



## THE COMPARISON OF ORAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR GRADE 1-3 IN TAIWAN AND AMERICA

**Min-Ping Wu**

Far East University, Taiwan. [minpingwu@gmail.com](mailto:minpingwu@gmail.com)

**Sheng-Wen Hsieh\***

Far East University, Taiwan, [onyx@cc.feu.edu.tw](mailto:onyx@cc.feu.edu.tw)

*This study focused on the English language teaching methodologies used by a small number of the ELD teachers in Fullerton school district in the United States and EFL teachers in ABC school in Taiwan. The instruments, interview, observation and field notes, were used to gather the evidences of useful oral language teaching methodologies. Results indicate that most of the methodologies utilized in the ELD and EFL programs are consistent with each other. However, the ELD teachers were more capable to provide valuable resolution of the obstacles of teaching oral language as well as the instances of delivering oral language methodologies. The researcher made an action plan targeted to findings of the following questions. 1. What materials are used to deliver oral language instruction in both countries? 2. What methodologies are the most useful and well-liked by students? 3. How are students motivated to acquire English oral language skills in both countries?*

Key Words: oral language, comparative education, teaching methodologies

### INTRODUCTION

English is offered as a foreign language (EFL), and it has been defined as a compulsory subject of the junior high schools in Taiwan for several decades. Without interacting with each other, students learn reading and writing, which focuses on grammar instruction. Consequently, students rarely have the opportunities to communicate with each other by oral language, and they lack oral language ability. However, communicating with other nationalities is a

---

\* Corresponding author: Dr. Sheng-Wen Hsieh, Assistant Professor, Dept. of MIS, Far East University, 49, Chung Hua Rd., Hsin-Shih, Tainan County 744, Taiwan, R.O.C.

crucial step to integrating cultures and to gain more information from different language speakers. English, the most common language in the world, is becoming more important for Taiwanese to learn. As a result, parents make children take English class in cram schools to improve oral language ability. However, even though there is oral language focusing curriculum in cram schools, students still have a hard time making uses of what they learned.

Moreover, English language teaching has employed the communicative-approach-oriented principle in the EFL program in Taiwanese elementary schools since 2001. To efficiently develop students' oral language acquisition to achieve communicative principles, oral language teaching approaches are argued by educators.

Since English is not the first language for both student groups of English Language Development (ELD) programs in the United States and EFL classes in Taiwan, exploring the oral language teaching methodologies and curriculum implemented in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program in the United States can improve the oral language learning and teaching of EFL program in Taiwan. Hence, the purpose of this study is to discover the curriculum and methodologies for delivering the oral language acquisition ELD program in the United States. For Taiwanese EFL classes, there are several important reasons to discover the oral language acquisition approaches of American ELD program. First, the classroom settings in Taiwan are non-English speaking environments. Students do not have many opportunities to practice newly acquired oral English language in the daily lives. Thus, learners loose the integrative motivation which promotes to the participation of the English language community. Second, the oral language curriculum in Taiwan is limited to simple greetings and there is no efficient assessment to evaluate students' oral language acquisition. As a result, students do not have the ability to use oral language fluently and accurately. They often feel frustrated by their limitations when having an opportunity to interact with others using their English abilities.

Having no efficient oral language curriculum in the EFL program in Taiwan not only makes educators feel frustrated and disappointed, but it also makes students suffer from limited language proficiency. Hence, exploring the curriculum of oral language acquisition of the ELD program in the US provides educational leaders with the invaluable approaches to improving oral language instruction in Taiwan. In addition, although much research has been conducted on English language instruction, only a few studies focus on oral language instruction. This project is intended to develop educational leaders who will

give more effort to improving oral language instruction, and so students can progress in oral language acquisition. This study investigates the following four questions. First, what materials are used to instruct English oral language in both countries? Second, what teaching methodologies are implemented in English oral language curriculums in both countries? Third, how are students motivated to acquire English oral language skills in both countries? Finally, how are students' English oral language capabilities evaluated in both countries?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are a great number of materials and approaches available for oral language instruction. Educators who specialize in English foreign language instruction need to understand which materials and methodologies best assist the oral language development of English learners. Therefore, this paper considers the materials and methodologies used to deliver oral language instruction to English learners.

### **Oral Language Instruction Materials**

The materials used to instruct oral language in Taiwan are similar to those used in the United States. The following materials are used in both countries and benefit the oral language acquisition of L2 and EFL students. Generally, materials most frequently employed are music, picture cards, chants, poetry, and storybooks.

#### *Music*

Music is widely used to assist teaching oral language both in the United States and Taiwan. Since music shares some similar features with language, it contributes to the development of oral language acquisition. Mora (2000) stated that "both language and music stem from the processing of sounds;...both are used by their authors/speakers to convey a message... music and language have intrinsic features in common, such as pitch... tone, rhythm....We learn both of them through exposure". The first benefit of verbal instruction associated with music is the repeated and memorable sound. No matter whether the sound is pleasant or not, it helps the students of language acquisition to memorize. Tim Murphey (Mora, 2000) described the "song-stuck-in-my-head" phenomenon as the melodic noise that is like conscious or unconscious verbal rehearsal. For instance, when students hear a theme song of a movie, they are able to recall some of the conversation between the actor and actress, and even their body

movements. Moreover, when the K-3 students in the Sesame Street School in Taiwan sang the repetitive lyrics of a song, students felt more excited and were able to memorize the lyrics and use them in the oral language interaction. Mora (2000) recounted that repetitive lyrics have a positive effect on students' language acquisition. Mora believes that songs can be easily memorized, and thus, it is an effective method to help students to build lexical patterns and use them during the oral language interaction. Second, the musical materials for ESL and EFL students provide many rhythmic words and intonated patterns. By engaging these rhythmic words and intonated patterns, students learn the rhythmic articulation and imitate the intonation of native-speakers. Mora (2000) stated that "the more rhythm and intonated the utterances we teach, the more holistic the learning will be". Third, integrating music into oral language instruction creates an easy-learning environment and extends students' patience. According to Mora (2000), musical concentration directed children's attention away from the dull articulation exercises. Children, thus, acquired more interest and patience in learning the material they were studying.

#### *Picture Cards*

Picture cards are believed to be an efficient tool to express the meaning of a word. Using picture cards, in connection with the direct instruction, is very common at the beginning levels of English oral language acquisition. Students practice the basic vocabulary by acquiring, identifying, and reviewing the picture cards. By asking students to identify the picture cards or the items in the picture cards, teachers can measure which words are unfamiliar to the students (Adelson-Goldstein, 1998).

#### *Chant*

Chanting is an attractive strategy for K-3 children to learn oral language. It is a fun material for both teachers and students in the classroom. Chants are rhythmic and short. The creator of Jazz chants, Carolyn Graham, stated that a Jazz chant is really a way of connecting with the natural rhythms of spoken American English and linking them to the natural rhythms of American Jazz (Rosenthal, 1998). Since chants are rhythmic, learners are able to repeat it over and over, and then remember them. By repeating chants, children not only can be directed to memorize chants but also learn the natural spoken English. In addition, chants provide the basic grammar. Carolyn Graham believed that chants are a tool to reinforce basic grammatical structures and to present natural spoken language. Consequently, when children repeat a chant, they simultaneously practice the grammar structure.

### *Poetry*

Oral language development in the ESL or EFL classroom concentrates more on essential communication and survival skills. Although poetry uses non-standard English, it provides the evidence that there is not only one kind of English (Hadaway et al., 2001). The characteristics of poetry provide many benefits to the L2 and EFL learners. Since poetry is short and brief, children will not be scared and reluctant to read it. In addition, because poetry provides the rhyming, rhythmic and repetitive patterns, and the meaningful words with accent, the readers are more easily to comprehend the meaning of the poetry and begin to be familiar with the sound of English words. Furthermore, the daily read-aloud activity of poetry helps learners to improve the fluency of oral language (Hadaway et al., 2001).

### *Storybook*

Storybook is considered an efficient material to keep students' attention (Kies et al., 1993). Reading stories to Taiwanese K-3 children results in increased activities and engagement in meaning making by guessing new sentences of the development or questions of the story. Through storybooks, students have more opportunities to be exposed to how language is put together and acquire the ability of integration knowledge into English oral language (Kies et al., 1993). Hoggan and Strong (1994) stated, "When using narratives in their teaching, speech-language pathologists support children's development of specific language skills". Strickland (1989) emphasized the importance of teaching children oral language through use rather than practice the exercises of learning language. Moreover, Strickland stressed that the more frequently students practice language use, the more effective students will be with oral language development. (Kies et al., 1993)

### *Repeated Readings*

Readings that include predictable repeated text provide young learners more confidence to pass a word or phrase. After listening to the predictable and repeated storybooks for several times, students become familiar with the regulation of the sentences of the text. Hence, while teachers pause in the reading and ask for predictions as to what will happen next, children are invited as co-creators. Educators believe that through repeated readings and the predictable books, children are getting more familiar with word forms, and thus, beginning to recognize words and phrases (Pikulski and Copper 1997).

### *Video*

Educators believe that video serves as a multipurpose input material of delivering oral language instruction to children. Children benefit greatly by the various roles of video in the ESL or EFL classroom. First, video provides the advantage of repeatability. Repeatability offers children more opportunities to impress their memory and to practice their pronunciations. Second, video is visual and highly motivational. Young learners acquire language through happy experiences. Hence, video creates an interesting and attractive environment that makes children enjoy learning. Third, video presents programs that show the language in use. Unlike picture cards and story books, video makes young learners learn not only the actions as people are speaking language but also the way they respond to what others say. Finally, video demonstrates the culture of the language by showing the dress, daily life, and customs. Hence, it allows young learners to acquire oral language by learning the culture (Tomalin, 1900).

### **Methodologies in Oral Language Curriculum**

Methodology is crucial in oral language curriculum. Materials with different methodologies can produce distinctly different oral language development. According to varied learner styles, instructors have to choose different methodologies to reach their learning types (Mora, 2000).

### *Melodic Approach*

It is believed that auditory learners enjoy listening to melody. For instance, when instructors connected the sentence “teacher is the winner” with a simple tune, students were able to imitate this sentence with the simple tune and shift the sentence such as “Andy (student’s name) is the winner”. Besides, most people have the experience of learning the multiplication table with a specific tune. Therefore, singing is really an easy way to imitate, practice, and acquire the phoneme and sentences of a language. Melody provides a track and clue to activate the information in our memories. Mora (2000) also recounted that it is possible to integrate a well-known tune into the sentences which are used to deliver English language instruction to students. It is recommended that the melody of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony is suitable to connect with the question patterns such as “what do you do?”. Mora stated, this melodic presentation of a structure has a slower tempo than speech, the syllables are lengthened, and pauses between different thought groups become notable (Mora, 2000). Since chant is the combination of rhythm and musical forms, it is a good example of

melodic approach. Carolyn Graham believed that chant is really a powerful tool as an aid to memory (Rosenthal, 1998).

#### *Storytelling Approach*

Storytelling is regarded as an effective approach to promote the development of language. According to Kies at al. (1993), there are two modes of storytelling: students act as the story listeners and students play as storytellers. In the former, students are listeners. This helps students to develop the receptive language skills and listening comprehension. Through listening to the stories repeatedly, students start to gain the sense of the story and assimilate the language and structure of the stories (Kies at al., 1993). In terms of being a storyteller, students begin to develop the meaningful oral expression. Actively participating in storytelling not only helps to confer the linguistic fluency but also establish the confidence (Peck, 1989). After storytelling, students are encouraged to share their feelings. Sometimes students do not know how to express their feelings orally, and can only use body language to act them out. Since the stories students have in the class are familiar with events in their lives, the storytelling, story listening and story sharing promote oral language development (Hoggan & Strong, 1994).

#### *Dancing Approach*

It is believed that not only kinesthetic learners but also all young children need to have physical exercise accompanying oral language learning. It is well known that the combination of movement and vocalization can aid memorization (Bell, 1999). When children are doing the body movement activities, which accompany a linguistic message, they are assimilating and memorizing the language as well. Total Physical Response (TPR), for instance, is one attempt to explore the powerful connection in memory created by combining languages and actions (Bell, 1999). Since dancing encompasses music and poetic or chant language, it enhances certain words or phrases in a much more memorable fashion (Bell, 1999). A number of other studies argued the importance of body movement with language. McNeil (1992) and Kendon (1980) have documented the synchronization of speech and gesture (Bell, 1999). Bolinger (1986) emphasized the importance of the connection between intonation and body movement. Moreover, Bell (1999) stated, using a combination of rhythm and movement offers students engaging ways to improve speech fluency by accentuating conversational rhythm and stress patterns of English. It also can be used as a means of transmitting the rhythmic

body movements and gestures that characterize and synchronize the communicative behaviors of native speakers of English.

### **The Critical Factors of Oral Language Development in Taiwanese EFL Classes**

In Taiwan, English is taken as a compulsory subject in junior and senior high schools. However, despite the fact that the program has been in place for decades, problems connecting the teaching and learning of English have been raised. In fact, without an efficient curriculum of English oral language instruction, teaching methodologies, assessments, and materials, EFL students are failing to acquire English oral language. Nevertheless, since many educators considered bringing English into the formal curriculum of elementary schools, the education department implemented the EFL program curriculum in elementary schools at the beginning in 2001. Although the educators support the implementation of an EFL curriculum in elementary curricula, they are still concerned about several critical factors associated with the EFL curriculum. Materials related to Taiwanese culture are lacking, there is a shortage of qualified English oral language teachers, and instructional time of EFL program is limited.

#### *Materials*

Materials are considered one of the crucial factors to develop oral language. Since the EFL curriculum of elementary level emphasizes on oral language ability, materials exist to incorporate background experiences into English language acquisition. However, most of the EFL materials come from the US, and lack content that includes Taiwanese culture background. Students, therefore, can barely relate to the American culture. The contents of textbooks, such as food history, and environment, are foreign to students (Wu, 1999). Zheng (1998) and Wu (1999) recommended that the education department invite the scholars and educators to create the proper materials, which include Taiwanese cultural background.

#### *The Resource and Quality of Teachers*

The shortage of teachers is believed to be a critical factor when implementing the EFL curriculum. In particular, most of the elementary teachers lack fluency in English. Therefore, since 1999, the education department conducted the elementary EFL acquisition assessment with elementary teachers. Those qualified teachers, who succeeded in the assessment, were trained in about eight

months. However, Wu (1999) was concerned that even if teachers' English ability could progress, their oral language ability would be hard to improve in such a limited time. It takes time to make progress in oral language, and thus, teachers are required to study and practice oral language more than eight months to reach oral language proficiency.

#### *Instructional Time*

Currently, English instruction is arranged during various time of a day in school. Some schools implement English instruction during the outdoor exercise, and some implement it during the morning activities (Chen, 1998). The outdoor exercise aims to make students do various exercises in fifteen minutes. When the EFL program is conducted during the time of outdoor exercise, students have the time to interact with each others in English. However, the time of the outdoor exercise is too short for students to practice oral language. The morning activities, such as singing, reading, and sharing stories, provide elementary students with more activities than the academic subjects. When English language instruction is implemented during the time of outdoor exercise and morning activities, there is not enough time for the EFL curriculum to deliver instruction. Zheng (1998) was concerned that the amount of time for instruction in a week or a day also affects students' oral language acquisition. Wu (1999) and Chen (1998) stressed the importance of English instruction periods. Chen (1998) argued that English instruction should be organized as planned subject of the school.

Materials and methodologies both play crucial roles in oral language instruction. Materials referred to above were implemented widely to assist oral language acquisition in both the US and Taiwan. It would be assumed that since both countries use similar materials and methodologies, the outcomes of students' oral language development would be similar. However, the oral language acquisition of EFL students in Taiwan is distinct from those of the ESL students in the US. This study, therefore, will compare the approaches of oral language development in both countries to improve the oral language acquisition of EFL students in Taiwan. Besides, this study will discover the ESL assessment and intend to develop an invaluable assessment for EFL students in Taiwan.

## **METHOD**

Based on the related literature, in this section, this paper will describe the context of the project, the participants, the instruments, the procedures and the data analysis.

### **Participants**

The purpose of this study is to improve the English oral language acquisition of elementary EFL students in Taiwan. This study compares the oral language teaching curricula of English language in America and Taiwan.

Hence, this study also compares the approaches of the Taiwanese EFL program in the Sesame Street School and the American ELD program in Fullerton School District. The Sesame Street School, a cram school in Taiwan, focuses on English language instruction. Students go to Sesame Street School after school four hours a week. According to varied levels of English language acquisition, this EFL program separates students into five levels, A to F. The two levels, A and B, which are the beginning and early intermediate levels are examined. The ELD program, Jump-starts Intervention is a pull out program in Fullerton School District. It took place during summer break and lasted three weeks. Students participated in this program five days a week. Students who enrolled in the ELD program were at beginning, early intermediate and intermediate levels. The levels of the ELD program selected were at the beginning and early intermediate levels.

There were fifty-six English language instructors in the Sesame Street School in Taiwan. Eight of them were selected because they were the population who delivered oral English language instruction to the beginning and early intermediate levels of grade one to three. As to the participants of the ELD program in Fullerton School District, there were fifty-seven teachers involved in the "Jump Start into English" program. To match the participants with those teachers of EFL program in the Sesame Street School in Taiwan, eight of the ELD instructors were selected randomly. The majority of the participants in America and Taiwan held bachelor's degrees and at least two years' teaching experience as English language teachers. All teachers of the ELD program in America held the California Language Acquisition Design Certificate.

### **Instruments**

The Oral language Approach Observation Form (Appendix A), the Interview schedule (Appendix B) and Field notes were used to collect data for this study. The six-item Observation Form was developed to capture the methodologies and approaches of oral language instruction, and the interactions between teachers and students in class. Besides observation, the five-item Interview Schedule was designed to identify teachers' perceptions, concerns, and characteristics of delivering oral language instruction to language learners. Five questions were open-ended and the ELD teachers were interviewed individually. In addition, since this paper was done in the US, it was not possible to observe the EFL classes in Taiwan and interview the EFL instructors face-to-face. Therefore, the Interview Schedule was sent to the participants in Taiwan through the Internet and the communication with interviewees was through the e-mails. Field notes were also used to collect data. Filed notes captured what was seen and heard in class, in the interviews and in the observations. All three instruments, observation forms, interview schedules, and field notes, were the multiple sources of data referred to as triangulation. In action research, it does not rely on a single source of data.

### **Procedures**

The eight teachers of "Jump Start into English" program were interviewed to determine how they delivered oral language instruction to the students of beginning and early intermediate levels. One beginning level class and one early intermediate level class were randomly selected. Each of the classes was observed separately for two times which was equal to one and half hours. At the beginning of the observations, the classroom teachers announced that the learners would be watched. During the periods of observation, the Oral language Approach Observation Form was used to collect the data and notes were taken to record the data. Because the delimitation that this paper was done in America, the observation experience of the EFL classes of Sesame Street School in Taiwan was used in this study. Besides, the Interview Schedule was sent to the participants of Sesame Street School.

Following the observations, each teacher of "Jump Start into English" program and EFL classes were interviewed separately. The interviews of the instructors in Fullerton School District were conducted by the Interview Schedule. To capture the interview responses and the essence of the conversation, tape recorders and notes were used during the interview. Due to the geographic

limitations of the EFL participants, this paper made use of e-mail to interview the participants of Sesame Street School in Taiwan. The data of interviews of Sesame Street School's teachers was recorded by e-mails.

The eight populations of EFL instructors in Taiwan and the eight samples of ESL instructors in Fullerton School District were randomly selected. Additionally, the paper conducted the observation and interview with both instructors groups of the United States and Taiwan. In fact, due to the geographic limitations of EFL participants, the Interview Schedule was sent through the Internet and the observation experience of EFL classes was examined by the Oral Language Approaches Form. Moreover, Interview Schedule Form, Oral Language Approaches Observation Form, tapes and notes were analyzed to identify the themes and compare the responses of the participants. These similar and dissimilar viewpoints of oral language instruction were then clustered to contribute to improve oral language acquisition of EFL students in Taiwan.

#### **ANALYZING AND INTERPRETING THE DATA**

This study made tables in this section which presented the frequencies, percentages and means to calculate and compare the development of the methodologies, approaches. Interactions between teachers and students of oral language instruction in ELD program and EFL classes were also studied. Additionally, the frequencies, percentages and means were used to demonstrate teacher groups' perceptions, concerns and characteristics of delivering oral language instruction to language learners. Finally, the data was analyzed and interpreted.

#### **Interviews**

What methodologies are identified to be the most useful and liked by students? Most of the interview responses in both the ELD and EFL programs were consistent. Employing visual aids in oral language instruction was the most useful and was also the children's favorite methodology. In particular, picture cards were the materials referred to as the most crucial element for Grades 1-3 by all the ELD and EFL interviewed teachers. To explain the abstract vocabulary, both ELD and EFL teachers associated it with regalia. In addition, three of the eight ELD interviewed teachers reported that storytelling approach was relevant and well-liked by students. Hands-on activities were mentioned by four of the ELD teachers. Moreover, they referred to the melodic approach as

the most well-liked methodology and the most useful motivation for learning oral language.

Chants and songs were students' favorite materials. Furthermore, predictable repeated books were recommended by half of the ELD interviewed teachers. Examples of the ELD teachers' responses to this issue were referred by the following verbatim quotes:

*"Students at that age level need something that is very active, very hands on and physical so they like a lot activities that require movement in learning language."*

*"We use the real thing so students can see it and talk about it."*

*"What we use for the ELD kids, especially in the primary level, are lots of visual aids and hands on activities."*

*"Students like things that are very repeatable and have rhythms with them."*

*"Predictable repeatable books make kids know what's coming next."*

In a similar way, visual aids were cited as the most valuable and popular methodology in the responses of the interviewed EFL teachers. In addition to visual aids, Total Physical Response (TPR) was most commonly referred to for helping kids understand the meanings of vocabulary and short sentences. Five of the EFL interviewed teachers also viewed melodic approach, such as songs and chants, as the methodology to support students' interest in learning and practicing oral language.

How do teachers identify the obstacles of delivering oral language instruction and how do they solve it? Seven of the eight ELD interviewed teachers referred to personality as the most difficult part. Children were too shy and soft-spoken to take the risk to deliver their English. Half of the teachers responded to this issue by utilizing the psychological method to encourage their students to try and use English. Other ELD teachers solved these obstacles by practicing talking chips, pair talking and cooperative learning. Teachers also suggested to wait for kids until they feel comfortable taking a risk to speak. Likewise, since English was not the home language of EFL students, encouraging students to communicate in English in class was a concern expressed by more than half of the EFL interviewed teachers. At this point, some of the interviewed EFL teachers recommended encouraging students instead of forcing them to pass

their English. Some of the interviewed EFL teachers suggested using the first Language (L1) as a transition to explain the content of the class after the class.

How do ELD and EFL teachers involve students in speaking oral language independently? Regarding this issue, overwhelmingly, the ELD teachers responded that students want a comfortable environment that builds confidence and provides feedback. ELD teachers emphasized speaking in small groups. Examples of the ELD teachers' comments to this issue were referred by the following verbatim quotes:

*"You have to build an environment of a trusting classroom where they feel safe enough to be able to speak out. And that involves talking a lot about learning language. When somebody makes mistakes, don't laugh at them."*

*"I ask them turn to their neighbours and tell them your answers."*

*"Depending on their level, they can either give me one word or two words when they are practicing pair talking."*

*"We are trying to expend oral language, so that they at least have three or four words in a sentence. Some of them are really moving along."*

Similarly, one third of the EFL teachers associated this issue with pair work or group work. Two of them cited free talking to practice oral language. Others referred to utilizing funny games to provide students opportunities to make sentences of questions and answers. Examples of the EFL teachers' responses to this issue were the following verbatim quotes:

*"Group work and pair work can create more opportunities for the students to pass their oral language."*

*"Free talk. Discussing some issues that are popular is a good way to attract their attention. They would try their best to display their oral language ability."*

*"Let the kids get chance to make their own questions."*

*"During the process of playing games, kids are getting so excited that they are more willing to take risk to speak oral language."*

How do teachers motivate students to learn oral language? ELD program teachers' answers corresponded with that of EFL program teachers. Rewards or prizes were the tips for students' stimulation to acquire oral language. In

particular, the rewards could be candies, stickers or oral praise. If the above rewards did not work for some students, ELD teachers also stimulated learning by finding out students' interest. Some of the ELD teachers also stressed the need for a confident learning environment and for implementing an interest inventory into curriculum.

### Observations

Table 1 and table 2 demonstrate the results of the observations of the ELD and EFL programs. The results of the observation tended to support the interview results of both programs. Table 1 lists the identified teaching strategies that were practiced in the four time observations of the ELD and EFL programs.

All four ELD classes observed emphasized the use of phonetic approach. This fact displayed the ELD standards, recognizing and producing English phonemes, for beginning and early intermediate levels. Additionally, three of them utilized melodic approach. Storytelling approach was practiced by three of the ELD classes. Brainstorming was employed by two of the ELD classes. Similarly, pair talking, funny games, dancing approach were used two times in the ELD classes. TPR was practiced only one of the four time observations. However, all four EFL classes observed displayed great stress on the funny games. Three of them utilized melodic approach. Since the phonetic curriculum was only implemented in the early intermediate level but not in the beginning level in the Sesame Street School, the phonetic approach was practiced by two of the four observed EFL classes. Likewise, storytelling approach and dancing approach were employed by two of them.

Table 1: Observation Results on Teaching Strategies

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>ELD Program</i>	<i>EFL program</i>
Phonetic Approach	4	2
Melodic Approach	3	3
Storytelling Approach	3	2
Brainstorming	2	1
Pair-Talking	2	1
Funny Games	2	4
Dancing Approach	2	2
TPR	1	3

Note. Number of classes in ELD and EFL Programs found practicing this strategy.

In the same way, Table 2 displays identified materials that were used in the four observations of each program. Picture cards were utilized by four of the ELD

classes. Music and storybooks were employed by three of the ELD classes. Similarly, all four observed EFL classes used picture cards. Three of the observed EFL classes utilized music. Two of the observed EFL classes practiced storybooks.

Table 2: Observation Results by Teaching Materials

<i>Teaching Materials</i>	<i>ELD Program</i>	<i>EFL program</i>
Picture Cards	4	4
Music	3	3
Storybooks	3	2

Note. Number of classes in ELD and EFL Programs found practicing this material.

### **Field Notes**

It was noted that the melodic approach was useful methodology to support students' interest in learning and practicing oral language. During the observations, it was discovered that music was a valid tool to create the learning atmosphere. For instance, when a first-grade teacher changed an activity to story reading, to make the transition, he sang a song to catch students' attention. Meanwhile, the teacher was sitting on the floor with the storybook in his hands. Then, the teacher told the students, "I like the way people listen and I like people who are listening." The teacher made it fun first, and after that he became serious about what they were going to do. Therefore, it was believed that this scenario was effective not only for attracting students' interest but also for educating students' behaviors. Hence, it was suggested to use music, facial expression, and simple sentences to manage the atmosphere of the classroom.

Although the phonetic approach was identified as a valid methodology by all the ELD interviewed teachers and was implemented in the early intermediate level in the EFL program, the teaching strategies were slightly different. The ELD classes were observed spending more time on story reading. While the ELD classes were reading stories, they utilized the activity Q and A. For instance, the teacher read the title of the book, *The Farmer's Hat Is Brown*, and asked which word is "farmer" and why. Then, the students pointed to the word, farmer, and said, "Because it has f." However, when the EFL classes delivered phonetic instruction, most of them focused on reading words instead of sentence dialogue. As a result, the EFL students lacked the opportunity to practice oral language. Therefore, it was suggested that involving students with the "Q and A" activity improves students' oral language acquisition.

## **FINDINGS**

According to the outcomes of the interviews, observations and the field notes, some surprising findings emerged. Regarding the identified useful methodologies, it was surprising to discover that the ELD program delivered reading and writing instruction to the students at the beginning level as indicated in the content standard. Conversely, the EFL program emphasized delivering listening and speaking instruction to the beginning level students, and did not guide them to read books. Through this unexpected outcome, it was found that some of the ELD teachers had no problem delivering oral language instruction. Nevertheless, there were some obstacles for the other teachers of ELD and EFL programs. These obstacles explained the significant fact that since English is not the primary language for all ELD and EFL students, students would feel uncomfortable using it at the beginning. As a result, time and valuable activities were the keys to solving these obstacles. In addition, although the concepts of involving individual speaking were similar, the ELD teachers provided more specific instances of implementing it. In other words, this fact demonstrated the experience of the ELD teachers at their longer professional years. Regarding to the motivation of oral language learning, the ELD teachers not only encouraged students by giving rewards but also analyzing their psychological needs. It was found to utilize psychological analysis to deal with the students who did not follow the physical motivation. Data triangulation through interviewing, observing, and taking field notes, converged toward the findings and conclusions.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the data analysis and interpretation, the findings are summarized by comparing ELD and EFL oral language curricula. This section discusses these comparison and maps out an action plan to improve Taiwanese students' oral language acquisition related to each research question.

### **Research Question One: What Materials Were Used to Deliver Oral Language Instruction in Both Countries?**

While English language instruction has been delivered to Taiwanese students for several years, students demonstrated better abilities on reading and writing than on speaking. To improve Taiwanese students' oral language acquisition, materials used to deliver oral language instruction in ELD and EFL programs should be upgraded. The results of the four observations displayed that both the

ELD and EFL programs utilized pictures, music and storybooks to practice oral language. However, the EFL program did not use storybooks as frequently as the ELD program did. Based on the related literature, storybooks played a crucial role in acquiring oral language. Hence, an action plan is recommended regarding this research question.

#### *Recommended Action Targeted to Findings Related to Instructional Materials*

It is planned to continue employing pictures and music in the EFL program to deliver oral language instruction as well as provide much more time utilizing storybooks in EFL classes. Therefore, to build the confidence for English language learners, it is recommended purchasing predictable repeated storybooks which are easier for students in the beginning and early intermediate levels to read. After purchasing predictable repeated storybooks, it is suggested developing a professional development program that train EFL program teachers to use storybooks and predictable repeated storybooks to stimulate students to create original stories. Professional development should be sustained and continued to provide EFL teachers with opportunities for discussion and feedback.

#### *Who Is Responsible for Action*

It is suggested that the department principal of the EFL Program in the Sesame Street School be responsible for ordering predictable storybooks and for providing staff professional development to implement this action plan. The EFL program teachers should be responsible for collaboratively generating more ideas for utilizing pictures and music. Teachers will need to increase their use of predictable storybooks to deliver oral language instruction across the EFL program offerings.

#### *Who Will Monitor and Collect Data*

It is also recommended that the department principal of the EFL program in the Sesame Street School collect data by observing the classes, conducting student survey and teacher survey, interviewing teachers about the implementation and monitoring the test results.

#### *Timeline*

The action plan will be continuing. The principal, after receiving input from teachers, will present data during the regular staff professional development program.

*Resources*

The start-up budget for professional development program is estimated to be \$286 US dollars. It is estimated that Sesame Street School will also need \$7429 US dollars to purchase predictable storybooks for the thirteen branch schools.

**Research Question Two: What Methodologies Are the Most Useful and Well-liked by Students?**

To improve the majority of the EFL teachers' professional skills, it is important to identify useful and well-liked methodologies for delivering oral language instruction. EFL instructors can be trained utilizing those methodologies in the classrooms. This paper found that teachers of both the ELD and EFL programs used visual aids, the Melodic Approach, the Phonetic Approach, brainstorming, and the Dancing Approach as the most helpful and well-liked methodologies for delivering oral language instruction. Additionally, the ELD teachers pointed out that the Storytelling Approach and hands-on activities played a crucial role at oral language acquisition. Most of the EFL teachers considered Total Physical Response as a useful methodology delivering oral language instruction.

*Recommended Action Targeted to Findings Related to Instructional Methodologies*

It is suggested developing a regular professional development program that focuses on instructional methodologies. Teachers should be trained to use visual aids in EFL classes. It is also proposed that teachers should collaborate to develop instructional strategies for using the Melodic Approach, the Dancing Approach, the Phonetic Approach, brainstorming and Total Physical Response in the professional development program. Finally, it is recommended that EFL teachers should be trained using the Storytelling Approach and hands-on activities to deliver oral language instruction.

*Who Is Responsible for Action*

The principal of EFL program in the Sesame Street School should be responsible for providing a professional development program to implement this action plan. The EFL program teachers are responsible for cooperating by attending the professional development program, by sharing experiences and by learning new skills to deliver oral language instruction.

*Who Will Maintain / Collect Data*

The department principal of EFL program in the Sesame Street School will continue to observe the classes, conduct student survey and teacher survey, interview teachers and monitor the test results.

*Timeline*

This action plan will be continuing. The department principal will have to collect data in the third month after this action plan is implemented. And then, the department principal will present data during the professional development program.

*Resources*

The estimated budget for this start-up professional development program will be \$320 US dollars for each session scheduled.

**Research Question Three: How Are Students Motivated to Acquire English Oral Language Skills in Both Countries?**

The results of the study used triangulated data to show that teachers of both the ELD and EFL programs used rewards or prizes to motivate students speaking English and they also utilized small group works to stimulate students to acquire oral language. The ELD teachers described the importance of providing a comfortable environment, confidence, and positive feedback to the language learners. Additionally, the ELD teachers suggested that students' interests should be inventoried. The EFL teachers recommended that students should play enjoyable games to motivate them to learn.

*Recommended Action Targeted to Findings Related to Motivation*

It is suggested that the professional development program should also train teachers on the motivation theory. The importance of providing extrinsic rewards and prizes as well as intrinsic rewards through small group works increases students' motivation to learn. It is also proposed that teachers should be trained to provide confidence and positive feedback to students. Students' interest should be inventoried and built into the curriculum. Young learners would benefit from psychological experts presenting the theme of learning motivation during the professional development program. In addition to the professional development program, teachers should communicate with parents to learn how to reward the young learners properly.

### Who Is Responsible for Action

Again, the department principal of the EFL program in the Sesame Street School should be responsible for initiating a professional development program to implement this action plan. The EFL program teachers should be responsible for attending the professional development program, for sharing experiences, and for learning about psychological motivation. EFL teachers should be responsible for talking with the parents. Parents should coach to offer rewards accurately.

### *Who Will Maintain / Collect Data*

The department principal of EFL program in the Sesame Street School will collect data by observing the classes, analyzing survey, interviewing teachers and monitoring the test results. Teachers will conduct student survey and present the results to parents.

### *Timeline*

The department principal will present the results of the data during the regular professional development program.

### *Resources*

The estimated budget for this professional development program will be \$ 325 US dollars and this budget will be able to support the cost for inviting a children psychological expert. In summary, by utilizing helpful instructional materials, by implementing new teaching methodologies, by understanding motivation theory and applying it to the classroom, learning will be improved. Professional development is the vehicle for implementing these recommended changes to the EFL program in Taiwan.

**REFERENCES**

- Adelson-Goldstein, J. (1988). Developing Active Vocabulary: Making the Communicative Connection. *ESL Magazine* 1:3 10-14.
- Bell, D. (1999). Rise, Sally, Rise: Communicating Through Dance. *TESOL Journal* 8:1 27-31.
- Bolinger, D. (1986). *Intonation and Its Parts*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Hadaway at al, (2001). Scaffolding Oral Language Development Through Poetry For Students Learning English. *The Reading Teacher* 54:8 796-805.
- Hoggan, K. C., & Strong, C. J. (1994). The Magic of "Once Upon A Time": Narrative Teaching Strategies. *Language, speech, and Hearing Services in Schools* 25: 76-89.
- Kies at al., (1993). Oral Language Development through Storytelling: An Approach to Emergent Literacy. *Reading Improvement* 30:1 43-48.
- Mora, C. F. (2000). Foreign Language Acquisition and Melody Singing. *ELT Journal* 54:2 146-152.
- Pikulski, J. J., & Copper, D. J. (1997). Issues in Literacy Development. Retrieved April 10, 2007, from <http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/res/literacy/>
- Rosenthal, M. (1998). Carolyn Graham, a Conversation with the Creator of Jazz Chants. *ESL Magazine* 1:5 10-16.
- Tomalin, B. (1992). Teaching young children with video. In Stempleski, S, & Arcario, P (Eds.), *Video in second language teaching: Using, selecting, and producing for the classroom* (pp. 47-55). TESOL Publications.
- Wu, Z. Z. (1999). The Discussion of Problems of English Teaching in Elementary Schools. *Study Data* 16:3 5-8
- Zheng, H. Y. (1998). The Obstacles and Solutions of English Curriculum Implementation in Elementary Schools Taipei County Taken As an Example. *Education Data and Study* 24: 15-17