

Exploring the Reasons Causing the General Flaws of
Elementary English Education in Taiwan: An Interview Study of
English Educators in Kaohsiung

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Submitted to the Faculty of the
Department of International Affairs in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs

June 2022

Kaohsiung, Taiwan, ROC

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Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, 2023

Abstract

In Taiwan, there is a known weakness in the English ability of the general population, despite the extensive English education students receive starting in elementary school. Taiwan additionally has established the 2030 goal to become a Mandarin-English bilingual nation. To reach this goal, the weaknesses of the current English education system need to be evaluated extensively. Three main issues with the current education system were related to the lack of qualified teachers, weaknesses in teaching methodology, and poor learning environments. The purpose of this study was to explore the reasons behind these main problems of fundamental English education in Taiwan, which was achieved through an interview study of twelve different English teachers of the elementary ages. The results of this study revealed that while the educational system is evolving, various explanations for these issues include problems caused by the proliferation of the cram schools' industry, education practices focusing on test performance, and overwork in students. Overall, this study provided a better understanding of the shortcomings of the current English education system and provides information that can be used in further research to make improvements in the Taiwanese English education system.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Throughout the world, effective English education has become an important target to keep up with an increasingly globalized world, and Taiwan is no exception. In 2001, Taiwan's Ministry of Education reformed its English education policy to institute English classes from primary school rather than secondary school, along with other policy changes to bolster English education and ability in Taiwan encompassed in what is known as the EFL Education Policy.¹ Now, Taiwanese students start English classes on a national level in the third grade and continue to attend English classes throughout public school. Many students also receive supplementary English education in the form of cram school, English school, or private tutoring throughout their elementary and high school years. Despite this, many Taiwanese adults do not have conversational English ability, revealing major weaknesses in English education in Taiwan. Preliminary literature review has revealed the possible main flaws of English education in Taiwan to fall into three kinds of weaknesses: lack of qualified teachers, unfavorable learning environment, ineffective teaching methodology and curriculums. English educators in Taiwan are the primary conduits through which English education is conducted, and therefore are firsthand in experiencing and witnessing these general flaws and can provide insight through their experiences and opinions of such.

¹Ai-hua Chen, "An Evaluation on Primary English Education in Taiwan: From the Perspective of Language Policy," *English Language Teaching* 6, no. 10 (2013), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1077090>.

Motivation

In 2019, Taiwan's government announced the goal of becoming a bilingual nation by 2030. Even before this announcement, Taiwanese students have been known to attend extensive English classes throughout the public education system, many also attend supplementary English education in the form of cram schools, English schools, or private tutoring. The Taiwanese government also dedicates considerable resources towards bolstering English education in Taiwan in the form of grants and subsidies dedicated to encouraging native English speakers to come to Taiwan to work as English teachers and in improving the English training of Taiwanese teachers.

Based on these factors, the English ability of the general population in Taiwan should be at a working conversational ability, or at the very least there should be a noticeable improvement in the overall effectiveness of English education. However, according to English First's "English Proficiency Index", English proficiency in Taiwan continually decreased from 2014 to 2018 and stayed in the "Low" level of proficiency.² The flaws regarding English education continue to exist, continually resulting in poor English ability of the population, despite the extensive English programs that exist within and outside of school systems. This indicates that there are reasons behind the existence and persistence of these flaws, whether it be from culture, policy making, economic influence, or some combination of the preceding. By identifying and exploring these reasons, effective changes can be explored to address these enduring problems more effectively, whether on a local level through teachers or institutions, or through subsequent

² Keoni Everington, "Taiwan's English Proficiency Ranking Drops to 48th in World," Taiwan News, last modified 2018/11/08, 2018, accessed June 7th, 2022, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3571032>.

studies on a wider scale in terms of policy development related language education in Taiwan. Without thoroughly understanding these issues, many resources and efforts will be wasted on ineffective or short-term solutions.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore possible reasons behind the flaws of English education at the elementary level in Taiwan through the perspectives and experiences of English educators in Taiwan using in-depth interviews.

Research Questions

Exploration of these reasons behind these flaws will require analysis of the main flaws themselves, meaning that this study will examine:

1. What are the reasons behind the lack of qualified teachers in elementary English education in Taiwan?
2. What makes teaching methodology and curriculums used in English education ineffective?
3. What contributes to the continuation of unfavorable learning environments for elementary English education?

Contribution

This study builds on existing research by providing more context to the flaws of English education in Taiwan. The finding of this study can be used as a basis for future studies in exploring modifications and improvements that address these issues.

Limits

There may be difficulties in identifying exact or specific reasons for flaws in English education as many factors may contribute and these concepts can be observed from many perspectives. Lack of resources in terms of time and connections also add to the limitations of what can be explored by this study, meaning that details of related policy development and cultural influence cannot be explored at the same depth or scale as might be required to serve as a basis for effective changes outside of the local level.

Delimits

My case study will only focus on the reasons behind the flaws of English education through the perspective of elementary level English educators, rather than exploring things from the perspectives of students or policymakers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English Education

There are many kinds of English programs designed for different purposes. In the context of this study, the focus is English education for those who are nonnative speakers, which may be referred to as Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) or Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL). Within this field there are many types of programs for different purposes, including general English skills, conversational skills, business English, creative English, academic English, and so on. It is important to note that English education has become a global trend as it is a language considered necessary for participation on the international level. Policy making has reflected this trend, governments are changing and creating educational policies to include more robust and extensive English education nationally. A study published by TESOL Quarterly as early as 2003 highlights the trend of English education worldwide, stating that “the age at which English is a compulsory subject in most of the countries has shifted down in recent years, a shift that is predicated on the importance of English as a global language. Underlying the shift is an assumption on the part of the governments and ministries of education that when it comes to learning a foreign language, younger is better.”³ Countries globally are lowering the age in which students begin learning a second language, predominantly English. This trend has only increased, with English being considered a necessary subject of early childhood education in many countries.

Along with the many kinds of programs of English language instruction are different

³ David Nunan, "The Impact of English as a Global Language on Educational Policies and Practices in the Asia-Pacific Region," *TESOL Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (2003), accessed 2022/06/07, <https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3588214>.

types of instruction. From this arises the question of what makes English education effective or not. This, in part, depends on the English teacher. A study from The International Journal of Educational Researchers breaks the characteristics of an effective English teacher into four traits: “socio-affective, pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge and personality characteristics.” The study furthers breaks down these traits, demonstrating that an effective English educator can motivate and engage students, having a positive and enthusiastic teaching attitude, possess the relative knowledge to their subject matter and how to organize and teach it, and have personality traits such as being patient, flexible, creative, and open-minded.⁴ English institutes must consider these aspects in their hiring practices to find effective English educators.

Another consideration that affects English education is the cultural context in which the education takes place. The article “The Role of Culture in English Language Education: Key Challenges” highlights such important cultural factors such as bias of native speakerism, cultural perceptions of teacher competency, and what can be considered standard English. More specifically, the article explains how non-Western countries are biased towards favoring English educators who are perceived as white native speakers, regardless of teaching competency or certifications. It also discusses the relationship to individualist and collectivist culture, demonstrating that those educators perceived as “belonging” to individualistic cultures are also assumed to have the traits associated with such cultures, such as critical thinking, planning, and management skills.⁵ Each of these factors contribute to the bias in hiring practices of schools and

⁴ Ali Dinçer, Ali Göksu, Ayşegül Takkaç, and Mine Yazıcı, "Common Characteristics of an Effective English Language Teacher," *Educational Research Association The International Journal of Educational Researchers*, no. 3 (2013), <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/89901>.

⁵ Adrian Holliday, "The Role of Culture in English Language Education: Key Challenges," *Language and Intercultural Communication* 9, no. 3 (2009/08/01 2009), <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14708470902748814>.

pressure by parents to hire English teachers who are perceived as native speakers over factors of actual teaching competency.

English Education in Taiwan

Taiwan has many motivations for the bolstering of English education. As mentioned before, it has become more and more of a necessity for participation on the global stage. This is especially significant to Taiwan considering its precarious position in the international context. One journal article published by Cambridge University Press focuses on how the neoliberal ideology of competition has resulted in the competitive environment that makes English education a necessity, stating that: “States perceive English as having a utilitarian necessity and construct it as such in economic and political discourses as a means to connect with the world politically, or gain (or maintain) a competitive economic edge. Both private corporations, such as English First, and supra-national institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or World Bank, view English competence as an important indicator of whether a given country is an attractive place to do transnational business”⁶ This study contextualizes the drive for English improvement as a nation, and highlights Taiwan’s position in global politics and need for a recognized national identity spurring the cultivation of English education as a means to achieve this.

Due to these reasons, Taiwan has sought to bolster and improve its English education. Various policies have been designed and implemented towards this goal. One study lays out a history of English education in Taiwan in its relation to politics, stating how increase in

⁶ Gareth Price, "English for All? Neoliberalism, Globalization, and Language Policy in Taiwan," *Language in Society* 43, no. 5 (2014), accessed 2022/04/20/, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43904599>.

international activity by Taiwan has created a need for a strengthening of English education in Taiwan. Consequently, education policies have been made or modified to answer this need, such as the English language-in-education policy in 2001 that established English classes starting in the fifth grade nationwide, which two years later was modified to start in the third grade. The reformulation of the Nine-year Joint Curriculum Plan was also implemented in 2001, with the intention of bolstering English education by including it as one of the major areas of study, language arts.⁷ In more recent years, Taiwan has announced a goal to become a bilingual nation by 2030. According to the Financial Supervisory Commission Republic of China (Taiwan), The National Development Council drafted a blueprint with the purpose of developing Taiwan into a bilingual nation by 2030, and which was accepted by the Executive Yuan in December 2018. It consisted of four parts to raise English ability in the nation: organizing demand for English education, bolstering the use of technology in language education, bolstering bilingual policies related to native languages, and improving working-English skills.⁸ Such policies have resulted in an increase of There are several types of English education that are popular in Taiwan, that is cram or English school education, English courses included in the public education system, and private tutoring and language exchange programs.

Flaws of English Education in Taiwan

There are several main widely accepted flaws of English education in Taiwan that will be

⁷ Chen, Ai-hua. 2013. "An Evaluation on Primary English Education in Taiwan: From the Perspective of Language Policy." *English Language Teaching* 6 (10): 158–65. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1077090>.

⁸ R.O.C. Financial Supervisory Commission, "Taiwan's 2030 Goal to Become a Bilingual Nation," Financial Supervisory Commission, R.O.C., last modified 2019-01-11, 2019, accessed 2022/03/16, 2022, <https://www.fsc.gov.tw/en/home.jsp?id=253&parentpath=0,4,212,252>.

the basis for this study: Lack of qualified teachers, ineffective teaching methodologies and curricula, and poor learning environments. These flaws are interrelated, contributing factors often affect more than one flaw. The previously mentioned study by Chen discusses factors of each of these problems, attributing them policy implementation in Taiwan. This study discusses the lack of qualified teachers to poor certification standards, regional differences between rural and urban schools. Chen also highlights the role of oversized, mixed proficiency classrooms as another flaw⁹, which can be considered a contribution to poor learning environments as teachers cannot address the needs of all their students. Related to teacher qualifications also is the high demand for “native” English teachers, regardless of their actual skill level, which was discussed in Holliday’s paper on the role of culture in English education.¹⁰

Related to teaching methodology, a study by Lin states that “the effectiveness of English education to a large extent depends on the context of teaching and learning such as teaching materials, methodology, curriculum design and students’ motivation.”¹¹ These factors can greatly determine the outcome of English education, and it needs to be further explored what methods are primarily being used and what their weaknesses are. Suggested flaws in the system include an overemphasis on writing and grammar, and test performance over workable speaking. A journal Article in TESOL Quarterly discusses the challenges educators face in teaching English grammar to young learners while these learners are still only beginning to learn the grammar of their native languages. It discusses that while grammar is important, it is largely ineffective in

⁹ Chen.

¹⁰ Holliday.

¹¹ Han-Yi Lin, "Local Responses to Global English: Perceptions of English in Taiwan," *English Today* 28, no. 3 (Sep 2012)

2019-11-22 2012), <https://dx.doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0266078412000119>.

teaching to mixed-level classrooms or when taught by unskilled teachers.¹² It is widely accepted that grammar and writing is emphasized from a young age in Taiwan, but consequently students often lack the skills of conversational or working English.

Regarding learning environment, a large factor is student motivation and engagement. There are methods being explored to engage English learners more effectively, such as further integration of games in classroom settings. One study discusses the continual increase of the use of digital games in English education and observes that more emphasis needs to be on the role of the educator and implementation of such games rather than the role of the games themselves.¹³ This discrepancy can be observed in classroom settings, as the effectiveness of similar games can lead to varying outcomes of learning effectiveness depending on the manner of implementation. An important aspect of student motivation also has to do with the pressure faced by students. As Chen states: "too much pressure and too high expectations from Taiwanese parents can be an obstacle to good primary English language planning." Parents are facing increasing pressure to set their children up for success and view English education to achieve this goal.¹⁴ This, however, can have an opposite effect as pressure on students results in negative attitudes towards English learning, and consequently ineffective English education.

¹² Fiona Copland, S. U. E. Garton, and Anne Burns, "Challenges in Teaching English to Young Learners: Global Perspectives and Local Realities," *TESOL Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (2014), accessed 2022/04/20/, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43268015>.

¹³ Yu-Ning Huang, and Zuway- R. Hong, "The Effects of a Flipped English Classroom Intervention on Students' Information and Communication Technology and English Reading Comprehension," *Educational Technology Research and Development* 64, no. 2 (2016), accessed 2022/04/20/, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24761334>.

¹⁴ Chen.

Study Population: English Educators in Kaohsiung

English educators in Taiwan are the primary conduits through which English education is directed, and therefore are firsthand in experiencing and witnessing these general flaws. For this reason, they can provide key insight into the reasons behind these continuing issues. English educators have a choice in what curriculum is used, what teaching methodologies are used, and what the classroom environment is like. While they are not in complete control of these factors, they generally have a good understanding of why schools might prefer different teaching styles or what the main motivations and goals of the school are. Many similar studies, including ones used in my previous literature review also focus on the same population. One such by Copland et al. focuses on teachers to evaluate the challenges faced in teaching English to young learners. This study also highlighted the role that teachers play in English education. Another journal article, "Teacher Perceptions of Teaching and Learning English as a Lingua Franca in the Expanding Circle: A Study of Taiwan" addressed university-level English teachers to examine their study issue using survey and interview.¹⁵ These are just a couple examples out of many using English teachers to evaluate different aspects of English education. To keep the study population narrow and consistent, the focus will be on Kaohsiung English educators of the elementary ages as they are most accessible, yet still diverse enough to collect a wide range of data.

¹⁵ Wen-Hsing Luo, "Teacher Perceptions of Teaching and Learning English as a Lingua Franca in the Expanding Circle: A Study of Taiwan," *English Today* 33, no. 1 (Mar 2017

2021-08-30 2017), <https://dx.doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0266078416000146>.

Research Methodology: In-Depth Interviews

Considering the study issue and study population, in-depth interviews was determined as the most appropriate and accessible means of conducting this study. Interviews allow for a more thorough examination of perception and opinions. Using this method to directly communicate with English educators allowed greater exploration of the reasons behind existing problems in English education in Taiwan. Several of the studies referenced in work utilize in-depth interviews as either the primary research instrument, or in conjunction with other research methods. The above two studies both used mixed approaches, using both survey and interviews to collect data. Chien, in their study “Taiwanese Elementary School English Teachers’ Perception of Teacher Leadership,” similarly used a mixed methods approach, highlighting the use of interviews, and having a nearly identical study population of elementary English teachers in Taiwan.¹⁶ In fact, most similar topics, especially those focusing on English Educators as the study population, utilized in depth interview either as a primary or supplementary method of data collection.

Indicators

Consideration of the study issue and population paired with reflection on existing studies and related literature has resulted in the development of three main indicators:

- a. Lack of Qualified English Teachers
- b. Weaknesses of Teaching Methodology/Curriculum
- c. Learning Motivation and Environment

¹⁶ Chin-Wen Chien, "Taiwanese Elementary School English Teachers' Perception of Teacher Leadership," *Research in Education* 108, no. 1 (2020/11/01 2018), accessed 2022/05/03, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0034523718809390>.

Lack of Qualified Teachers

Several studies include lack of qualified teachers as a pervasive issue in English education in Taiwan, especially those evaluating the Taiwanese education system such as the study by Lou and the study by Chen on Taiwanese language education policies. This indicator includes an evaluation of several items. The first of these is what makes a teacher qualified. Qualifications can come in the form of teaching experience, English ability, education level, training, and related certifications. There are also informal qualifications such as personality traits like charisma or personal motivations to teach, which are harder to evaluate but can still be influential in determining the quality of a teacher. Both the interviewee's level of qualification could be explored as well as their perception of the qualifications necessary to be hired by their employer. After an evaluation of what makes one a fit teacher, it was explored why there is an unfulfilled demand for more of them. English Teaching is a relatively attractive job in terms of salary and benefits in Taiwan, yet many schools are desperate to find more quality teachers to fill positions. Reasons that will be explored are cultural expectations and parental bias, hiring processes, and training procedures of educational institutes. The interviews will serve to explore whether there is a gap between what makes an effective or quality teacher and what is expected by institutions or parents.

Weaknesses of Teaching Methodology/Curriculum

The second indicator explored was the persistence of the most common teaching practice and types of curricula used, and why they are ineffective. Different methods were discussed

briefly in the theoretical framework but was further explored as to why specific methods are used. These reasons were determined from working backward through the educational design process, starting with what are the learning goals of their classes, in more specific terms than “English education.” This means that the focus of classes was evaluated whether it be on test score improvement, parental satisfaction, fluency in speaking, or working towards some certification level in English. Following this, was discussed whether the methods used achieve these goals are considered effective or not. Resources were also be taken into consideration when considering teaching methodology and curricula design. Concepts such as what is provided by schools and provided by teachers, do schools use subsidies or grants from the government, and how does competition for these resources effect teaching goals were taken into consideration.

Learning Environment and Motivation

This indicator not only included physical environment, but concepts such as teacher and student attitudes and motivations, and other environmental factors that affect a student’s ability to learn. Teachers can provide a great deal of insight on these factors as they oversee classroom management and often observe and deal with the challenges and frustrations faced by their students. Learning environment consists of class size and consistency of English level, available resources, school facilities, and perception of pressure faced by students and teachers. All of these can have a great consequence of teaching effectiveness. Observations of the teachers’ attitudes, and their perception of student attitudes and engagement served to reveal determining factors of teacher effectiveness. This indicator is greatly related to the first two. Teacher qualifications can determine ability of teacher to manage and engage students, and what teaching methodology is used can greatly affect teaching and learning attitudes, and consequently reveal

effective versus ineffective learning environments. Motivations are a question of why a teacher has chosen to, and continues to teach English, and is also related to the first two indicators in that it can help reveal why there may be a lack of qualified teachers and why ineffective curricula and methods are used. Questions that were explored relate to whether a teacher passionate about their job, and how do students' attitudes and motivation level effect their teaching. These are all interrelated issues that through exploring, helped to reveal the reasons behind the flaws of English education in Taiwan.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The goal of this study was to explore the reasons causing the general flaws of English Education in Taiwan, and it will be a case study conducted using qualitative analysis in the form of in-depth interviews. More specifically, interviews were conducted with both Taiwanese and foreign English educators in Kaohsiung who have been teaching English in Taiwan over one year at the elementary school level. This included those who work in public or private elementary schools, cram schools, or other educational institutes. Analysis of the data collected from these interviews provided a greater understanding of the flaws and of English education in Taiwan and the reasons behind them.

Sources of Data

The data of this study consisted of the comments of twelve elementary-level English educators in Kaohsiung on their perceptions of the flaws of English education in Taiwan. This was a mix of Taiwanese and foreign teachers. Included in the foreign educators were both native and non-native English speakers. This study included a mixture of teachers at both cram school and public elementary schools. These teachers were interviewed about their experiences as teachers and their perception of the three general flaws that also serve as the indicators of this study, which are the lack of qualified English teachers, weaknesses in the curriculums and teaching methodologies used to conduct English classes, and poor learning environments for learning English.

The study population was limited to those teachers at the elementary school level as these are the formative years of English education in Taiwan and serve as the basis for all future English studies. The population was further limited to those teaching in Kaohsiung for reasons of data accessibility. In this way, the comments of these educators served as a sample of the perception of English education by English teachers in all of Taiwan. However, these perceptions cannot be considered fully representative of the views of teachers throughout Taiwan, as Kaohsiung teachers may be influenced by various factors that other cities' teachers are not.

This source of data was chosen for several reasons. As mentioned in the section on literature review, teachers provide a key perception on English education in Taiwan as the conduits through which students learn, being able to understand a wider systemic impact (bottom-down influence) on English education as well as experience the pressure from parents and students (bottom-up influence). Therefore, their comments and insight on the flaws of English education in Taiwan are valuable in forming an understanding of the reasons behind such issues. The information collected from these interviews served to reveal the roots of the problems of English education in Taiwan from the viewpoints of those who deal with them as a career. Teachers with over one year of English teaching experience are chosen to ensure that interviewees had a basic understanding of the education system a sufficient experience to develop informed perspectives on the topic.

Research Instrument and Data Collection

The method of data collection was through in-depth interviews. These interviews collected educators' perspectives of the problems of English education in Taiwan. The interview

design was constructed based on the three indicators identified in my literature review: lack of qualified teachers, ineffective teaching methodologies, and poor learning environments.

Accordingly, the interviews consisted of five parts- introduction, indicator one, indicator two, indicator three, and closing statements. Each part was made of several open-ended questions, which were adjusted within interviews to further investigate the topic according to the direction of the interview. The length of the interviews averaged around 45 minutes.

The first part, introduction, consisted of questions related to the interviewees' demographics: teaching experience, type of teaching (for example, cram or public schooling), teaching position, and how they became an English teacher in Taiwan. The second part consisted of questions related to the first indicator: lack of qualified teachers. These questions were on qualifications the interviewee possesses, what training they have received, and what they consider to be important traits or qualifications of English teachers. The third part was related to the second indicator: ineffective teaching methodologies. This were questions about what curriculums and materials are being used, how much creative control teachers have in lesson and curriculum design, opinions on the content of the materials, focus of classes, and the methods being used to teach these materials. The next part was on the third indicator, poor teaching environments. This do not refer solely to the physical environment, but also things such as student/teacher attitudes and relationships, and pressures faced by them. Questions were about class size, English level, opinions on class engagement, opinions on learning teaching attitude, perceived motivation of students and teachers. The fifth and final part of the interviews encompassed closing statements and general opinions of teachers on the Taiwanese English education system. Questions consisted of what teachers perceive as the biggest problems in the system, what challenges they face as teachers, and any other input they may want to add. Then

the interviewees were asked if they had any questions or additional comments about the study before being thanked for their time and concluding the interview.

As mentioned in the section on literature review, this method of data collection is common in this type of subject matter as the study population can provide key expertise in terms of personal experience and understanding of the education system. Interviews provide a more in-depth discussion of the materials than can be explored using forms of quantitative analysis such as surveys. Additionally, adjustments were able to be made, when needed, to the interview construct between interviews if certain questions were discovered to inadequately represent the indicators.

It is important to consider some limitations to this method of data collection, namely personal bias in interview construct and of interviewees. As a foreign teacher in Taiwan, my cultural background and opinions on the Taiwan education system may have influenced the interview construct and implementation. Similarly, opinions of the English educators being interviewed were biased by their own experiences and opinions within the systems that they work. This further emphasizes the importance of having diverse interviewees from multiple backgrounds and experiences teaching in different types of educational environments.

DATA ANALYSIS

The interview protocol was designed to explore English Educators perceptions and experiences with the general flaws of English education in Taiwan. Transcripts were made of each of the twelve interviews. The transcription process resulted in various modifications being made to the interview protocol such as improving questions in terms of clarity or relativity to the research question, as well as to further explore concepts or ideas that arose during specific interviews. The content of the data analysis consisted of the interview transcripts. Narrative analysis was used in reviewing the transcripts to find repeated themes within and between the interviews and to reveal the story of English education in Taiwan through the perspectives of the teachers. These themes were reviewed considering the research questions to what could be learned from them.

On the Lack of Qualified Teachers

The first sections of the interview explored what makes someone qualified as a teacher, what the hiring practices of their workplaces were, and whether they considered there to be a lack of qualified teachers. The responses to these questions indicated that what qualifies someone to be a good teacher is more dependent on traits, skills, and experience than formal certifications, that training by schools is inconsistent, and that there is not enough supply of such teachers to meet the demand that Taiwan has. Another important factor that was brought up was that hiring practices that may be culturally biased, especially in cram schools. The perceived ethnicity of the teacher was considered by interviewees to greatly affect the ability to get jobs, while it was agreed that this has no correlation to the actual ability for these teachers to teach.

On discussion of what qualifies someone to teach, most interviewees determined it was the qualities someone possesses rather than any kind of degree or certification. Quality English teachers were described as being caring for their students, likable, seeking continuous improvement, and having high English proficiency. Having these traits was considered more important in being a proficient teacher than formal education or qualifications such as teaching or English degrees or TESOL. Many schools do not have to enforce any such requirements in their hiring practices, either. Interviewee 3 stated

I just got the bare minimum degree just so I can get a piece of paper on the wall but so basically, I don't have any certification. Everything I did is just through experience and that's why, like, I saw a post on Facebook the other day, someone with a PhD looking for a job and someone [else] was blunt in the comments and said, 'you're overqualified.'

While half of the interviewees possessed these kinds of certifications, three of them only got the certification after they had already started teaching in Taiwan. The three remaining teachers who had gotten these certifications before they began teaching in Taiwan were those that worked at public or international schools rather than cram schools. These certifications were achieved more as a formality for paper than necessity to prove teaching experience. Rather, the most important factors that determined having these traits were teaching experience and training. However, the hiring practices do not reflect these requirements for selecting "quality" teachers, especially in the case of cram schools.

On hiring practices, we can see where public, private, and cram schools diverge quite a bit. Both Taiwanese public-school teachers explained that it took quite a bit of studying and qualifications to get to their positions, and the same with private international-school teachers, explaining that the vetting process for hiring teachers was quite extensive. However, cram schools had minimal formal requirements for hiring, and what was considered insufficient

training. Another important aspect is that these practices varied greatly from school to school.

There was no standardized method in which cram schools trained or hired teachers.

However, a general theme was present in cram school hiring practices was bias in the perceived ethnicities that were hired. Interviewees reported it much easier to get working contracts if they held passports from native speaking countries, despite English or teaching proficiency. Additionally, appearing to be a white or European passing made it easier to get jobs. It was noted that those most disadvantaged at getting teaching jobs, or fair paying English teaching jobs, were southeast Asians. Interviewee 7 said

It's weird because for example, I know lots of people from southeast Asia, whose English is just perfect, it's so great. And no one gives them a job. But also, I know some people from, for example, South Africa, whose accent is quite strong and hard to understand for little kids that differs from American accents and still they get jobs everywhere. Just because they have citizenship.

Nine of the twelve interviewees stated that nationality will affect your ability to get a job, four of them bringing up specifically the disadvantages faced by southeast Asians. Four of them also described challenges getting English teaching positions as a foreigner with an Asian appearance, in contrast with their colleagues from the same countries or even being native speakers themselves.

A related issue was the lack of transparency in hiring practices, specifically within cram schools. One aspect of this was the lack of working contracts for non-native English-speaking foreigners. Three of five the non-native foreign interviewees stated that despite teaching in Taiwan for several years, they have never had a formal contract with the schools they have worked for. Due to their lack of formal qualifications or English passport, the school could not justify hiring them on contracts, yet still used their labor, and was able to take advantage of the

job insecurity faced by those teachers, requiring more commitments and/or paying a lower salary than their contracted native speaking counterparts. As interviewee 7 stated

[O]verall I don't feel that I'm respected at the workplace because I don't have any contracts. I don't have work permits; nothing is provided for me at my current school. It's like, oh, it's not written on paper. Plus, my salary is lower than other native speakers get so I feel quite offended. And I feel like I put in a lot of effort, but I'm still not as recognized as people from native countries are.

And those hired in this manner describe that it is hidden from parents that are paying the school for their children's education. Three teachers reported that they were told to minimize interactions with parents or lie about their country of origin or English teaching experience in the presence of parents and even other employees. Along with this, two of the interviewees also mentioned being discouraged from discussing their salaries with other employees. Cram schools would claim to have many requirements for hiring, but then not back up those requirements in who they had teaching for them. As interviewee 7 stated about their experience getting jobs:

When [cram schools] post [a hiring] ad on Facebook or somewhere else, they're always like, Oh, you need to have a degree, you need to be native, or and so on. But when you come to the interview, and you tell them 'I'm not native, I don't have a degree, I don't have a work permit, I don't have any training. I didn't have any kind of training before.' They just agree to that because they kind of rely on your speaking ability. They don't need any kind of proof they think, like, 'oh, if you can speak English, well, now that means you can teach it well, even though they don't know how, or what kind of a teacher I am.'

This also reveals that the quality of teachers hired by such schools is unlikely to be consistent, as the advertised requirements do not match the actual requirements.

Related to the hiring practices, the training practices for many cram schools could be considered insufficient. While those who had experience working in public or private schools had requirements to go to conferences, workshops, and other sorts of training events, those working only at cram schools had minimal to no training before teaching. Cram schools that did

have training plans generally consisted of a requirement for a certain number of hours watching other classes being taught, and/or some supervised classes before official hire. Four of the interviewees stated at some of the schools they worked at that they received no training at all, and began teaching only after a short interview, some of these being their very first teaching experiences.

Another issue with the quality of English teachers relates to their motivations for teaching. Nearly all of the interviewees agreed that an important factor in being an English teacher is related to enjoying teaching, liking kids, or being passionate about your work. However, a great deal of English teachers in Taiwan, both local and foreign, are attracted to the job for other reasons. These include availability of the job, relatively high pay and minimal requirements, and, for foreigners with limited Chinese language skills, lack of other job opportunities. Out of the interviewees, only two stated that they started teaching because they wanted to become an English teacher, which happened to be the public-school teacher and international-school teacher. The other interviewees, all who teach at cram school, reported that they started teaching because it was an available job, or way to stay in Taiwan, rather than a passion. While each of the teachers stated that they do enjoy teaching, the lack of “passion” in this case can interfere with displaying the traits stated to make quality teachers such as care for the students and the willingness to continuously work to improve their teaching ability.

On the perceived lack of quality teachers in Taiwan, there was a unanimous agreement that the supply of quality teachers did not satisfy the demand. However, the reasons given for this varied greatly. Some stated that the reasons are related to the lack of training in schools, that teachers' potential could not be uncovered because they are thrown into teaching positions without proper training. As interviewee 3 stated:

So is there a lack of teachers? Yes. Qualified teachers, I guess, by default. Yes, but I would turn the question around and say, is the school providing adequate training and is the school hiring the right people? And there are good teachers out there and there are people who don't know that their teachers who, if they were brought into teaching, would do a good job. They just have to be found.

Another reason given for the inadequate supply of teachers is simply the very high demand for teachers in Taiwan, arguably much higher per capita than many other countries. Interviewee 9 stated this succinctly: "I think the supply of teachers is actually quite over-average compared to other countries. But the point here is because there's a dual school system, they have afternoon cram schools, and so the demand for teachers in [Taiwan] is really high." Another contributing factor is the high turnover rate of teachers, especially in big cram schools. Two of the interviewees brought up that since English teaching is an attractive job for foreigners to stay in Taiwan, it often is not considered a permanent job, and so teachers will take on classes for short amounts of time. This connects back to the lack of contracts for non-native speakers, without contracts, many teachers have more of a reason to leave, or can more easily be terminated, contributing to a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching as students may have multiple different teachers in one year.

In conclusion, the lack of qualified teachers is related to a lack of consistency in the quality of teachers due to bias of hiring practices, inadequate training programs, lack of hiring standards, and high demand for English teachers created by cram schools. In general, hiring practices are inconsistent between educational institutes, with a greater number of problems related to cram schools. These inconsistencies cause a great discrepancy in the quality of the teachers, and therefore teaching practices, at different schools.

On Teaching Methodology and Curriculums

When discussing teaching methodology and curriculum, interviewees were asked about their experiences as teachers and about the different schools and institutions they have worked at, as well as their opinions on what has worked, or what might need to be changed. The main comments that arose as the issues of Taiwan English education were related to the emphasis on test performance, the level of control that teachers had in lesson planning, lack of development in critical or creative thinking skills, and use of materials that were inappropriate for the class.

First, to address the teaching materials and curriculum. Interviewees explained a difference in effectiveness based on how much creative freedom they had in designing lesson plans and in the way they teach. There was consensus among all interviewees that with more freedom they were better able to fit their students' needs and teach at the student's pace, meaning that their students understood materials better and ultimately had more effective retention of taught materials. On the other hand, teachers who described workplaces that had very little freedom to modify materials or expected teaching approach, felt this greatly limited their ability to fulfill students' needs. However, basic requirements and general learning goals were considered necessary to base curriculums on and being expected to provide all materials and planning meant that an educator had a lot more preparation work and thus made teaching more difficult. The third interviewee pointed out that as a teacher gains more experience, they often need less guidance and benefit more from creative freedom in curriculum design as they get to know their students and their needs. While each teacher might have their own ideal balance of curriculum requirements and creative freedom in their lesson planning, all but one interviewee indicated that most educational institutes in Taiwan had very limited freedom in curriculum design. This was contrasted with the one international-school teacher, who stated that if they

would change anything about the curriculum it would be to have fewer resources and options to choose from in lesson planning as it added to the decision fatigue in lesson planning.

Related to the above point of freedom in lesson planning is what materials are expected to be taught. Several of the interviewees stated that they felt parts of the materials were inappropriate for their classes, due to being the wrong level for the students, being too numerous to cover in class, or simply being uninteresting for the age group or specific class. Interviewee 7 stated that a recurring issue is simply that the materials are uninteresting to the students:

I cannot change lesson plans. I cannot really bring my own taste to the classroom, because the materials that they teach kids are quite old fashioned, and I will say boring. There are no pictures, just plain texts. And every day I have to teach those books. And because of the amount of books that we have to learn every day, it's a lot. So we don't have any time to play games or to learn it in a fun way.

This again highlights the issue of the number of materials some teachers are expected to cover during their classes, making it even more difficult for teachers to engage students for the length of the class.

Another issue that was brought up is the general teaching style in Taiwan that focuses on memorization rather than understanding. And while a great deal of English learning does depend on remembering grammar and spelling rules and expanding vocabulary, three of the interviewees specifically mentioned how this emphasis on memorization leads to a lack of understanding or ability to use the language in natural contexts. Most of the interviewees that had experience teaching in cram schools described this kind of emphasis on memorization or repetition. As interviewee 4 stated:

[C]ram school just repetition, repetition, repetition. So you repeat the vocabulary, and then repeat the sentence, and repeat, repeat, repeat... And then if you have time to, if you did the books, everything fast enough, then you have like ten minutes to play a game with them and pretend that in ten minutes you can make them remember everything they learned.

This teacher went on to describe their frustrations with this style and being expected to follow it, describing that even the teachers who have a desire to engage students are limited by the materials provided to them and expectations placed on them. This style of memorization-based learning is related to another problem, as most teachers agreed that the students do not have enough “talk-time” in class. Getting students to use the English they are learning was included in the teaching goals of seven of the interviewed teachers. These interviewees mentioned different reasons for the limitations of student talk-time, such as was mentioned before the number of materials expected to be covered and class size and English level which will be discussed in the next section.

These styles of teaching through memorization are connected by another issue pointed out by interviewees, which is the emphasis of test-based education. Cram schools specifically, are used for test preparation. While English-focused cram schools somewhat diverge from this, it is still included as a motivator for parents to enroll their students, and therefore must be considered in the curriculum design. However, test preparation and building usable English ability don't necessarily line up. Classes that focus only on English for testing may improve grammar, reading, writing, and spelling, but the test is an unnatural environment. Interviewee 3 highlights the issue with this kind of test-based learning: “...after you do your tests... you get your job, are you able to talk and interact with foreigners? No. So what's the point of learning English if you can't even speak with them?” Interviewer 4 expanded on this idea, while acknowledging the importance of tests “It's not that it's not important to have a test, but I do think they [students] have too many. They focus too much on the fact that they need a very high score in a proficient test when they actually cannot speak anything.” Three other cram-school teachers expressed similar sentiment on the emphasis of tests compared to English speaking

abilities of students. So, even if Taiwan's goal of becoming a bilingual nation by 2030 is "achieved" on paper, as reflected by English test scores, this does not necessarily mean that Taiwanese graduates will be able to realistically use the language.

The last important aspect to note on English curriculums in Taiwan is that the education system is not static, and several of the interviewees mentioned that things are changing and improving. Four of the cram-school teachers brought up that the different places they have worked greatly differed in quality, and that as they have gained more experiences and worked for longer they have found better schools to work for and do not face as many of the discussed issues. Interviewee 5 also brought up that not all is bad, stating

I hear a lot of criticism about things, but there's always going to be criticism, but there are a lot of things I think Taiwan has done very well. And I think that things have changed. [For example], like more of my students, their parents are just like, "I just want my kid to experience [English]. I'm not too concerned about their test scores."

Especially five of the interviewers who said they have a large amount of control in their curriculum design expressed more satisfaction and positive perspective of teaching English in Taiwan. As interviewee 6 stated in response to being asked how they would change the curriculum "Now, I have so much, like, I can control most things... if I know what to improve, like, I've already done it. I'm still working on it." They went on to state that they hope that one day English can be "not just a subject" but rather a tool that is accessible to Taiwanese people. Over half of the teachers expressed similar sentiments of hope or observed change in the education system that they believe is leading towards a positive outcome.

These factors considered reveal that according to the English teachers, the main problems behind curriculum flaws according to the interviewees had to do with test emphasis, lack of control in lesson planning, and unengaging or too many materials to be covered. While these problems are still commonly faced, it is significant that evidence also suggests that this

educational culture is changing. It is important to note as well the discrepancies between public, private, and cram school education systems, and while these discussed issues are present in all three types of institutions as they are part of the Taiwanese education culture, they are most prominent within cram schools.

On Poor Learning Environment

The third research question addresses the learning environments in English education in Taiwan. The interviewees were questioned about the challenges they face in terms of learning environments, both in the physical sense, such as classroom setting and available resources, as well as non-physical, such as attitudes of students and work culture. The main problems that were faced by teachers were class size, student's English abilities, lack of standardization of classroom quality, and students' non-academic needs not being met.

In terms of class make-up, the biggest issue is that classes are overpopulated and often made of mixed levels. Nearly every interviewee, except for one, indicated that they had faced one or both issues at some point in their career, though half of them also stated at their current places of work that these are not as much of a problem. Statements included mentioning not having enough one-on-one time with their students, challenges in teaching more than one level of English ability in the same class, and difficulties in classroom management. This was not limited to just the cram schools either, as the public and international-school teachers also stated similar difficulties. Having overfilled classes also poses challenges in tracking student progress as students have less opportunities to participate in class, and oftentimes results in either lower-level students falling farther behind or higher-level students not getting anything out of the

classes. The extra time spent in classroom management also takes away from lesson time and active learning.

Related to this, the physical environment of the classroom makes a huge difference in the ability to teach effectively, and many of the interviewees reflected on a lack of classroom resources or quality. This included classroom size, thin walls, depressing atmosphere, inability to arrange classroom to fit needs, poor lighting, low-quality seating and desk space, lack of projectors, whiteboard or whiteboard markers, and activity supplies. Interviewee 4 went as far as to state safety concerns- “I noticed one thing that really bothers me in Taiwan, is that at a lot of the cram schools, the environment looks depressing, like old and everything's falling apart. And it honestly doesn't look like a safe place to keep a bunch of kids.” Similarly, Interviewee 7 described one of their teaching spaces as a basement:

The classroom is very small. It's so small that we barely have any space to walk around. So kids, they're kind of packed up, they sit very close together, and because some of them don't get on, well, I have to always change their seats, and it's difficult because even if I tend to resist, they're still too close to each other, and they annoy each other they get mad they get said someone cries. So it was really, really difficult because they don't provide enough space. The school does not provide the teaching environment. Because even the classroom ceiling is so low, the kids can touch it. So the environment, the vibe is not serious for them. They can't focus on studying because the classroom feels like a basement, right?

In fact, several of the interviews stated similar needs to create a more “serious” environment to aid in students' ability to learn. Many teachers also reported the need to provide their own supplies for classroom activities or rewards to motivate students. All but three of the interviewees brought up that the quality of seating and/or tables greatly affected students' ability to focus and participate in class without distractions.

In general, the teachers who reported that their places of work had specific standards for classrooms and class makeup, also reported facing less teaching issues in these regards. Four separate interviewees stated that the schools they worked at that capped class size and were flexible in moving students to appropriate English level classrooms had a lot more success in addressing their students' needs and effectively teaching. Those who work for schools that did not have such standards stated it was one of the significant challenges they faced. Similarly, the teaching institutions that listened to teachers' needs in providing materials and teaching resources or had specific classroom standards for materials were reported by teachers to have a higher degree in ease of instruction. As interviewee 9 stated:

So when you see different cram schools or also primary schools or junior high schools, [the] classes there, it's like, you see like there is a very big gap of what things can they do- what resources are offered by the place you're teaching in. That changes a lot like how the class goes and if it runs smoothly.

While students or parents may not immediately recognize differences in classroom qualities, teachers must adjust their teaching styles to the resources they have to work with, which may mean having a lot more work to prepare for classes or keep students' attention.

Another important problem that was described was that many of the student's needs are not being met outside of class. Things such as academic and performance pressure, lack of sleep, and unaddressed learning disabilities or emotional needs greatly affect a student's ability to perform in class. Interviewees reported that students also receive varying amounts of support at home, which greatly affects their academic performance. In this case, family backgrounds and parents have a lot of influence on the success of their children, but this is outside the control of the teachers. Interviewee 1 discussed this about teaching at public school, that the wide range of students' needs greatly impacted their ability to teach. They brought up that all students come

from different backgrounds, have different challenges at home and different levels of support. They went on to mention that as many as four students per class are medicated in some way for behavioral issues and finding balance between working with higher needs students and teaching the whole class could be difficult. They stated that the degree of involvement of parents in their students' studies and lives greatly affected student progress. In fact, the word "parents" was mentioned 53 times by the interviewees, generally regarding the challenges that teachers face in the support their students receive. Without appropriate parental support, students have a much lower capacity to succeed.

On the other hand, problems can also be caused by over-involved parents. Interviewee 12 stated "The second challenge is being able to mediate between the parents' needs, the students' needs, and my boss's needs. That's very difficult because sometimes they have very different needs. And then they expect the foreign teacher to be able to handle things." While a teacher may recognize that a student needs to work on English foundation before jumping into complicated grammar, a parent may expect immediate improvement in test performance, and the cram school expects you to meet their curriculum standards. This puts teachers in a very difficult position of mediation in finding the right balance of what and how to teach, opting to satisfy their bosses or parents instead of being able to address the needs of their students. Interviewee 9 brought up an interesting point that this reflects the general lifestyle in Taiwan:

[Student's poor attitudes are] not the problem of the class, but the problem of the lifestyle here. So I understand that. I think it's like you are overworking as a student as well. And then parents here like they put a lot of pressure on their kids. And not every single kid will react in the same way to pressure.

The expectation is that students will study hard and that academics will be their number one priority.

These issues of pressure from parents tie back in with the overall academic culture of Taiwan, with interviewees bringing up the students' attitudes have a lot to do with the way they are treated in school and the expectations placed on them. Interviewee 4 also expressed their dislike of this academic culture while describing the challenges they face as a teacher

I don't really like this system here. I don't think it's fair that the kids need to be that long sitting down, getting a bunch of books shoved in their heads, and they have to do it or they get punished. They get shamed. They get humiliated in front of everyone. I really don't like this. So I think my biggest challenge is to find a way that I can marry the fact that they're learning English but also having as much of the time they can possibly have to still do kids things.

Similarly, interviewee 9 tied this back in with the students' lack of development in critical thinking skills that would ultimately help them learn English.

Kids are not allowed to freely raise questions in class. And if they do, they feel a shame, or they may feel they will face some consequences and they are not actually- they're not curious here... I think for two reasons. They are overloaded with classes. So you cannot focus [on] a single course because you have too many classes going on...[And] basically, their education here is this top down structure that you have to respect the authority of the teacher, you cannot question now against that. So their level of critical thinking definitely hasn't improved.

Finding the balance between helping students meet the testing standards, actively learn, and still enjoy English was mentioned as a challenge by many of the interviewees. Ten of the twelve interviewees mentioned some aspect of students being overworked or having too much homework or expectations on them, even in elementary school. This academic culture only intensifies as the students get older.

The main problems discussed by the interviewed teachers regarding the classroom environment consisted of student attitudes and unmet needs, work pressures caused by managing the expectations of employers and parents, overfilled or poorly planned class demographics, and

inadequate classroom spaces. In this aspect again we must note the difference between cram schools and public or private schools, as these issues occurred at different degrees within the different types of institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study took the perspectives of elementary level English educators in Taiwan to evaluate three main problems in the English education system: lack of qualified teachers, teaching methodology and curriculums, and unfavorable learning environments. From the comments of these teachers, it was able to be determined that each of these problems had similar causes including the academic culture in Taiwan and lack of standards in the cram school industry. It was also noted that these conditions are improving.

The first major finding that can be extrapolated from my data is that performance-based academic culture, specifically test-focused, contributes to several challenges to efficient English education. This was especially apparent when considering the flaws of curriculum design and teaching environments. Many curriculums are designed for test performance rather than English ability, and the large number of materials to be covered results in students not having the time to practice speaking and using the materials they are learning. This test-driven education style also affects the way that materials are taught, with an emphasis on memorization rather than meaning. These curriculum and teaching styles combined result in the lack of development in critical or creative thinking skills and students' inability to use their English in real-world contexts. Emphasis on academic performance also affects students' abilities to learn as the pressure they face detracts from their attitudes and desire to engage in class. This is further inhibited by poor treatment of students if they are not meeting teacher or parental expectations of them in terms of test or academic performance.

Related to academic performance, the cram school industry greatly affects the quality of English education in Taiwan. Cram schools originally were created, and continue, to aid students

in test performance. Cram school culture is ingrained in Taiwanese lifestyle, so much so that cram schools often serve as a form of childcare for many families. While cram school is not automatically a negative thing and does achieve its goal in assisting students' education in various subjects, the lack of standards for cram schools results in inconsistencies of quality. In each discussed flaw of Taiwan English education, we could see how the issues were more pronounced in cram schools when compared to public or private educational institutes. This includes discrepancies in the quality of the teachers due to hiring and training practices, poor curriculum design due to lack of teacher flexibility and emphasis on test preparation, and inadequate teaching environments caused by lack of teaching resources and unmet student needs. Profit-driven education may result in cut costs and corners by schools, some only providing the bare minimum to keep parents satisfied without focusing on the quality of education they provide. This is especially problematic as the regulations for cram schools are not as sufficient, or enforced, as those for public or private schools.

The last significant finding of this research is that the issues in English education in Taiwan are interrelated, as addressing one issue will affect each of the others, and that they are improving. Increasing the quality of teachers allows for teachers who will advocate for their students' needs, improve classroom quality, and care about the curriculums being taught. Developing curriculums and teaching styles can attract more quality teachers and lesson pressures faced by students that affect the learning environment. Improving learning environments can again attract more passionate teachers and allow for more creativity in lesson plans and teaching methods. Many of the interviewees expressed a satisfaction for their current places of work and the freedom and creative control they had, finding institutions that they

believe truly care about their students. While there is a long way to go, English education in Taiwan is not static, the culture is changing, and in many ways is improving.

The purpose of this study was to explore the possible reasons behind the flaws of English education at the elementary level in Taiwan, and it was revealed the most significant factors that contribute to these flaws are the focus on academic achievement and test performance, cram school culture and the lack of enforced standards, and the need to address each flaw to improve education. English education in Taiwan would also benefit from future studies that focus more on public school as this one had a greater amount of data from a cram school perspective and may benefit from looking at these same issues from a top down or structural perspective in terms of the government and education.

APPENDIX A: Interview Protocol

Opening:

Hello, I am a student of Wenzao University of Foreign Languages. My name is Khessed Yoder.

The topic of my research is the reasons behind the general flaws of English education in Taiwan.

Your perspectives and expertise as an English educator can help me to complete my research.

During the interview, I will ask you about your experiences as an English teacher in Taiwan including challenges you may have faced. You are free not to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with, as well as ask any questions you might have for me. This interview will take between 45 to 60 minutes. I greatly appreciate your time and input for my study. This interview is being recorded for research purposes, I would like to confirm that you have read and signed the related release form?

Part One: Background

1. * What kind of English work do you do? How long have you been teaching English?
2. Do you like your work, why or why not?
3. Why did you become an English teacher?

Probe: how did this process occur?

Part Two: Lack of Qualified Teachers

4. What relevant degree or certification do you have as a teacher?
5. What kind of training, if any, did you get from your place of work?

6. What traits or qualifications do you think are important to have as an English teacher?
7. Do you think a teacher's nationality will affect their ability to find teaching jobs? If so, how?

Follow up: How might a teacher's nationality affect their ability to teach English?

8. Do you think Taiwan has a shortage of qualified English teachers, and why or why not?

Part Three: Ineffective Teaching Methodologies/Curriculum

9. How much creative control do you have in lesson planning and curriculum design?
10. What materials or resources are provided by your place of work?

Probe: Are you expected to provide your own supplemental material?

11. What are the main focuses of your classes (ex. listening, speaking, reading, writing)?

Follow up: Do you think these learning goals are effectively met?

12. What methods or classroom activities do you use in your teaching?
13. How effective are the teaching materials you are provided to work with?
14. In your opinion, what ways can the curriculum be improved?

Part Four: Poor Learning Environment

15. What, if any, issues have you faced regarding classroom size and students' English levels?
16. What methods are used to engage your students in classroom activities and learning?

Probe: what outside factors do you think most affect student engagement?

17. How do you feel about teaching?
18. How would you describe your teaching style?
19. How would you describe your relationship with your students?
20. How do different classroom environments affect student ability to learn?

Clarify: what ways might you set up your classroom to aid in student engagement?

Part Five: Conclusion and Closing Statements

19. What are the biggest challenges you face as an English teacher in Taiwan?
20. Is there anything you would change about the education system if you could?
21. Do you have any comments about English education in Taiwan?
22. Any last questions for me about my research?

Closing: Thank you for your time, it has been very helpful for my research process.

APPENDIX B: Consent Form



Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages
Department of International Affairs
900 Mintsu 1st Road Kaohsiung 80793, Taiwan

Informed Consent Form- Interviews

Please carefully read the following material and ask the researcher to clarify or provide any additional information you may need.

TITLE OF STUDY: Exploring the Reasons Causing the General Flaws of English Education in Taiwan: An Interview Study of Elementary English Educators

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Khessed Yoder

0908472109

khessed.yoder@gmail.com

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore possible reasons behind the flaws of English education in Taiwan through the perspectives and experiences of elementary-level English educators in Taiwan.

STUDY PROCEDURES

This study will consist of interviews designed to collect the comments of English teachers in Taiwan. You will be interviewed for up to 60 minutes, during which, the researcher will be taking notes. This interview will be audio recorded and will later be transcribed for data analysis purposes. This data will be used in a research paper and presentation by the researcher. Your comments may be directly quoted, summarized, paraphrased, or otherwise cited anonymously in these works.

You may decline to answer any or all questions, and you may cancel your participation at any time.

BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, we hope that the information obtained from this study may provide valuable insight on the reasons behind the flaws of English education in Taiwan. Exploring these reasons allows for opportunities to improve English education on a local and nonlocal level.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All data collected through this study will be anonymous to anyone except the researcher. Your confidentiality will be preserved through various methods, including:

- Assigning code numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information accessible only to the interviewer

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. After you sign this consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will not be used in the study.

To Contact the Researcher: if you have questions or concerns about this research, please contact: Khessed Yoder, phone: 0908472109 and email address: Khessed.yoder@gmail.com

CONSENT

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date :_____

Name (Print): _____

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