

DEVELOPING ENGLISH VOCABULARY IN PRESCHOOLERS IN CHINA

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Abstract

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Minzhen Gui

Under the Supervision of Dr. Wonim Son

This study sought to understand strategies that can be used to promote English vocabulary development in preschoolers in China. English language development is important for China's growth and economic development, given the rapidly globalizing nature of the world, and the increasing significance of English language for communication purposes. A library research methodology was implemented, whereby secondary research materials on the research topic were identified and evaluated. Research articles were identified through keyword searches on Jstor as well as on Google Scholar. Some of the key search terms used to identify articles included 'language learning in preschoolers' and 'vocabulary development of EFL preschoolers in China'. A literature review of the identified articles was then performed and strategies for the development of English vocabulary in preschoolers identified. The study revealed that vocabulary development is influenced by internal factors such as the Age of onset (AoO) and preschooler's language aptitude, as well as external factors such as the home literacy environment and home literacy practices. Strategic implementation of the FRIENDS model can help to foster proper language development in children in both the home and school settings. Some of the specific strategies recommended to develop preschooler's English vocabulary include parent-child reading for the home setting, and the implementation of the ExCELL program in the preschool setting, as well as the use of strategic conversations in both environments.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Language plays a critical role in the human socialization process. It facilitates communication and the exchange of information and ideas. Language is thus an important component of society and culture, whereby different cultures/societies have different languages. Because of differences in language, however, language is sometimes, instead, a barrier to communication. This barrier becomes a significant one within a multicultural, multilingual setting, whereby people speak different languages. One of the ways of overcoming this barrier is by learning foreign languages to achieve mid-ground. Once individuals learn foreign languages, they are then able to communicate with others from different cultures or societies. In this context, several languages lend themselves to wide-scale usage for cross-national and cross-cultural communication. One of these foreign languages is English, which has become very widespread as a second language as well as a foreign language. With increasing globalization and more prevalent travel, English has emerged as a language of choice, particularly within business. In China, English is increasingly being taught to individuals at various levels of learning. Bolton and Graddol (2012) reported that as of 2010, English was spoken by 400 million people in China, which represents nearly a third of the population. Evidently, English is an increasingly popular language in China.

Despite its popularity, the quality of English practiced in China is still wanting. Yeung (2017) reported that Chinese graduates have poor proficiency in English, a state which he attributed to the current mode of teaching English, which is rote memorization. He further added that the poor proficiency of Chinese English has significant consequences. He indicated that despite being the second largest global economy, China has a much lower proportion of natives in leading Fortune 500 companies and American universities compared to India. He contended

that this was due to China's lack of the soft power of English communication. Given this position, there is a need to improve the proficiency of English in China. This seminar paper discusses the development of English language vocabulary, with a focus on preschoolers in China. The aim is to determine how the vocabulary of preschoolers can be developed. The research question investigated in this study is "How can the English vocabulary of preschoolers be developed?" This research question is broken down into several smaller questions as follows:

1. How do preschoolers learn languages?
2. What factors affect the development of preschoolers' vocabulary?
3. Which strategies can parents and teachers utilize to develop the English vocabulary of their preschoolers?

Statement of the Problem

This research will investigate the development of English vocabulary amongst EFL preschoolers in China. The study will seek to determine some of the challenges of developing the vocabulary of EFL preschoolers. The specific research question that will be investigated is "How can the vocabulary of EFL preschoolers in China be developed?"

Definition of Terms

EFL – English as a foreign language. EFL can be distinguished from ESL (English as a second language), whereby the latter is taught in a country that speaks English, while EFL is taught in a setting that does not natively speak English (Nevalainen & Traugott, 2016).

HLP – Home literacy practices refer to a mix of both direct instructional learning techniques as well as observational learning activities (Chow, B. W. Y., Chui, B. H. T., Lai, M. W. C., & Kwok, S. Y., 2017).

Lexical knowledge – Knowledge of words or vocabulary (Sun, H., Steinkrauss, R.,

Wieling, M., & de Bot, K., 2016).

Preschool – The period beginning from three years of age all the way to six years (Kaya & Emine, 2016).

Dialogic reading – This is a reading technique which involves a parent scaffolding their child, whereby the parent plays the role of an active listener, encouraging the child through questions and praising the child (Chow, McBride-Chang & Cheung, 2010).

Parent-child reading – An activity involving the parent reading to the child and talking about pictures in books (Chow et al., 2010).

Purposeful-strategic Conversation – “Conversations that focus on the explicit development of vocabulary words and help children construct the meaning of words through multiple activities and experiences” (Wasik & Iannone-Campbell, 2012).

ExCELL – Exceptional Coaching for Early Language and Literacy (Wasik, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The growing popularity of English in China has opened up a new area of research in this domain. It is interesting to understand the motivations of learners, as well as how their proficiency in the language can be developed. Several studies have investigated the growth of English in China under various perspectives. Few studies, if any, however, are yet to investigate the development of vocabulary amongst preschoolers. The purpose of this study, therefore, will be to address this research gap by investigating the vocabulary development of EFL preschoolers in China. Specifically, the research will seek to analyze the factors that affect preschoolers’ English development both positively and negatively. The paper will aim to develop strategies and recommendations for teachers and parents, regarding how they can help to develop the vocabulary of their preschoolers either at home or in the preschool.

Significance of the Study

English has gained significant popularity in China, with a greater number of people learning the language. There are various reasons for this unprecedented popularity of the language, but globalization lays at the heart of this motivations. For instance, Porzucki (2015) reported that the motivations for Wang Lin, a Chinese citizen, studying English include traveling and online shopping. The interviewee, Wang Lin, indicated that online shopping for her daughter and her desire to travel the world with her daughter in the future were two of the main factors that motivated her to study English. Finally, Lin also pointed out that she will need to teach her daughter English in the future. This article also pointed out that more Chinese people are learning English for leisure purposes. These aspects indicate that English is only set to further grow in popularity. As the world continues to globalize, more and more young parents will want to learn English and teach it to their children. This study will contribute to these trends by developing strategies that young parents can use to enhance the proficiency of their preschoolers in English. The recommendations developed will assist parents to improve the vocabulary development of their children while they are still in their developmental years.

This study will also have significant implications for China from an economic perspective. As has been noted this far, the world is globalizing and global trade has become increasingly common. Many large corporations such as Apple, McDonald's and Walmart are global. All of these American enterprises have set up shop in China. While China is the second largest economy globally, it continues to lag behind India regarding the number of citizens in Fortune 500 companies and American universities. Yeung (2017) reported that these low numbers had to do with poor English proficiency amongst the Chinese. This study will be significant in addressing this limitation, by improving the proficiency of English amongst

Chinese English speakers. This outcome will be achieved by developing strategies to improve the vocabulary grasp of Chinese preschoolers, thus improving their competence in English from a young age.

The focus on vocabulary development is hinged on the positive outcomes it has on language proficiency. For starters, vocabulary development can help to mitigate difficulties in reading later in life (Neuman & Wright, 2014). Additionally, vocabulary development also has positive outcomes in other areas of language development such as phonological distinction (Chow, McBride-Chang & Cheung, 2010). Given the contribution of vocabulary development to overall language development, and that preschool years have been shown to be the most appropriate time to intervene in language development (Neuman & Wright, 2014), focusing on vocabulary development in preschoolers is the best opportunity towards improving English language proficiency.

Delimitation of the Study

This study is delimited to Chinese preschoolers. The study will only deal with the vocabulary development of English in these preschoolers, with strategies being sought to improve the vocabulary development both at home and in the preschool setting. As such, the recommendations set out herein are only applicable to Chinese preschoolers.

Methodology

The methodology of this research involved a qualitative inquiry into the study research question. Given the objectives of this study, a qualitative research design was best suited towards attaining these goals. The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the research question. This qualitative inquiry approach involved a review of

the existing literature on the research question. The aim was to synthesize current research findings on this topic, and develop best practices and recommendations.

To answer the research question set out in the introduction, the researcher collected information on how preschoolers learn language. The researcher also gathered information regarding how preschoolers store and retrieve information. This information was collected through a secondary research data collection process. The information was sought primarily from peer-reviewed journal articles. The articles were collected from keyword searches from Google and Jstor. To identify articles, keywords that were used included 'language learning in preschoolers,' 'developing EFL preschoolers vocabulary in China,' and 'English vocabulary development in preschoolers'. These search criteria were effective in identifying a variety of resources that were used for the research.

Chapter II Review of the Literature

This chapter provides a summary of the review of the literature on the research question. The section is broken down into several sections based on themes identified throughout the literature. Some of the themes identified include language development in preschoolers, factors affecting language development in preschoolers, and vocabulary development strategies. The first theme, second language development, attends to how preschoolers and young children acquire second languages in general but is applied explicitly to English. The other sections necessarily deal specifically with English.

Language Development in Preschoolers

Preschoolers develop language differently compared to other age groups. According to Dunn (2011), young children acquire languages naturally and have an internal motivation to acquire languages naturally, without having to learn it consciously. Wasik and Ianonne-Campbell (2012) also pointed out that the preschool period was particularly critical for the development of vocabulary. This age thus provides an excellent opportunity for vocabulary learning. Neuman and Wright (2014) corroborated the significance of this age, whereby they noted that the preschool period was where the highest amount of vocabulary development occurs. The importance of this age, as well as the contribution of vocabulary to other aspects of English language learning, underscores the significance of vocabulary development in preschoolers.

Vocabulary development occurs through various processes and is influenced by several antecedents. For starters, according to Christ and Wang (2010), young children acquire vocabulary by picking up words they hear in their environment. Merely hearing words, however, is not sufficient to lead to word acquisition. Instead, these words have to appeal to the children's

interest. They used the term word consciousness to refer to this phenomenon whereby children gain an active interest in the meaning of a word. This process of word acquisition precedes the learning of meaning. The meanings of words are then acquired through a process of fast mapping, whereby children rely on the context within which a word is used to derive a quick but partial understanding of the word. Through a repeated process of exposure, children eventually develop a fuller and more flexible understanding of a word. Such development of meaning occurs because each separate context within which a child encounters a word offers additional information about it.

As for the process of second language (L2) development, preschoolers in China whose first language (L1) is Chinese can also acquire or learn English following the natural order of L1 acquisition. The famous second language theory “the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis” put forwarded by Krashen (1981) has been often discussed in numerous language academic researches. He hypothesized that children had an acquire-system which was the product similar to the process children underwent when they acquired their first language. This hypothesis has laid a theoretical foundation for second language learners and given them more confidence on their way of L2 development. More importantly, he also suggested that those who received natural exposure to the second language during childhood ultimately achieved higher levels of proficiency than older learners, even though older learners progress faster through the early stages of second language learning (Krashen, 1982). Hence, in this sense, we can conclude that, Chinese preschoolers should take advantage of age and seize the best opportunity to promote the development of English vocabulary.

Factors Affecting Preschoolers Vocabulary Learning

There are Several factors that affect how preschoolers learn English. Sun, Steinkrauss, Wieling, and de Bot (2016) classified these factors into internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are those that relate to the characteristics of the learners. They include time-related factors, language aptitude, and the child's first language. The most significant time-related factor is the age of onset (AoO), whereby Sun et al., (2016) reported that an older AoO had been found to be advantageous for vocabulary learning. Specifically, the authors indicated that ESL learning children build their vocabulary faster above the age of five years. This faster learning has been attributed to an advanced cognitive ability amongst older children (Munoz, 2014). The authors are keen to note that such findings apply only to the breadth of lexical knowledge, which has been defined as a language user's knowledge of different words and not semantic depth, which refers to the language user's understanding of the meanings of a word. This finding appears to contradict Neuman & Wright's (2014) assertion that the preschool years are the best years for vocabulary development.

The second internal factor is language aptitude, which is the natural talent of an individual to learn languages. According to Sun et al., (2016), language aptitude consists of the ability for phonemic coding, ability to analyze language and an individual's verbal memory. Language aptitude is associated with analytical reasoning and short-term memory, which are vital components of an individual's language analytic capability. Singleton (2017) evaluated language aptitude, specifically concerning whether individuals have an actual innate ability for learning and acquiring languages. His work is a review of ongoing research and is inconclusive, but indicated increasing skepticism toward this view of aptitude. Nonetheless, language aptitude

is as of yet considered to be an essential factor affecting second language development, based on previous research findings (Sun et al., 2016; Singleton, 2017).

Another internal factor is preschoolers' vocabulary knowledge of their primary language. As Sun et al., (2016) mentioned, there was a correlation between the vocabulary knowledge in the primary language (L1) and the secondary language (L2). This correlation has been attributed to a commonality in the vocabulary acquisition mechanism. Consequently, the level of L1 knowledge attainment moderated the attainment level of L2 knowledge attainment. Sun et al., (2016) argued that the aptitudes that allow children to acquire vocabularies in L1 also enable children to gain vocabularies in the second language. This finding is interesting in light of the findings by Roberts (2008), who researched the effects of storybook reading on English language vocabulary development. She investigated storybook reading using both the primary language and the secondary language (English). Then she found that storybook reading in the primary language led to better English language vocabulary development outcomes than storybook reading in English. Several explanations have been proposed to explain this association. For example, Snow and Kim (2007) found that the positive correlation existed due to a transfer of concepts from L1 to L2. On her part, Roberts (2008) found that when children learn vocabulary in their first language, they may gain concepts and vocabulary which they then applied in the context of the second language.

Apart from the internal factors, vocabulary development is also influenced by external factors, which mainly refers to the length of exposure to English and richness of the English language environment. Children who are exposed to different words in different settings have a larger vocabulary size as compared to those with minimal exposure. Numerous studies have explored the influence of exposure to the language and emphasized that it was one of the most

important variables to increase preschoolers' L2 performance and vocabulary size. In studying the different factors that influence vocabulary development and language acquisition, Mancilla-Martinez, Christodoulou, and Shabaker (2014), Wasik and Iannone-Campbell (2012), and Miller and Gildea (1987) identified exposure as a key influence to children. And we know that the home literacy environment is one of the preschoolers' main language environments in preschool period. According to Chow et al. (2017), the home literacy environment moderates children's language development via the home literacy practices by the parents. Noting that much of the current research in this area had focused on maternal influences on first language development, Chow et al. (2017) focused on the influence of home literacy practices (HLP) on children's development of English literacy. They implemented their research by testing 48 Chinese first graders in China and then subsequently conducting a questionnaire with both parents of the children in their research. The questionnaire investigated the HLP of parents on English as a foreign language. They found that the HLP of both mothers and fathers was significantly correlated with the vocabulary knowledge of children. The study also found that mothers had a stronger influence on the vocabulary knowledge for both receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge (Chow et al., 2017). Thus, mothers have a greater influence on the vocabulary development of children, possibly because they spend more time with their children. Additionally, the parent's grasp of the language moderates the effectiveness of HLPs. This finding is corroborated by Roberts (2008) who indicated that the oral skills of the family caregiver were related to the knowledge of English vocabulary.

As for the richness of the English language environment, the quality of L2 instruction affects the grasp of English vocabulary. As Silverman and Hartranft (2015) mentioned, the effectiveness, quality, and extent of instruction influence the vocabulary development in children

learning English as a second language. Collins (2005) also suggested which techniques and strategies instructors applied interfered with the efficiency and quality of children's vocabulary building. Wasik and Iannone-Campbell (2012) also argued that parents and teachers should adopt and implement effective strategies in vocabulary teaching. For example, teachers could improve preschoolers' English vocabulary learning process by high-quality interaction with them. This means that what teaching materials, what topics are provided for preschoolers, and what ways they are taught or interacted do matter. In this respect, parents and teachers should improve their own oral English skills and literacy in order to produce a more positive influence on their children's English vocabulary development.

Strategies for Improving Preschooler's Vocabulary Development

FRIENDS Model

Before talking about specific strategies that can be used to develop children's vocabulary both at home and in preschool, it should be first discussed how we scientifically teach children vocabulary. Is there any rule or guide for parents and teachers to follow before they decide what way they will choose to teach vocabulary? An important framework that can be used to enhance the efficiency of vocabulary development is the FRIENDS model. Proposed by Dashiel and DeBruin-Parecki (2014), this framework translated research into practice and incorporates many of the strategies that have been found to enhance vocabulary learning. In this model, F stands for fostering conversations between the child and the adult to engage in meaningful interactive dialogue; R stands for robust, motivational, and systematic instruction that includes directly explaining words, thought-provoking and fun follow-up activities; I stands for interactive storybook reading; E stands for engaging and literacy-rich environment; N stands for numerous opportunities for children to practice new vocabulary; D stands for direct and explicit

instruction; and S stands for selecting age-appropriate rich literature that contains sophisticated and rare words. This model almost covers the most important factors that influence preschoolers' vocabulary development, and can be used as a guiding framework in building vocabulary both at home and in preschool. The key concept in this model is to provide high quality and large amounts of input of second language environment, as well as to emphasize the importance of output in authentic context by practicing listening and speaking language.

Parent-child Reading Embedded with Dialogic Reading

There are several efficient and popular strategies proposed by other researchers which exactly coincide with the FRIEND Model. Interactive story book reading is one of the most frequently recommended practices for developing preschoolers' early language and competence. Parents can engage in interactive storybook reading through approaches such as parent-child reading. Farrant & Zubrick (2012) reported that parent-child reading had been shown to improve children's vocabulary in the home-setting. Parent-child reading is important to vocabulary development in several ways. For starters, parent-child reading exposes children to vocabularies that they have not previously encountered (Chow et al., 2010). It is an important avenue for vocabulary development since typically, children have not encountered such vocabulary in real life. Apart from the novelty of vocabulary, parent-child reading also enhances vocabulary development since it provides a context in which parents can label pictures and use more sophisticated language. It was reported that parent-child reading provides a structured setting within which children can learn word-object mapping (Farrant & Zubrick 2012). More importantly, there is a need for parents to provide explanations of these new vocabulary words, since such explanations lead to improvements in the vocabulary skills of the learners (Chow et al., 2010). In high quality story reading, like Dashiell and DeBruin-Parecki (2014) stated,

instructors can use questioning and feedback techniques such as asking open-ended questions rather than those with just one correct answer following their interests.

Therefore, parents could involve dialogic reading. Unlike traditional parent-child reading, dialogic reading is a specific technique that emphasizes parent's scaffolding in a dialogue with their child during the reading (Whitehurst et al., 1988). It guides parents to take an active role as listeners to support their children to be storytellers by using prompt questions and linking the text to daily life experience (Valdez & Whitehurst, 1992). It could be a cooperative reading approach into parent-reading to facilitate the effectiveness and the quality of the reading (Neuman & Dickinson, 2013). Parents could engage and scaffold children in dialogic reading by asking questions, answering questions, and explaining. In the context of second language learning, dialogic reading promotes children's exposure and use of language, which can directly expand their vocabulary and knowledge of more complex phonological structures. Within a home setting, the dialogic reading approach has been shown to have numerous positive outcomes on language development. To test the effect of both parent-child reading and dialogic reading in the context of learning English as a second language in China, Chow et al. (2010) conducted a study in Hongkong and involved 51 kindergarteners. The study showed that dialogic reading did gain significant progress in all tasks of English language skills across the interventions of 12 weeks. Its results imply that both parent-child reading and dialogic reading increased the exposure to and use of English in Chinese children, which in turn lead to direct expansion of their vocabulary. Since dialogic reading involves parents scaffolding their children and listening to them read out loud, it facilitates an opportunity for children to practice words. Dialogic reading harbored benefits not just for vocabulary acquisition, but for language learning as a whole.

However, the study of Chow et al. (2010) also indicated that children in the group of dialogic reading in English in contrast of reading in Chinese gained less receptive vocabulary and attributed it to the parents' and children's lower proficiency in a second language. In this condition, verbal interactions between parents and their children tend to be less frequent and less sophisticated in foreign language contexts. Actually, the study of Hale and Windecker (1992) could explain this result. They investigated 21 preschool children and their parents, and analyzed parents' behavior during reading situations by videotaping. And found that children's level and the quality of vocabulary development had significant relationships with the quantity as well as the quality of parent-child reading interactions. That means that Chinese parents need to enhance their own English language level to meet the request of developing their children's vocabulary both in quantity and in quality.

Purposeful-strategic Conversations

The concept of purposeful-strategic conversations is put forwarded by Wasik & Iannone-Campbell (2012). It was defined as conversations that "create opportunities for a dialogue that intends to specify vocabulary words and concepts by making definitions explicit and supporting connections between new vocabulary words and familiar word and ideas" (p. 326). . There are two important aspects in purposeful-strategic conversations. The first is asking open-ended questions, which allows children to express themselves, while the second is offering meaningful feedback. They suggest teachers could apply the conversations especially in three conditions: morning message time, center activity time, and book reading time. Like dialogic reading, purposeful-strategic conversations can also take place both at home and in the classroom (Wasik & Iannone-Campbell, 2012). In both contexts, adults could scaffold the child's vocabulary development.

However, in the real classrooms, many teachers just ask open-ended questions but do not give children enough time to respond. As Dickinson, et al. (2011) mentioned, 80% of the talking across the classroom activities was produced by teachers, but less than 2% was contributed to children to express their own ideas. In fact, the provision of meaningful feedback could encourage and motivate children to use the words, think about the responses, and develop their knowledge and vocabulary size in meaningful ways (Gillanders, Castro, & Franco, 2014; Collins, 2005; Wright & Neuman, 2013; Wasik & Iannone-Campbell, 2012). Like Dashiell and DeBruin-Parecki (2014) emphasized, “conversations consisting of complex vocabulary and sophisticated can enhance young children’s language skills” (p. 514). In conclusion, purposeful strategic conversations provided children with large amounts of meaningful exposures to vocabulary, authentic and interactive contexts, high-quality explanations or definitions, and are supported by rich two-way communication with adults. It is a very helpful strategy that teachers and parents can apply in developing preschoolers’ English vocabulary.

Direct and Explicit Instruction

Direct and explicit instruction involves purposefully choosing and teaching the meaning of new words. This approach is particularly important for certain words that are frequently used across various domains, but that children are unlikely to encounter in their everyday interactions, regarded to as tier two words (Dashiell & DeBruin-Parecki, 2014). Many children, and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to encounter these words, making this component especially pertinent to them. The approach can also take place at home, whereby a parent provides rich explanations of words. This component includes an array of activities including using target words, proper pronunciations and providing age-appropriate explanations (Dashiell & DeBruin-Parecki, 2014). Collins (2010) noted that the provision of rich

definitions improved the number of new words learned so that this proportion neared 50%, with rich explanations accounting for a further 22% of the variance. Various methods are used to convey the meanings of targeted words, including gestures, definitions, the use of decontextualized statements (statements that express what the word means by providing explanations or examples), the use of synonyms, and the use of illustrations. This strategy also involves the use of fun activities such as word guessing games and puzzles.

ExCELL Program

The ExCELL program mainly relates to vocabulary learning in the preschool setting. It was Wasik (2010) who developed and promoted the ExCELL program designed especially for preschool teachers. ExCELL stands for Exceptional Coaching for Early Language and Literacy (Wasik, 2010). The program comprises two main components, the first being an ongoing and intensive training program, where teachers are trained in groups with the help of coaches in five interactive modules. These are “interactive book reading, guiding conversations across the curriculum, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, and writing” (Wasik, 2010, p. 624). The second component involves guiding teachers individually on how to integrate these five modules into doable and coherent instructions for a classroom schedule so that they are seamless. Every teacher in this program will get group training, focusing on one aspect of the language and literacy modules each time, and also get individual training in which teachers will learn from professional coaches on how they teach vocabulary and then given chances to teach video-taped lessons with a following feedback from coaches. The ExCELL program was found to significantly promote learner’s acquisition of receptive vocabulary and increased their expressive vocabulary when the teachers adhered to the program intensely.

Even though this model is not originally experimented in China, it also can be introduced and modified in China so that it can assist teachers in developing their language teaching skills and instructional strategies for preschoolers with a systematical framework. In China, lots of attention is paid to how to choose a better curriculum for preschoolers to learn English these days, because we believe that a well-established curriculum can provide teachers plenty of practical ideas for activities and appropriate structured tasks to teach students vocabulary. However, as Hammond and Bransford (2007) argued, it is the teachers' ability to implement the curriculum that will make a difference and have the most significant impact on children. There is sound theoretical understanding about the importance of vocabulary and lots of strategies put forward to enhance vocabulary, but less models or programs like ExCELL introduces how to transfer theories into effective classroom practices.

Summary

Firstly, the literature review discussed several language development theories related to first and second language acquisition. It aims at indicating preschoolers in China could acquire English language vocabulary as their first language and suggests ages in the period of preschool could acquire vocabulary better and faster than older children and adults with the same variables.

Secondly, various factors including internal and external factors that influence language development in preschoolers are listed and evaluated. On one hand, it shows that vocabulary development in preschoolers is affected by internal factors such as age, language aptitude and the child's first language. The result indicates that preschoolers who learn a second language earlier will benefit more in vocabulary development. And it then shows the language aptitude, consisting of the ability for phonemic coding, ability to analyze language, and an individual's verbal memory, is associated with analytical reasoning and short-term memory, which are vital

components of an individual's language analytic capability. As for the primary language, many studies tend to indicate that the level of L1 knowledge attainment moderates the level of L2 knowledge attainment in a positive manner. On the other hand, Language development is also affected by two main external factors such as the length and the richness of exposure to L2, which both have positive relation with vocabulary development.

Lastly, the FRIENDS model is introduced as a framework that can be used to promote vocabulary development in preschoolers both at home and in the preschool setting. It covers the most important factors that influences preschoolers' vocabulary development and can be used as a guiding framework in building vocabulary. In the following parts, several strategies including parent reading, dialogic reading, purposeful-strategic conversations, direct and explicit explanation, as well as ExCELL model are explored. Both parents and teachers could practice these strategies by taking their own advantages in different contexts.

Chapter III. Conclusion and Recommendations

English is growing in popularity in China, with more than 400 million people currently speaking the language. There are varied reasons for learning English, such as business, travel, and leisure. The globalization of the world is bringing people closer, leading to international trade and increased travel. English has emerged as a core language for many transactions. Despite these high numbers, many Chinese lack proficiency in the language, with detrimental effects on the number of Chinese in Fortune 500 companies and top American universities. There is, therefore, a need to promote better language outcomes.

In this background, the period in preschool years serves an important role in the vocabulary development process, and as such, it becomes the focus of this research. And this research offers an articulate look into how children learn language, factors that influence vocabulary development, and the most effective strategies for the development of English vocabulary in Chinese preschoolers. It shows that vocabulary development can take place both at home and in preschool. Vocabulary learning is affected by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include the age of onset, the language learner's aptitude, and the learner's primary language. The external factors, on the other hand, mainly have to do with the quantity and quality of input and output of English.

From this respect, parents and teachers in China could teach English vocabulary to their preschoolers effectively by taking advantages of age and other positive factors, and try to avoid negative factors. The most important thing they need to do is to create English literacy environments for their children and keep them practicing conversations with adults in authentic contexts. Thus, adults who understand the English language and communicate with children as much as possible in different contexts, could boost both children's receptive and expressive

vocabulary development. However, preschoolers in China have limited exposure to the second language, which consequently limits the opportunity for children to learn and apply English foreign language. In this situation, they can make good use of research based strategies to promote their teaching skills so that they can guarantee better English acquisition environments for preschoolers. And the FRIENDS model is highly recommended to both parents and teachers, because it provides a framework and a basic guiding concept that can be used to promote vocabulary development both at home and in the preschool setting.

In the end, to improve the vocabulary development in preschoolers in China, the following recommendations are made:

1. Promote parent reading – parent reading is a powerful strategy for vocabulary development. It has numerous positive outcomes which extend beyond mere vocabulary development. Through storybook readings, preschoolers can understand the contextual usage of words. Thus, they not only develop their vocabulary, but they also get to understand when and how to use various words. It will increase children's exposure to the richness and the length of English language.
2. Promote dialogic reading – Dialogic reading is interactive and allows children to practice pronouncing words. Through the scaffolding by parents, children can think about the words that they are using. As the parent or teacher praises the child, the child develops confidence in their use of language. Also, it increases exposure to English vocabulary and can check what children have grasped and how children learn.
3. Promote purposeful-strategic conversations – The use of purposeful-strategic conversations could create an opportunity for children to acquire new vocabulary and

practice vocabulary being learned. Parents and teachers could try to use it by asking open-ended questions to allow children to express themselves, as well as to provide feedback. Purposeful-strategic conversations could apply in storybook reading, daily conversations, or classroom dialogue to engage the children throughout the whole process of English acquisition.

4. ExCELL (Exceptional Coaching for Early Language and Literacy) model is recommended to equip teachers adequately for quality and effective teaching. The approach involves interactive book reading, phonological awareness, writing, alphabet knowledge, and guiding conversations. Teachers could be trained individually and in groups to get more practical teaching materials and resources, as well to learn teaching strategies appealing to young children.

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