teaching activities to explore the philosophic foundation and spirit. As far as the program and spirit of whole language are concerned, the nature of such program and activities is often learner-centered, integrative, real, relative, self owning, functional, and useful, so that children can indulge themselves in the program (Austuring, & Sorensen, 2012).

In short, whole language program should be learner-centered, and launch from the learner's experiences. By means of integration, the teacher and students co-establish and co-create learning program for children to learn actively, and explore actively--learning is superior to teaching, and teacher plays the role of the helper.

Teacher's role in whole language

Resource provider: teacher should try his/her best to provide children chances for selecting, invite children to take part in relative learning activities, and offer diverse materials and methods to enlighten children to learn.

Mediator: The less the teacher intervenes, the larger children can have the space to create. Therefore, the teacher should guide or assist students only when it is necessary (Flokmann, 2010; Lai Meng-chin, 2000).

(1). Observer: Whole language teacher must be a sharp observer of children, and he/she must record students' learning and growth, and positively make retrospections in order to understand students' language developing process and problems.

(2). Learner: The teacher is one who is always learning, and the children in the classroom are deemed to love learning.

Whole language class operation and atmosphere in the classroom

There is unique learning atmosphere in the whole language classroom. The teacher operates the classroom as the learner's social group model where both the teacher and students are learners that would support each other, while the learning pace of the learner can be

proceeded according to his/her own tempo (Flores, 2013; Wright, Wallace, & McCarthy, 2008).

The learner's backgrounds, ability, and learning motivation are all respected and accepted fully by the teacher in the classroom, so children in whole language classroom have autonomy right in the whole language classroom. They can decide the activities that they feel like joining, the learning area they like, the materials they want to use, the methods they would use to complete tasks, and even the form they would use to present their own ideas and creativity. In such atmosphere, children's autonomic ability is developed. In the classroom, because of due to the teacher's encouragement and respect, children's learning and language ability is raised, they would be more willing to explore diverse learning activities in the classroom freely, and such autonomous learning behaviors will increase significantly.

Assessment of Whole Language

Whole language assessment is also dual process assessment, including students' learning process assessment and teacher assessment proceeded simultaneously, possibly owing to the teacher positively helps students proceed learning (like Table 1).

Table 1 Dual process assessment

Type	Teacher assessment	Students' learning process
Participant	Teacher participation	Teacher-students co-participation
Content	For assessment of linguistic development, cognitive development, and program	Through using language, students learn to understand their world, answer and solve their questions, and evaluate their own learning
Method	Proceeds continuously, process of integrating anytime	Reading, writing, speaking, and listening

Data from: Li Lien-chu, 2006, p106

Whole language asserts that when engaging in assessment, students should be treated as a complete individual. For the content of assessment, the teacher has to observe not only their learning, thinking, and behaviors in the classroom horizontally, but also cares their growth, family, and cultural content vertically. Such assessment's thinking implication respects the learner, and also provide opportunity for the learner to re-construct his/her own self-value (Li Lien-chu, 2006).

Teachers who exert whole language use the whole oriented assessment like children observation and learning files the most often (Goodman, 1996). The whole language scholar Church (1996) proposed the concept and measure of recording keeping, including assessing methods such as event record, observation record, interview, class status check list, teacher's diary, children's learning file, and etc.

To conclude, the whole language assessment is a kind of time-enduring, continuous dual process assessment, including student's learning process assessment and teacher's assessment, which had better proceed simultaneously. As the observation dimension adopted during assessment, children's horizontal and vertical facets should both be taken into considerations, and diverse opportunities should be provided to the learner to learn (Ryan, 2012).

Whole language related empirical studies

The whole language related studies in Taiwan

Research (year)	Title	Research method and subject	Research results
Li Lien-chu (2006)	Whole language education	Pre-kindergarten class in affiliated kindergarten in the elementary school in Tainan City	The research indicated that due to adjustment of program, teachers should provide an materials and equipment that support children's listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In daily life and teaching, teachers should show the consulting tools of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and accept children's writing model. Teachers should become children's language and writing partners and provide them proper response and suggestions.
Hung Ying-ping (2007)	Actions research on whole language program reform	Action research on language activities and whole language integrated program: have the parents become part of the program to launch actions of whole language program reform	"Increase children's physical experiences", "observe children's interest in the corner", and "design individualized theme activities and imitated speakin", and "value sharing". Regarding parents and assessment, the initial action strategies is to win parents' identification continuously and adopt real assessment. When encountering the problem that parents strongly demand phonetic notation, the corresponding method should be "facing the need of the parents, and make efforts to communicate with real assessment"
Yen Chi-chen (2008)	Action Research on scaffolding children's reading and writing ability	By action research method and with 6 children in writing process in the affiliated pre-kindergarten class in the elementary school in Tainan City. Through teaching observation record, retrospection, dialogue, children's work collection, and so on to develop writing activities and understand their writing condition from	Children accumulate their various kinds of writing experiences. The date writing concept and form is established in daily life discovery. Book borrowing certificate combines date and book title. Teacher's scaffolding strategies to provide writing activities in the real and meaningful situation. Respect children's individual difference, and provide different scaffolds. Offer sense of security, enhance writing motivation, and encourage children to take risk in

		the activities, and find out the individual differences to provide proper assistance.	attempting various forms of writing.
Huang Yu-zong (2009)	The whole language teaching process of a childhood educator	By qualitative research and with the researcher and 27 pre-kindergarteners and 3 kindergarteners to proceed teaching. Apply what the researcher studied literature and professional books to practical teaching process and synthesizing and analyzing the collected data from observation record, recording, video taking, parent interview, self retrospection, and doing a diary.	1. the process of forming whole language teachers: pre-work education cultivation, in-service growing, whole language teacher's growth and supportive groups 2. Apply action strategies to improve the teaching difficulty; plan and change teaching environment to have the children situated in words, exert experience graphs, social community discussion, and routine language record activities, raise children's listening, speaking, reading, and writing ability by picture book integrated program. 3. Teachers' growth and what they obtain Win the parents' trust in teaching program, and implement whole language concept in teaching practice.
Yen Hui-min (2012)	Book borrowing motivation and writing strategies of children in the whole language classroom	By qualitative study, and with 6 pre-kindergarteners as the subjects, plan reading environment to display new books or introduce authors. The book shelves are classified with subject, author, and publish company. Through observation, interviewing parents and children, reading data, the data was analyzed.	The research results found that book borrowing motivation is decided by personal interest, program influence, family influence, and peer influence, among which the personal interest is the most important. In addition, software and hardware in the environment also effectively stimulate children's book borrowing behavior.

Analysis and enlightenment of whole language education related thesis Integration and design of program

- (1) Emphasize on spirit of integral learning
 - (a) The method of integrating program is to combine theme with other programs
 - (b) Listening, speaking, reading, and writing is proceeding by the program integration method
 - (c) Extend explorative activities from children's living experiences, interest, or questions to encourage and support children's learning

(2). Construct learning activities with children's literature framework (Li Lien-chu, 2006)

Goodman (1986) pointed out that whole language is a constructive philosophy that not only focuses on practice of skills or the existing textbook practice book or the package program. Rather, it should exert children's literature to construct the program and utilize extensive literary works to support development of the thematic concept.

(3). Connect children's living experiences and interest through language activities.

With the teacher's modeling of extensive reading, children are provided with opportunities to continuously observe, learn, and imitate. Under the teacher's encouragement, children can orally express their self living experiences, work's content, and story text. In this process, children can generate interest in language and try to intimate.

Change of teaching environment and equipment

As far as whole language classroom is concerned, it is an environment that provides many readings and writing anytime (Li Lien-chu, 2006). The classroom learning environment that meets whole language teaching spirit would change with program designing progress (Huang Yu-zong, 2009; Hung Ying-ping, 2007). Besides, teachers have to develop a real, meaningful, and interactive situation full of linguistic materials and arrangement for children to learn, and further generate learning motivation, cultivate sensibility of observation, which dimensions are worthy of researcher's learning and intimating.

Teacher's attitude

The difference between the whole language teacher and the teacher who uses traditional teaching method lies in the diversity and openness of the concept (Huang Yu-zong, 2009). In addition, the teacher also plays a role as the guider to model, a helper that receives challenges, develops environment, and interchanges with knowledge. Consequently, when the researcher conducts research, she obtains the outcomes as children do (Ross & Wensveen, 2010; Shusteman, 2000).

To sum up, through the studies of scholars and the researcher, it is found that whole language teaching tendency is from the whole to the part, since the teacher's expertise is the most important factor that affects teaching quality when children is the subject.

Research Methods

This chapter is divided into four sections for discussion. Section 1 is selecting qualitative research, Section 2 is the framework and work flow of the research. Section is the research field and subject, Section 4 is data collection and analysis, and Section 5 is reliability of the research.

Qualitative Research

This research aims to explore how to exert concept of whole language teaching in order to carry it out in the process of teaching by adopting qualitative approach. While concerning the "meaning" formed in the study, the researcher in qualitative studies must personally understand events taking place in the research field, and describe and generalize it with detailed and accurate data by means of long-term observation and record, as the events take place naturally (Kao Ching-wen). Through such repeated cycling process, the researcher must describe the events in this study with correlation. However, data in this study were obtained

from observation method, interviews, and collecting relative document. The teacher practiced whole language concept in teaching, observed children's reaction and change, expecting to obtain teacher's professional growth and outcomes.

Research Framework and Work Flow

In the first place, motivation to conduct the research must be triggered before defining the subject and purpose of the research. Then, after forming research questions, the research continue to read relative literature to back up his/her augments in the research. So far, with the above-mentioned preparations, the researcher draws up the research project and starts to proceed it.

Here, with the research purposes and questions in mind, the researcher modifies the research data after reviewing in the teaching stage, where he/she collects and record data in the process of teaching. Finally, with collected data, the researcher synthesizes, organizes, analyzes, and generalizes the data, and starts to compose the thesis.

Research Field and Subject **Research Field**

The research field was the affiliated kindergarten of Happy elementary school. In addition to operating class and teaching, the researcher had to deal with administrative work. In addition, program and activities were organized and constructed by the teacher in process of interaction. From learning program model, and the units and corner teaching in the past, to thematic programs as the developing axis, together with whole language concept and activities placed into teaching, children could enjoy such condition.

Background and Role of the Researcher

Gold (1958) classified the researcher into 4 roles: complete observer, observer is the participant, participant is the observer, and the complete participant (quoted from Huang Hui-chin, 2010). Sometimes, the researcher is the complete observer, and sometimes he/she plays the role of the participant as the observer, so he/she has to read, retrospect, and take note, and discuss with other teachers. By this way, the teacher could examine his/her subjectivity to prevent from deviating from the original research intention.

The researcher has taught for 27 years, and she took part of the Southern whole language growth group. Therefore, the researcher intended to place the whole language concept in the classroom, so that research and practice can be conducted in the classroom.

Background of Co-teacher

The researcher served as the teacher in White Cloud Class, a class mixed by kindergarteners and pre-kindergarteners. The other co-teacher Jin-jin has taught for 20 years, and took part in whole language teaching study for many times.

The intern teacher was also a student with childhood education major. She was the best helper of the researcher, and assisted to take care of children of non-subject. In addition, the intern teacher offered the researcher many different perspectives during data analyzing

provided even more viewpoint as the role of an outsider, so that the purpose of triangulation could be achieved.

The researcher investigated parents that were willing to take part to serve as volunteer parents. Her job responsibilities include assisting children reading one by one, helping them borrow books and fill out book borrowing record.

Research Subjects

Based on research ethics, all places or names mentioned in the research content used the anonymity. Code T1 refers to the researcher, T2 considers the co-teacher, Jin-jin, T3 is the intern teacher, Anan, CC signifies all children, and C1 refers to child No.1.

Program Arrangement

The program's content in White Cloud Class could be categorized into routine teaching activities and thematic teaching activities. Routine teaching activities that were melted with concept of whole language was conducted every day. After forming habits, the language ability was learned by children. What follows were three stages involving program design content and teaching implementation.

Teaching Content

(1) Routine Teaching Activities

(a) **Attendance sheet:** Wrote down the child's name individually, so that he/she could know one another through written language form as well as time concept of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

(b) **Contact book:** Writing contact book allowed children to check the message in the morning for understanding the activity content that day, whether guests would come to visit, or seasonal activities. The researcher expected that the design of contact book could carry more diversified meanings that could have children learn to write record and review learning activities on that day.

(c) **Borrow a book:** Book borrowing activity was an extremely good chance for children to learn self-management. In the beginning of this semester, the researcher designed the book borrowing certificate and the reward system for finishing reading 100 books in order to encourage children to borrow a book for reading.

(d) **Story teller:** Story teller was an activity for children to participate actively. One child told a story for 20 minutes after lunch and before snapping time every day.

Thematic Teaching

Direction of thematic teaching was usually developed from several directions; it would be teacher's observing children's activity in school, or might be a theme discussed by teacher and students together.

(1) Three Stages in this Research

Table 2 Three stages in this research

Stage	Preparation Stage		Conduction Stage Retrospection and modification stage		Integration stage
Date	103/09-103/10		103/10-104/01		104/02-104/06
Description	I	Summon parents' meeting and parent-teacher communication Interview for survey of children's reading behaviors Describe how to use reading visa and book borrowing certificate	1. Routine activity	Attendance activity Book borrowing activities (when borrowing a book, the new children records on reading visa, and the old ones record on the book borrowing certificate) Co-reading at down Bedtime story Story teller Writing contact book	Modify, generalize, and write information and teaching integrative research report
	II	Reading environment planning: Classify the book shelves according to theme, publish company, and author Arrange new book or author introduction posters Design attendance sheet, mood notebook	II. Thematic activities	Group discussion on thematic content Thematic activity Group activity Learning area activity Integrative activity	

2. Work-rest schedule

Week Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7 : 40-8 : 20	Sign attendance sheet borrow a book free exploration				
8 : 20-8 : 40	Local language teaching (coordinative with laws and regulations)	Physical strength activity			
8 : 40-9 : 20	Desert time				
9 : 20-10 : 00	Holiday life Experience sharing	Thematic activity time			Parent-teacher bridge time

					(reviewing activity in this week)
10 : 00-10 : 30	Outdoor activity time				
10 : 30-11 : 10	Learning area activity Group activity time				
11 : 10-11 : 30	Write on contact book (recording today's learning activities) Cleaning and work appreciation				
11 : 30-12 : 30	Lunch time				
12 : 30-13 : 00	Bedtime story				
13 : 00-14 : 30	Snapping time				
14 : 30-14 : 50	Grooming, folding quilt, outdoor activities				
14 : 50-15 : 20	Desert time				
15 : 20-16 : 00	Recount picture book	Musical game	Physical strength activities	Character teaching	Film appreciation
16 : 00	Leave school				

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

Data collection could be classified into three stages, and the collected content included: teaching activities designed by the teacher, observation and discussion records, interview records, teaching diary, and documented data.

Observation Records

(1) **Dimension:** The researcher intended to apply to group discussion, learning area's observation records, event records, and co-teacher Jin-jin's feedback as observing dimension. Group discussion focused on reading, and recorded thematic teaching and the content of teacher-student conversation in group reading time. In the learning area, the focus was response, interactive condition, body movement, workload distribution, drawing and creation of the child in activity and social community or child and environment. As for event records, it aimed at recording the narrative meaningful events in the research field (translated mainly by Tsai Ching-tien, 2004) to observe children's response to and interaction with the social community or learning environment.

(2) **Time:** from September 15, 2014, to December 5, 2014, totally 12 weeks.

Sampling method: This research applied event sampling to record data. When children present language related issues, it could be recorded.

Interview

Mishler (1986) considered interview as the process of interviewer and interviewee's constructing meaning together, and creation of new meaning in the ceaseless interactive process (quoted from Bi Heng-da, 1996). Denzin (1989) held that interview is like the dialogue, and as the process of both sides' giving and receiving through language. Based on the structure patterns, interviews can be categorized into "structure-type", "non-structure type", and "semi-structure type". In this research, children, parents, co-teacher Jin-jin, and intern teacher An-an were the subjects.

a. Interview with Children

Include formal and non-formal interviews with children conducted in teaching axis time. In the conservation time within a day's teaching, informal and random informal interviews could be proceeded in order to help the researcher clarify and confirm. During interview, people could be aided by taking notes and recording the content, and converted the talking and conversation content to transcription for data analysis.。

b. Interview with Parents

Through non-structure telephone visit or interview, the researcher understood whether children's motivation on borrowing a book was influenced by parents. In addition, when the researcher intended to further confirm the research data, she would make an appointment with the parents to proceed formal interview.

c. Interview with Co-teacher

It was supposed that the researcher discussed with co-teacher in snapping time at least 3 days in a week. Co-teacher could also provide concrete suggestions through self retrospection diary, teaching strategy planning, various observation record, document data, and so on

Data Organization and Analysis

The data collected in this research mainly involved teaching diary, observation record, interview record, children's book borrowing certificate, and other data. In order to get clear of data source and to organize data, we conducted synchronical collection and analysis. In addition, we discussed and inspected each data anytime as needed, inter-verify ceaselessly, implement generalization and integration. The organizing, coding, and analysis is described as follows:

Data Organization

Data organization and analysis was proceeding continuously and circularly until the research comes to the end (Huang Jui-chin, 2004). We organized and analyzed the children related data, memorandum, picture books, retrospection notes, and etc. to serve as reference for this research's deduction.

Data Coding

Collect the original data for effective organizing, forming meaningful data.

Data Analysis

(1) Output Category--In the process of analyzing research data, after carrying out initial coding of data, we inspected, analyzed, and adjusted the property of category to generalize conceptualized data, and developed category and sub-category.

(2) Axial Coding-- In this stage, the data in the open coding returned to text to aggregate and integrate. After conceptualization, data was generalized as category, and the same categories form the even higher level categories. After obtaining the name of certain conceptualization, what followed was to consider whether those concepts can be grouped and inducted with one or multiple categories.

(3) Data Explanation-- after data got conceptualized and categorized, the researcher discussed with co-teacher and studied assessment data in order to explain that through which activities, teacher practiced whole language teaching process. In this research, the researcher

explored how children reacted and changed for corresponding to the purpose and questions in this research.

Research Reliability

Qualitative research is often regarded as too subjective, so researchers should adopt diverse methods to raise reliability between data (Chin Li-hua, 2001). The researcher intended to use triangulation to explore the triangulation of the participative group. Then, by comparing literature, the researcher aimed to raise the validity of this research.

Triangular of data signifies that during investigating the same phenomena, people resort to integrating multi-dimensional research methods (Huang Jui-chin, 2005). In qualitative research, "triangulation" that is applied the most means to study single subject with different methods as well as what different people say. In this research, we exerted data from different sources for cross-analysis, such as children's works, interview recording, document analysis, or observation record.

Triangulation of the research participant's group is relative to the views towards different subjects and personnel. In this research, based on data source, the researcher inspected and discussed with the instructor and the co-researcher.

Verification of methods-- it refers to applying multiple methods to investigate the same theme. In this research, we can find and review problems from various kinds of observation records.

Research results and discussion

Teaching activities that practice whole language in the classroom

In this section, we classified the teaching activities that practiced whole language in the classroom into two types: first, the language activities as daily routine that children participated in every day during the research period; secondly, we explained the content of thematic program activities, and discussed and analyzed the language activities triggered in process of doing activity.

Routine activities in the classroom raise children's language ability and interest.

In order to equip children with more written language experiences, we set up normal reading activities in the classroom, including I am the little helper, teaching tools borrow back activity, attendance sheet, contact book, story teller, and so on.

Record of Attendance Sheet and Contact Book

(a) Attendance Sheet

In regard of attendance sheet activity, other than providing chances for children to write and inter-watch, it was very helpful in respect with recognizing time and date, fostering interaction, and developing children's responsible attitude. Many scholars indicated, children's writing will be inclined to tradition with age increases, and signing attendance sheet can help them understand the meaning of written language (Clay, 1975; Li Lien-chu, 1992).

(b) Contact Book

Proceeding daily contact book writing can not only raise children's writing ability, but also present complete learning activity events every day, so that children can have sufficient

chances to practice. In addition, if the teacher melt into daily contact book display and conduct group sharing from the angle of respect and appreciation, children will obtain sense of achievement, support, and encouragement.

Book Barrowing Activity and Story Teller

(a) Book Borrowing Activity In the beginning of the semester, in order to help children learn to use book borrowing certificate and book reading method, every child in the classroom has a book borrowing certificate with his/her name on the cover. Children have to learn reading visa for 10 times before borrowing a book back home to read.

(b) Children's reasons for borrowing a book: (i) category of the picture book; (ii) evaluation on the images; (iii) Publish company's familiarity and preference; (iv) preference to the author; (v) the amount of words. In addition, children's concept for publish company and the author is also a kind of artistic appreciation. Finally, selecting category of picture books could show children's personal experience and preference, all are factors that influence children's book borrowing.

(c) Parents influence on children's borrowing a book: It is also found that children will listen to parents' suggestion to borrow specific book/ Parents hope children could borrow books unread before in order to expand the range of reading, but children usually borrow a book based on their own favor.

(d) Imitative writing and order of strokes: In the end of the semester, some parents proposed in the feedback sheet , "it is no use that kid can write national words, because the order of stroke is wrong". The researcher confirmed with the elementary school teacher and suggested that in writing Chinese words, it is better to deliver to the children the principles of writing words: from up to down, and from left to right. In kindergarten stage, the most important is to guide children to be interested in words rather than adhering to the order of strokes.

Story teller

Otto (1996) indicate that sharing story can enhance children's language development in the following five dimensions:

- A. Understand different languages should be applied to different types of stories.
- B. Understand the auditory system and symbolic system of phonetics.
- C. Understand change of lingual pattern will influence semantics.
- D. Understand the meaning of terms in each kind of literary works (semantics).
- E. Understand how to use sentences or phrases to express the thought in the story book (syntax).

Reading stories can enrich children's knowledge of writing language and awareness of phonetics (Otto,1996). For children aged 5-6, so-called stories are even longer, more complicated than stories in the past, and the content involves real life stories, imaginary stories, poems, and mythology.

In order to raise the fun of the story teller and the attention of the children sitting off the stage, the teacher proposed that the story teller can prepare for 2-3 questions or little gift for the one who answers correctly. According to the researcher's observation, "little gist" is the critical factor that attract children to register for telling a story and concentrating on listening to the story.

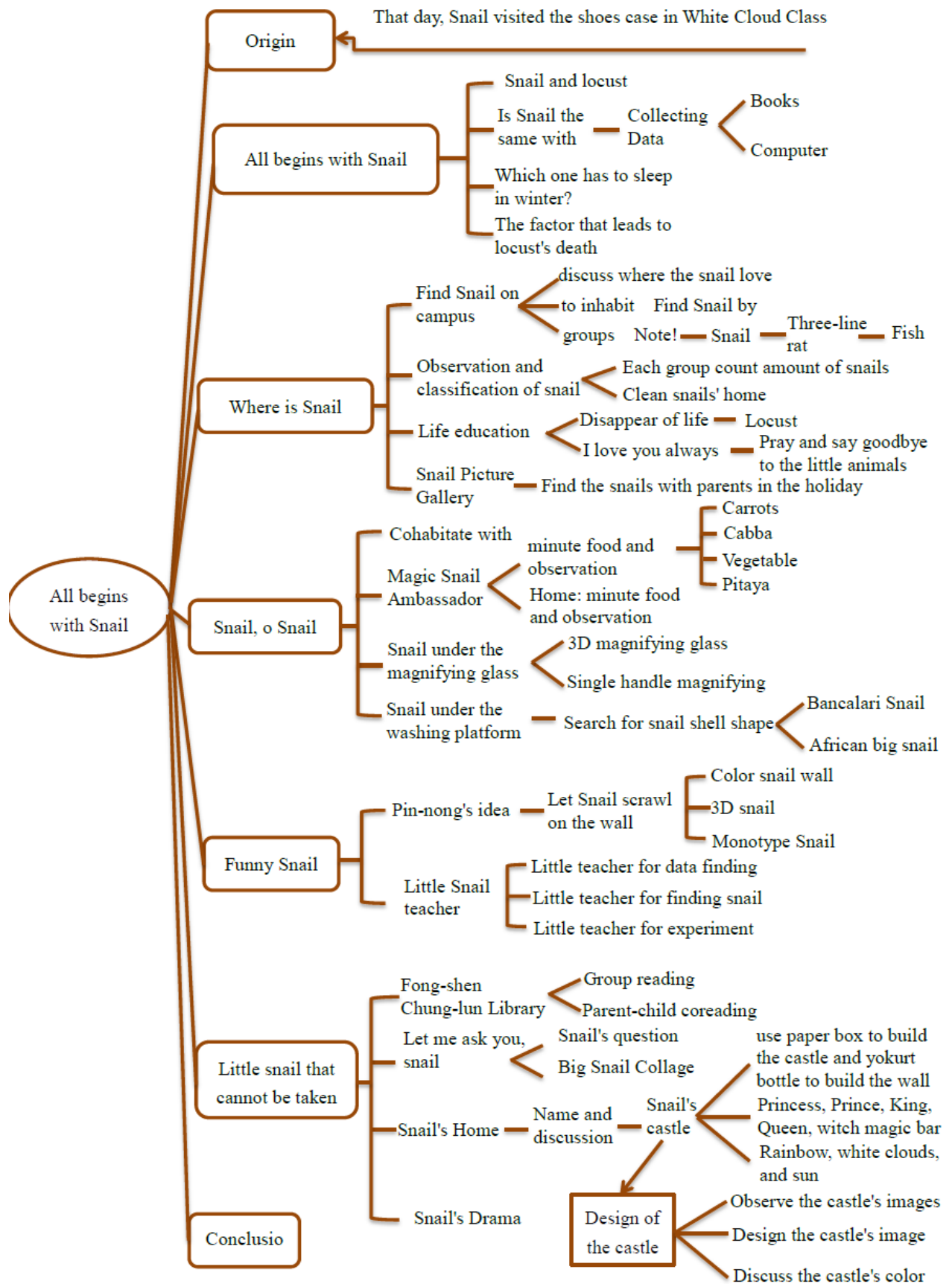
Routine writing is generated from living, so it is closely connected to children's daily life. In addition to taking part in the activity to achieve the original goal of that activity, children's writing or oral language development are also enhanced. Such writing activity arrangement is therefore real and meaningful.

Language activities motivated by thematic teaching

Snail Thematic Teaching's developing process 1					
Origin Hsin-yang found a snail on the shoes shelf in the classroom			Find the snail on campus 1. groups find the snails on campus 2. count where there are the most snails on campus		Explore snails. 1. Snail Experiment 2. Observe and classify the shape of snail's shell
Snail Thematic Teaching's developing process 2					
Knowledge on snails increases 1. picture book reading 2. parent-child collect information on snails together			White Cloud Class turns to White Cloud snail Class 1. Establish snail story museum 2. create snail's picture books 3. Design snail's castle drama museum		The Smart White Cloud Snail Class 1. Invite experts to solve problems 2. Make snail's book to publish 3. Set up Snail Museum.
Snail Thematic Teaching's developing process 3					
selling tickets Supplement snail's knowledge wall 2. Snail exploration hall 3. Snail's work display hall 4. Snail's castle drama hall Promotion Area	Selling punch the ticket Three-fold introduction	Introduction by the tour guide; African Snail's story; Brother Big John classroom; Answer the snail's questions; Movie play	Story of snail's castle	Promotion Area	

Fig 20 Developing process of teaching themes

Fig 1 Teaching theme net



CHILDREN'S CHANGES DURING RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION***Children's sensitivity to the words in the environment***

The researcher and the co-teacher conducted oral group discussion and converted to the graphs of written language through each language activity aroused by routine language activities and themes, so children could actively read the posters of children's songs, the experience graphs of the activity. Also, they could write daily program items on the whiteboard, name in the attendance, book borrowing activity proceeding daily during research period, and so on. In daily time, when the teacher read for children, he/she combined with oral language and written language by reading the title while pointing to the words correspondingly. Therefore, children became very clear about the reading direction, order, word amount, and etc., and the researcher found that compared to the condition as semester began, children's sensitivity to words raised and they generated interest in text.

Children's listening and comprehension ability raise significantly

Whole language teaching philosophy emphasized on addition of a huge quantity of picture books, children's songs, children's poems, articles and language games to the thematic activities as children's reading materials. Such reading materials not only helped children to develop sensitivity to words, but also helped them cultivate comprehension of the stories and raise their concentration ability little by little. Other than teacher's reading the picture books, the class also proceeded co-reading for several times. Among the activities, what interested children is Q&A. The teacher proposed a question for children to search for certain interesting events or figures in the book, and answer it was in which page. In fact, searching for such answers is a kind of assessment, test, memory, or sensitivity to the images, and invisibly raises their concentration and comprehension abilities.

Enhance expression of complete and rich terms and open oral attitudes

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing accompanied White Cloud Class's everyday life, and they were all functional and applied to correspond to different learning goals in the classroom. Most importantly, this was part of children's daily life, and it was what they cared, the natural and active learning. The language learning process started at need rather than teacher's imposing on them. Consequently, the researcher observed children's change in language from the following activities:

Story Teller Activity

The researcher observed that children's ability of telling a story in the classroom made progress not only in oral expression, the correctness of the story content raised, but also in demonstration of stable and firm stature on stage without showing shyness. In addition, they were able to judge whether to use the microphone based on their own volume, so that they could be heard by the audience. All are what the children improved.

Thematic activities

Huang Jui-chin (1997) proposed that, in regard of the group's common experience of generating words, the process was mainly led by the teacher. Chances for each child to express orally for creating words might be less. For example, the words listed in the experience sheet might only come from 6 or 7 children's oral narration, while the others

might not have the opportunity of talking about what they thought; as result, the number of people taking part in group discussion had better not be too large, so that every child has more chances to take part in speaking.

In thematic group discussion activities, it is found that children started with their own living experiences to express why they created the title-- it might be resulted from their stage construction background or generate their ideas from the functionality of drama. Anyway, children could speak out their ideas for the snails and drama, so the group discussion could enrich children's terms and vocabulary unconsciously and invisibly.

Learning sheet

In the researcher's designing learning sheet, through various kinds of forms, the researcher allowed the children to record by drawing in order to cultivate their ability of appreciating words. From the mood of face drawing learning sheet, the teacher had the children to add the adjectives of their mood by means of the close test. It is found that children's use of terms became richer and more diverse, and image symbols and the recorded words corresponded to a large extent, showing they had made significantly progress in written learning development. The progressivism educator, Dewey, said, "education is living", indicating that in learning single word substitution activity or recording the learning content of the whole activity, children can often verify the content of their daily life.

Increase time for independent reading

In the beginning of this research, a few children still took books as the toy to pile them up or arrange them as the rectangle shaped, and they only spent less than one minutes to watch the pictures in the book. Such situation was as what Chen Ya-yi (2014) mentioned that picture book teaching can trigger students' reading motivation, which is similar to that in the beginning of the research, children's way of treating the books stays in the superficial layer of reading, and taking them as toys.

In the everyday teaching work flow, the researcher and the students co-regulated that each child had to read at least one picture book after having the lunch. Lin Hui-ling (2012) pointed out that arranging the fixed reading time is helpful to form the reading habit. After conducting this research, the researcher observed that most children could keep on reading one to two books introduced by the researcher or the children after lunch time, and they could even generate body or oral response to the pictures, roles, or plot. Therefore, from the research results, children's independent reading time has increases.

From sketch to written expression of textual symbols

The researcher observed children's writing strategies included drawing, imitating writing, asking others to write, recording book elements, and ghost writing. Daily registering attendance, book borrowing registering, and writing contact book were the routine writing activities in our classroom. In the beginning of this practices, children were not clear of the book borrowing procedure nor accustomed to this task, often filling the date, week, or book title in the wrong field, and could not write the book title correctly wither. After the researcher and co-teacher demonstrated and instructed continuously, together with the interactive learning among peers, we had the children with better ability, better fine motor skills to lead other children. In this research, it is found that few students could use Pinyin

system or Chinese words with formal characters, and had independent writing ability and high accuracy. Part of the children would leave the difficult words or ask for someone able to help writing in process of recording. A few children could express personal viewpoint with their developing strategies, although they had not developed how to write the words.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Findings from implementing whole language teaching process

(1). Routine activities of whole language raise children's language ability

The research focused on the daily routine activities like registering attendance sheet, recording contact book, borrowing books, and story teller. Registering attendance sheet had the children know their peers through written form, learn date and time concept, and understand the meaning of written language. Design of book borrowing allowed the children learn to record and review a day's learning activity content, book borrowing activity encouraged students to cultivate reading habit and interest by means of recording book borrowing certificate, and story teller told stories by registering, and prepare the story and questions at home to improve their oral ability and firm stage stature.

(2). Thematic teaching not only trigger language activities but also integrative learning.

The content of thematic activities was determined by children's interest or living experiences, The theme in this semester was "snail", although it is relative to natural ecology, by melting the philosophy of whole language, the previous worry of incompatibility with literature was cleared away, because the outcome were quite good.

(3).Teacher's and parents' attitudes towards whole language teaching

(a). Teacher

Among the thematic activities the researcher proceeded in the classroom, most of them exerted group discussion and recorded the discussion results in the experience graphs to remind the students with the content of activities and tempo as reference for proceeding activities. The researcher's teaching attitudes have changed from guidance-based to more children-centered, and have teaching philosophy similar to the co-teacher and intern teacher, so the daily teaching discussion and activity proceedings are very effective.

(b). Parents

from the interviews, the researcher found that most parents consider that whole language teaching model employed in the classroom is very helpful to children's learning language.

CONCLUSION

What mentioned above illustrates the routine language activities and thematic language activities, and it narrated how children improve their language development. Based on the research findings, the researcher's teaching attitudes have changed from guidance oriented to more children-centered. In addition, from the interviews, it is learned that most parents identified with the language outcomes obtained in the natural atmosphere of whole language environment, but some parents considered that the books borrowed from school were improper so that the reading interest could not be triggered. In regard of recognizing new words and Pinyin learning, it involved with suggestions that more linkage methods in daily learning activities for parents to take ease. Parents agreed with diverse learning content in the thematic activities, and asserted that thematic activities were not restricted to language

development learning, but related to integrative learning, including natural observation, art and humanistic, or creative thinking.

Research Limitation

Research Subject

It is limited to the mixed-age class with the kindergarteners and pre-kindergarteners in the affiliated kindergarten in the elementary school in Kaohsiung City. Since it is not random sampling, so overly deduction is not appropriate.

Research Period

The research only lasted for 12 weeks. Due to rich thematic activity content, the preparation period took a long time, leading to insufficient time, which is the limit of this research.

Research Teaching

This research is based on the researcher's reading relative literature and collaboration with the interest and experience of the research subjects, so it is not applicable to deduction of subjects in different classroom situations.

Research Suggestions

Program and Time Arrangement Should Be More Flexible

Kindergartens usually arrange daily schedule. However, if it is enforced every day, the inflexibility will result in divided activities, especially when thematic programs need extensive group discussion to collect children's oral expression to be converted to practical program activities, more flexible time will be required to work with.

Lengthen Research Period and Extend the Subsequent Research

Since there were only 4 thematic activities, it is a pity that we did not visit the snail museum, and so is it that there were only 4 to present so many rich activity content. If the children's physical strength permits, it is suggested extend one to two weeks for museum display, so that the activity content may be presented more richly. Regardless of the task the children took, they had even more solid activity experiences, and could interact with more different visiting audience.

Handworks made by children, various written information on snails, and videos about snails, snail publishing products, snail stamps, or netof teacher's teaching themes are presented in the Snail Museum, and all should be preserved for reference for the teaching subsequently.

Whole Language Teaching Philosophy is Integrative Teaching

Whole language philosophy teaching not only focused on language activities, design of the teaching content was limited to routine language activities and those triggered by the themes originally. However, after implementing, the researcher found it is restrictive, since thematic activity "the Snail Museum" richly presented not only the linguistic dimensions in listening, speaking, reading, and writing; rather, even parents appreciate that such thematic activity can enhance children's language development with the content involving natural observation, art,

humanity, and creative thinking, which are all complete, natural, and meaningful learning. That is to say, whole language teaching strategies do not have fixed model nor focus on teaching language.

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