

中英雙語幼兒與中文單語幼兒之敘說能力探究

Narrative Ability of Mandarin-English Bilingual and Mandarin Monolingual Children

Hsieh, Ming Fang¹ and Huang, Yi Ping²

¹National Tsing Hua University

²National Chengchi University

E-mail: mf.hsieh@mx.nthu.edu.tw

Purpose: Teaching English to young children is a critical issue in Taiwan. Given that early childhood English language education in kindergartens mostly emphasizes children's listening and speaking abilities, this study aimed to explore and compare the narrative abilities of Mandarin-English bilingual and Mandarin monolingual children. In kindergartens, asking children to share what they did over the weekend is a common activity that enhances their oral expression. Thus, in this study, narrative ability refers to how children talk in classrooms about their weekend.

Method: Fourteen children from a bilingual kindergarten and thirteen children from a typical public kindergarten that did not provide English instruction were recruited for the study. The children were five or six years old. All the parents gave consent for their children to participate in the study. In the bilingual kindergarten, the children were invited to share their weekend activities in English and Mandarin separately during different periods. In the public kindergarten, the children were encouraged to illustrate their weekend activities and then describe them orally. The bilingual children shared their weekend activities three times in English and Mandarin, and the monolingual children shared the same three times in Mandarin. All the children's descriptions were transcribed and coded based on the proportion of story-grammar elements (Stein & Glenn, 1979: setting, initiating event, internal response, plan, attempt, direct consequence, and resolution).

Findings. The weekend activities that the bilingual children frequently mentioned included staying in hotels, visiting grandpa and grandma, playing with siblings, and going out with parents for shopping and fun. The lengths of the descriptions of most bilingual children's weekend activities in Mandarin and English were similar. In two cases, the descriptions in English were longer than those in Mandarin. In addition, the grammatical structure in the bilingual children's English and Mandarin descriptions were also similar. They were able to clearly state the setting, initiating event, plan, and direct consequence, whereas internal response and resolution occurred less frequently. The monolingual children had different narrative structures from the bilingual children. The monolingual children usually presented the weekend activities by describing the images they drew. When the monolingual children described their weekend activities, their teacher asked them questions to clarify their expressions. However, the total length of each description was shorter, and the structure simpler than that of the bilingual children. The examples of two groups' narratives are presented in Table 1.

Conclusions: This study found that the two kindergartens displayed different styles of sharing weekend activities. The bilingual children’s English and Mandarin narratives were similar and better than those of the monolingual children, which is different from what is found in previous studies (Rezzonico, 2015; Rezzonico, 2016). However, the details of both groups of children’s narratives increased over time, and the teachers’ questions would enhance the monolingual children’s narratives (Feltis, 2011).

References

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Table 1 The examples of the bilingual and monlingual children’s narratives

Bilingual Children	Monlingual Children
<p>Saturday I went to grandpa and grandpa house And my brother <u>my brother</u> play with me And I and I say “I don’t want to play with you” I want to play with my sister And <u>and</u> my baby brother go to clean my toys And <u>and</u> I play with my sister hide-and-seeek But my sister is too loud And <u>and</u> I say “be quiet” and <u>and</u> my sister be quiet And and I say “ok” who will find and I say (unclear 02:29) ... And I win and <u>and</u> my sister didn’t win And <u>and</u> my mommy say “come down and eat lunch” And I say and I go downstairs And my sister say “I will go down” And my <u>and my and my</u> mommy say “right now go come here” And I my am I come down and my sister didn’t come down And I eat lunch and I go to sleep And I wake up I <u>I</u> go to see my sister But my sister is not wake up So I wake her up And <u>and</u> I play with my sister hide-and-seeek again And I go down eat dinner and I go to sleep And Sunday I <u>I</u> wake up and I go downstairs And I go to my grandma and my grandma say “why you so <u>so</u> quick wake up” And I say “because I want to play with my sister hide-and-seeek” And <u>and</u> I and I go and I wake up my sister And I go eat lunch again And I <u>I</u> go home and <u>and</u> I and I go to see TV And I <u>and</u> I go Thank you</p>	<div data-bbox="798 1198 1348 1608" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>My dad and brother and I went to the amusement park. We played many games. Because my height is less than 130 cm, my dad had to ride bumper cars, teacups, and airplanes with me. It was a fun day.</p>