

# The-Younger-the-Better Ideology in Taiwan's Private English Schools: A Critical Analysis of Early Language Learning

JACKIE CHANG

English Department, National Pingtung University, Taiwan

Author email: 2012sijackie@gmail.com

---

Article information	Abstract
<p><b>Article history:</b> Received: 10 Apr 2024 Accepted: 18 Jul 2025 Available online: 23 Jul 2025</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Ideology Social injustices Television commercials The-younger-the-better</p>	<p>The decreasing age at which Taiwanese children begin learning English suggests that Taiwanese society endorses the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) and believes that children should learn English as early as possible to ensure their academic or professional success. Consequently, many parents enroll their children in private English language schools to give them a head start. The purpose of this study is to investigate how television commercials for Taiwanese private English language schools promote the ideology that the-younger-the-better in English learning. This study also explores the underlying ideologies and social injustices associated with early English education. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the study analyzes 216 television commercials from private English language schools between 1980 and 2023. The results indicate that a prevailing perception in Taiwan is that English language learning must begin at a young age. The underlying ideologies of the-younger-the-better approach include English as a gateway to the world, English as a means for future success, English for self-improvement, American English as the standard, the ideal English teacher, the ideal English teaching method, and joyful English language learning. Moreover, this ideology has contributed to social injustices affecting Taiwanese children, native languages, and English teachers in contemporary Taiwanese society.</p>

---

## INTRODUCTION

With the global trend of learning English at an early age, Taiwan is no exception. One of the key education reforms in English teaching and learning in Taiwan was the implementation of English education in elementary schools in 2001. At that time, Taiwan's public elementary schools began teaching English in the fifth grade, which was subsequently lowered to the third grade in 2005. The reasons given by the Ministry of Education (MOE) for introducing English at the elementary school level were to "instill students with a global perspective, to utilize students' critical period in language learning most effectively, to optimize the timing of the implementation of the new curriculum, to follow the trends of the new era, and to fulfill parents' expectations" (Chen, 2013, p. 159). It is evident that the Taiwanese government acknowledges and incorporates CPH as a rationale for introducing English at the elementary school level. Chu (2018) argued that Taiwanese parents support the CPH and believe that the-younger-the-better when it comes to English learning for their children's future success.

In summary, both the Taiwanese government and parents support the CPH and favor the belief that the-younger-the-better for English language learning.

English was officially introduced into Taiwan's elementary school curriculum in 2001, but this policy did not apply to preschool students. Taiwan's Preschool English Education Policy Statement I, announced in 2004, prohibits public and private kindergartens, as well as private language schools, from offering full-day or half-day English classes to preschoolers (Lu, 2017). However, this policy conflicts with the beliefs of many Taiwanese parents who support the-younger-the-better approach to English language learning (Thomas & Chou, 2023). Before the government made English a compulsory subject for 5th graders in elementary schools in 2001, private English language schools, which offered English programs for both elementary and preschool children, were ahead of the government in promoting early English learning due to the profitable market for this service. In 1989, there were 34 private English language schools; in 1999, there were 335; in 2009, there were 1,858; in 2019, there were 2,401; and by 2023, there were 2,450 (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 2024). The number of elementary school students was 2.4 million in 1989 (Department of Statistics, Taiwan, 2024a), and 1.23 million in 2023 (Department of Statistics, Taiwan, 2024b). Yang (2024) reported that the number of Taiwanese elementary school students is decreasing and that Taiwan is expected to have fewer than one million students six years from now. In other words, the number of private English language schools has steadily increased since the 1980s, despite Taiwan's declining birth rate and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Private English language schools are extremely popular in Taiwan, largely because many Taiwanese parents support their children learning English at these institutions (Hsu, 2018; Lin, 2020; Pao, 2019). For instance, Hsu (2018) investigated parental expectations regarding English learning for preschool children in Taipei City. Among the participants, 81.2% reported that their preschool children were enrolled in kindergartens or private English language schools; notably, 78.1% expressed a desire for the government to lift the ban on English instruction at preschools. Similarly, Pao (2019) explored how private English language schools in Taiwan attract parental enrollment. Five recurring factors emerged: the importance of English, well-designed curricula, enriched learning environments, instruction by foreign English teachers, and parents' high expectations for their children's English performance. Prevailing assumptions hold that private English language schools play a substantial role in enhancing Taiwanese children's English proficiency without causing harm or problems. However, the terms "common-sense assumptions" (Jindapitak & Teo, 2013) and "taken-for-granted practices" (W. H. Lee, 2020) have been employed to critique the underlying ideologies embedded in English language education.

As mentioned earlier, both the government and many parents take for granted that there is a critical period for English learning. Many Taiwanese people commonly assume that private English language schools are regarded as the solution to the problems of early English education. In other words, the belief that the-younger-the-better in English language learning in Taiwan carries ideological connotations. The purpose of this research is to explore how private English language schools have marketed the ideology of learning English as early as possible in Taiwan over the past four decades. This study examines how this ideology is presented in the

promotional materials of private English language schools. Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) was employed to analyze television commercials from these schools. Based on the research purpose, the research question guiding this study is: What are the underlying ideologies of the-younger-the-better in private English language schools' television commercials?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Pro-and Anti-CPH studies

Lenneberg (1967) was the first scholar to formulate the CPH. From the perspective of those who favor the CPH, native-like proficiency can be achieved by early starters of a second or foreign language. Conversely, those who oppose the CPH argue that all learners of second or foreign languages can attain native-like or near-native-like mastery.

Empirical evidence presented in recent studies (Chen et al., 2022; Crosby, 2015; Jia, 2022; E. K. R. Lee, 2020) supports the notion that an earlier start in English language learning yields greater benefits in EFL countries. Chen et al. (2022), Crosby (2015), and Jia (2022) each investigated how age influences EFL outcomes among children, albeit from different angles. Chen et al. (2022) examined the effect of early childhood EFL learning on the later English and Chinese achievement and attitudes toward English learning of 892 children in China. The results showed that preschool children benefited from their English language learning experiences, which led to improved English and Chinese language skills, as well as more positive attitudes toward English learning later on. Similarly, Jia's (2022) study involving 191 Chinese children aged seven to nine demonstrated that those who started learning English at a younger age had more advantages than those who started at an older age. Crosby (2015), focusing on 48 Japanese elementary students, provided phonological evidence that younger learners outperformed older peers in acquiring English phonemes. In contrast to these childhood-focused studies, E. K. R. Lee (2020) explored the long-term effects of age of onset, type of exposure, and ultimate attainment in morpho-syntactic sensitivity among 40 Korean university students. The participants who attended English kindergartens exhibited stronger performance on a grammaticality judgment task compared to those who began learning English in a formal classroom setting. Collectively, these studies underscore the benefits of early engagement in EFL learning.

The studies by Lin et al. (2016) and Pei and Qin (2019) investigated EFL learners, challenging the assumption that an earlier start in English language learning necessarily guarantees superior outcomes. Both studies examined phonological attainment among university-level learners in Taiwan and China, respectively. Lin et al. (2016) found that age of onset among 50 EFL learners had limited impact on the acquisition of English consonants, while Pei and Qin (2019) observed that 318 early starters did not surpass their later-starting peers in EFL phonological tasks. These findings suggest that a later start in English learning does not necessarily hinder pronunciation development in EFL learners. Such results challenge the notion that earlier is always better in EFL contexts.

Dwaik and Shehadeh (2015) and Jaekel et al. (2017) provide evidence that complicates the application of the CPH in EFL contexts. Jaekel et al. (2017) reported nuanced longitudinal

findings among German learners (N = 5,130). In Year 5, earlier starters (N = 2,632) outperformed peers with less and later exposure to English, yet by Year 7, later starters (N = 2,498) had surpassed their early-starting counterparts. In a similar vein, Dwaik and Shehadeh (2015) conducted a study involving 1,846 Palestinian elementary students. Their findings revealed that early starters demonstrated stronger performance in vocabulary, reading comprehension, and speaking. In contrast, students who began learning later excelled in grammar, listening, and writing. This multifaceted performance highlights the coexistence of both pro- and anti-CPH perspectives within EFL contexts. The findings from Dwaik and Shehadeh (2015) and Jaekel et al. (2017) illustrate that the applicability of the CPH to EFL contexts may be more complex.

The aforementioned pro- and anti-CPH studies evaluated English language abilities across various linguistic areas, including phonology, lexicon, morphology, syntax, grammar, and both receptive and productive skills in EFL contexts. Although empirical findings on the CPH in EFL contexts remain inconclusive, scholars have increasingly questioned the foundational assumptions underlying these studies. First, these studies, whether supporting or opposing the CPH in English language learning, did not specify the precise age considered optimal for acquiring English in EFL contexts. Singleton and Leśniewska (2021) argued that the age of puberty has been highly contested, as it varies by country and differs between genders. Second, using native English speakers in both pro- and anti-CPH studies (Crosby, 2015; E. K. R. Lee, 2020; Lin et al., 2016) as benchmarks for comparing English pronunciation and grammar of EFL learners is a questionable practice. This practice implies that EFL learners should aim to attain native-like proficiency. Such an approach assumes that the acquisition process of native speakers is directly transferable to foreign language contexts. Moreover, using native English speakers as reference samples in CPH research, particularly in studies of English pronunciation, raises another question: Which variety of English should be employed as a benchmark?

A critical perspective on the CPH emerges from scholars who view it more as ideology than evidence-based theory. Singleton and Leśniewska (2021) contended that, in naturalistic contexts, the CPH is considered unproven and unfalsified. Strid (2017) asserted that the CPH is harmful and remains an enduring myth in additional language acquisition for both children and adults. Similarly, Tran (2020) stated that in Vietnam, the-younger-the-better approach, or the idea of a critical or sensitive period in English learning, is a myth. This study aligns with such critical perspectives, moving beyond the question of whether a biological critical period for English learning exists in Taiwan. Instead, it argues that private English language schools play a pivotal role in promoting the ideology that earlier English acquisition leads to superior outcomes. As mentioned in the Introduction, the ideological concept of the-younger-the-better has a powerful impact on the educational system in Taiwan, so it deserves more attention from lay people, English educators, policymakers, and researchers. This ideology significantly influences the pursuit of English proficiency and concurrently exacerbates various forms of social injustice in Taiwan. To explore this ideology, a critical approach is needed and is presented in the following section.

### **CDA and media discourse**

A primary goal of CDA is to examine and evaluate the relationships between discourse and power. Fairclough (1992, p. 12) stated that CDA does not merely describe discursive practices

but also demonstrates “how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identity, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief, none of which is normally apparent to discourse participants.” Ideology plays a crucial role in the field, as media texts often serve as focal points for analysis. Important differences exist between “different types of media in their channels of communication and the technology they draw upon” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 38). In Taiwan, based on the percentage of exposure to each form of mass media, watching television is the most popular, with 42.20% of people participating (Taiwan Academy for Information Association, 2023). Jen (2024) asserted that television commercials are the most effective medium for promoting products since they can reach a vast nationwide audience in Taiwan. Muhammad (2015) argued that television commercials saturate our lives, and we tend to take them for granted without recognizing the ideologies they construct. Similarly, Taiwanese private English language school television commercials, broadcasted on television or their school websites, may convey ingrained ideologies about how English should be taught and learned.

In Taiwan, studies that employ CDA as a research methodology in the field of education are scant. The following are three notable examples. Camasta (2020) conducted research on the portrayal of ideology in Taiwanese English senior high school textbooks. The results revealed that the language texts and images reflect ideological concepts from native English-speaking countries as well as Taiwanese nationalism. Two studies (Kajee, 2023; Wang, 2024) examined the ideology behind Taiwan’s Bilingual Policy 2030. Their findings indicated that the policy itself is ideological, leading to inequalities for minority languages, local teachers, and students within Taiwanese society.

Gölbaşı (2017) argued that Fairclough’s three-dimensional discourse model is a more comprehensive model of social research compared to other CDA models. Bukhari and Wang’s (2013) study investigating three models of CDA indicated that CDA is an effective research methodology in the field of education for exploring the relationships between ideologies and power. Moreover, Fairclough’s three-dimensional discourse model “has attained the status of nucleus in CDA” (Bukhari & Wang, 2013, p. 13). Thus, Fairclough’s model is employed in this study to explore the manifestation of English learning ideologies in private English language school television commercials and their implications in Taiwan. To the best of my knowledge, no published works have investigated how children English language school television commercials promote the-younger-the-better ideology, nor how these commercials construct and project this ideology. Thus, this study fills a gap in the literature.

## **METHODS**

### **Research design**

The theoretical framework employed in this study is Fairclough’s three-dimensional discourse model (Fairclough, 1995, p. 59) for CDA. This model includes text (dimension one), discursive practice (dimension two), and social practice (dimension three). In this model, texts may be written, oral, visual, or a mixture of these forms. Discursive practice concerns the processes

of text production and consumption, including who produces the text and for what purpose. Social practice addresses how the text is linked to and reflects power relations and ideologies within a society. In this study, television commercials consist of a mixture of spoken and written language, as well as images. Private English language schools are the producers of these television commercials, with the purpose of promoting the idea that the-younger-the better when learning English in Taiwan. The relationship between television commercials and ideologies of early English learning in Taiwan can be explored using this model. Thus, Fairclough's model is adopted in this study.

### Data collection

The researcher was a director of a private English language school and was responsible for employing various media channels to market the English courses offered at the school from 1998 to 2000 in Taiwan. The research data, consisting of private English language school television commercials, were collected and updated annually since 1998. To date, 216 television commercials were collected: two from the 1980s, nine from the 1990s, 41 from the 2000s, 128 from the 2010s, and 36 from 2020 to 2023. The commercials aired on Taiwanese television stations and were either recorded directly from broadcasts or downloaded from private English language schools' websites or YouTube channels.

### Data analysis

To safeguard the anonymity of private English language schools, the symbol “©©©” is used in place of school names. Chinese texts are translated into English and enclosed within parentheses ( ). Texts in English are underlined, while texts in Chinese are italicized. A written and spoken text in either Chinese or English with the same meaning in a commercial is counted only once. The following section presents how private English language school television commercials are analyzed using Fairclough's three-dimensional discourse model.

#### *Dimension one – Textual analysis*

Textual analysis involves analyzing the language and images used in television commercials. Take the 20TC8 commercial (produced in 2020) as an example. The 20TC8 begins with a white Caucasian teacher using an interactive or communicative method to teach a group of Taiwanese children English. A spoken text appears: ©©© 100%外籍老師授課 (©©©, 100% taught by foreign English teachers). Then, another spoken text says: 英語聽說讀寫 No problem! (English listening, speaking, reading, and writing, no problem!). Following this, a spoken text states: ©©© 讓孩子與世更接近 (©©©, let children get closer to the world). The scene then cuts to the children raising their hands, answering questions from their foreign teacher, and happily playing games. A final spoken text says: 100% 英語浸潤環境 (100% English immersion environment). This commercial concludes with the school's name and logo.

Eggs (1994) stated that imperatives and ellipses convey commands and demonstrate that the writer holds greater knowledge or power, giving direct commands to the audience. Moreover, the deliberate language used in television commercials is intended to attract viewers' attention

and persuade them to purchase products (Rehman et al., 2023; Shariq, 2020). In other words, the primary purpose of the 20TC8, produced by the language school, is to persuade customers to buy its products. To achieve this, the language in the 20TC8 is carefully selected to suggest that the language school possesses authority and expertise.

In addition to language texts, the images in television commercials also persuade viewers to purchase products (Bhatti et al., 2020). From a social semiotic approach, images are used to record and represent people, places, actions, and things (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001). In this study, the images were analyzed based on symbolic representations of people, places, actions, and things. In the 20TC08 commercial, Taiwanese children (symbolic people) are learning English happily (symbolic action) at a children English language school (symbolic place) because the Caucasian English teacher (symbolic people) is using an interactive method (symbolic action). Iedema (2001, p. 21) employed a social semiotic approach to analyze tele-films and argued that no texts were made “by accident.” Moreover, “each aspect of a tele-film contributes to its meaning potential in a meaningful way.” The images of Taiwanese children, a Caucasian English teacher, a private English language school, learning English happily, and the interactive method in the 20TC08 were deliberately chosen and have significance regarding children English teaching and learning.

Fairclough (2015) argued that ideology is tied to power relations. The private English language school in the 20TC08 commercial presents itself as an authoritative expert to convince its audience of the effectiveness of English teaching and learning for children. How the chosen language texts and images in the 20TC08 convey the ideology of the-younger-the-better will be analyzed in the discursive practice analysis (dimension two).

**Dimension two – Processing analysis**

The processing analysis focuses on deconstructing the written and spoken language, as well as the images presented in the television commercials. Take 20TC8 as an example. Table 1 demonstrates how written and spoken language, along with images, are used by private English language schools to convey ideological concepts

**Table 1**  
**Ideologies in 20TC8**

<i>Ideologies</i>	<i>Written or Spoken Texts</i>	<i>Images</i>
The ideal English teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 100% taught by foreign English teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A white Caucasian teacher</li> </ul>
The ideal English teaching method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● English listening, speaking, reading, and writing, No problem!</li> <li>● a 100% English immersion environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interactive and English-only method by a white Caucasian teacher</li> </ul>
English as a gateway to the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Let children get closer to the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● N/A</li> </ul>
Joyful English learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children learning English happily</li> </ul>

The language text “100% taught by foreign English teachers” and an image of a white Caucasian teacher teaching Taiwanese children English are featured in the commercial. Both the text and the image directly suggest to the audience that foreign English teachers are superior, as only foreign teachers are hired at this school. Two additional language texts, “No problem with English listening, speaking, reading, and writing” and “100% English immersion environment,” along with an image of a Caucasian teacher using an interactive method, imply that English-only instruction by foreign teachers is the ideal method. Another language text, “Let children get closer to the world,” suggests that for children, English is the key to the world. Toward the end of the commercial, an image depicts Taiwanese children happily learning English at the language school. The school promotes four ideologies to its audience: the ideal English teacher, the ideal English teaching method, English as a gateway to the world, and joyful English learning.

### ***Dimension three – Social analysis***

The third dimension focuses on the linkage between private English language schools and Taiwanese society. The Discussion section explores how ideological concepts are portrayed in the data. It also examines the impact of these ideologies on Taiwanese society.

## **RESULTS**

### **Spoken and written texts**

A total of 216 television commercials were collected. Then, 453 spoken and written texts from these commercials were analyzed for themes. Broad themes were identified to develop generalizations about the ideology of the-younger-the better in English teaching and learning. Recurring themes or ideologies shared in the commercials were categorized. Eight ideologies generated from the 453 texts are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Ideologies in written and spoken texts**

<b><i>Ideologies</i></b>	<b><i>1980-1989</i></b>	<b><i>1990-1999</i></b>	<b><i>2000-2009</i></b>	<b><i>2010-2019</i></b>	<b><i>2020-2023</i></b>	<b><i>Total (%)</i></b>
The ideal English teaching method	0	4	18	82	31	135 (29.80%)
English as a gateway to the world	0	1	32	53	17	103 (22.73%)
English for a better or future success	2	0	7	51	17	77 (16.99%)
Joyful English learning	0	3	5	24	16	48 (10.59%)
English for self-improvement	0	0	6	18	8	32 (7.06%)
American English as the standard English	0	0	3	15	10	28 (6.18%)
The ideal English teacher	0	3	1	8	5	17 (3.75%)
The-younger-the-better	0	2	0	5	6	13 (2.86%)
Total texts	2	13	72	256	110	453 (100%)

Table 2 illustrates that the ideal English teaching method has the highest frequency (135 texts), followed by English as a gateway to the world – English for international communication, understanding, or competitiveness (103 texts); English for a better future or future success – future academic studies or careers in Taiwan or overseas (77 texts); joyful English learning (48 texts); English for self-improvement – confidence, helpfulness, independence, etc.

(32 texts); American English as the proper English (28 texts); the ideal English teacher – foreign teachers (17 texts); and the younger, the better – critical period or onset age for English learning (13 texts).

Concerning the ideal English teaching method (135 texts), many schools did not specify the exact teaching methods they used. The terms found in the data included 100% English only, ESL (English as a Second Language) teaching, American style teaching, interactive teaching, the best, e-teaching, immersion method, and so on. Regarding American English as the proper English (28 texts), it is presented as the standard and correct choice. For example, “Learn standard American pronunciation” (written text) is featured in the 10CF3 commercial. Twenty-two out of the 28 texts were counted twice, as they contained two ideological concepts. The following written text in 10CF69 is one such example: “American English = Children’s future,” which contains two ideological concepts – American English as the proper English and English for a better future or future success.

The-younger-the-better ideological concept appears with the lowest frequency (13 texts) and is seemingly absent in the 2000s. Taiwan has long restricted private English language schools and kindergartens from teaching English to preschoolers, though enforcement has varied over time (Thomas & Chou, 2023). Enforcement intensified in the early 2000s, with widespread crackdowns on private English language institutions and kindergarten teaching preschoolers (Huang, 2004; Lin, 2005; Quartly, 2000). In practice, however, the demand for early English learning among Taiwanese parents has led private schools and kindergartens to continue offering English courses for preschoolers despite these restrictions (Shelton, 2024; Thomas & Chou, 2023). This development suggests that shifts in educational policy and parental attitudes have influenced how private institutions advertise the-younger-the-better perspective.

### Images

A total of 1,261 images were found in the data. Four categories – symbolic people, symbolic action, symbolic places, and symbolic aspects – were created (Table 3). The ideologies in images concerning the-younger-the better are presented in Table 4.

**Table 3**  
**Categories of moving images**

<i>Category</i>	<i>1980-1989</i>	<i>1990-1999</i>	<i>2000-2009</i>	<i>2010-2019</i>	<i>2020-2023</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>
Symbolic people	5	23	98	295	87	508 (40.28%)
Symbolic actions	3	13	69	203	52	340 (26.96%)
Symbolic places	3	12	48	164	44	271 (21.49%)
Symbolic aspects	0	0	28	94	20	142 (11.26%)
Total	11	48	243	756	203	1261 (100%)

**Table 4**  
**Ideologies in images**

<i><b>Ideologies</b></i>	<i><b>Images</b></i>
The ideal English teaching method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive, English-only, e-teaching method</li> <li>• Taiwanese parents' and celebrities' endorsements</li> </ul>
English as a gateway to the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children communicating with foreigners in English</li> <li>• Symbolic things: globes, world-famous landmarks, world maps ...</li> </ul>
English for future successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winners of competitions</li> <li>• Early starters – dream fulfilled, late starters – dream unfulfilled</li> <li>• Children donning various clothing representing white-collar jobs (such as businesspeople, doctors, attorneys, etc.)</li> <li>• Taiwanese parents' and celebrities' endorsements</li> </ul>
Joyful English learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elementary and preschool children learning English happily</li> <li>• Taiwanese parents' and celebrities' endorsements</li> </ul>
English for self-improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Character cultivation (confident, grateful, helpful, kind ...)</li> <li>• Taiwanese parents' and celebrities' endorsements</li> </ul>
American English as the standard English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symbolic things: American flags, American landmarks, and Sesame Street characters</li> </ul>
The ideal English teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White Caucasian teachers in language schools</li> <li>• Local English teachers in public schools</li> <li>• Local English teachers as foreign teachers' assistants</li> <li>• Taiwanese parents' and celebrities' endorsements</li> </ul>
The-younger-the-better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preschool children learning English</li> <li>• Taiwanese children teaching their parents or grandparents English</li> <li>• An adult foreigner failed to learn Chinese</li> <li>• Taiwanese parents' and celebrities' endorsements</li> </ul>

### ***Symbolic people and symbolic places***

The symbolic people category (508 images) consists of elementary school children (175 images), white Caucasians (172 images), preschool children (54 images), Taiwanese parents (43 images), local English teachers (35 images), Taiwanese adults (20 images), and Taiwanese celebrities (9 images). The symbolic places (271 images) include schools (175 images of private English language schools, 5 images of elementary schools), outdoors (65 images: baseball diamonds, fields, forests, parks, and so on), home (14 images), and others (12 images: English-speaking countries, international airports). The analysis of symbolic actions will illustrate what symbolic people are doing in the symbolic places in the commercials and how they are used to promote the concept of the-younger-the better.

### ***Symbolic actions***

The symbolic actions consist of 340 images across six categories: English teaching and learning (203 images), parent or celebrity support (52 images), future success (46 images), communicating with Caucasians (22 images), English for self-fulfillment (12 images), and the-younger-the better (5 images).

Regarding the English teaching and learning category, there are 203 images of Taiwanese elementary school or preschool children learning English in indoor or outdoor settings. Of these, 153 images feature white Caucasian teachers, 28 images show no teachers, 13 images

depict local English teachers, and 9 images represent online learners at home. The commercials illustrate that foreign teachers employ interactive, lively, and English-only teaching methods, using various teaching aids or e-teaching in private English language schools, while local English teachers rely on the grammar-translation method in public schools.

In 22 images, local teachers are portrayed as foreign teachers' assistants, as they are not responsible for teaching. Consequently, in private English language schools, white, Caucasian, or foreign teachers are marketed as the ideal teachers. The best ways to teach English to children are shown as engaging and interactive, similar to the methods used in private English language schools. A total of 54 images of preschool children learning English in language schools convey directly to the audience that the-younger-the-better applies to English learning. Moreover, the commercials demonstrate that elementary school and preschool children are learning English happily in private English language schools.

Fifty-two images depict Taiwanese parents and celebrities endorsing children learning English at private English language schools. Their reasons for support include viewing native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) as ideal English teachers, and favoring interactive, communicative teaching methods and English-only instruction. Other reasons include joyful English learning, English for future success, students' self-improvement, and the belief that the-younger-the-better applies to English learning.

Forty-six images relate to a better future or success. Twenty-six images show Taiwanese children wearing language school logo T-shirts as winners of running races, speech contests, or other English-related competitions. Eighteen images portray Taiwanese people as successful in various fields in Taiwan or overseas, or studying abroad, because they studied English at private English language schools when they were younger. Another two commercials (21TC1 & 21TC2) depict Taiwanese young people whose dreams cannot come true because they did not learn English at private English language schools.

Twenty-two images depict Taiwanese children communicating with foreigners (Caucasians), either in Taiwan or in English-speaking countries. These images demonstrate that communicating with foreigners is the primary objective of learning English, highlighting its use for international communication. Regarding self-improvement (12 images), Taiwanese children became confident, grateful, helpful, independent, kind, and respectful after learning English. They learned how to help themselves and others, such as the homeless, the elderly, and the poor in remote areas. In other words, studying at private English language schools not only helps them acquire English knowledge but also cultivates their character, contributing to their future success.

Five images convey the concept of the-younger-the-better. Four images show Taiwanese children teaching their parents or grandparents English because the older generation did not learn English when they were young at private English language schools. Finally, in 90TC1, an adult foreigner struggles to speak Chinese and is laughed at by a group of Taiwanese preschool children because he did not learn Chinese at a young age. 90TC1 implicitly conveys that the adult foreigner never achieves native-like Chinese pronunciation, unlike the young Taiwanese children. It also implicitly suggests that there is a critical period in second language learning.

Moreover, pronunciation is presented as his main problem and as being subject to critical period effects. The commercial ends with the name and logo of XXX English Language School, which indirectly communicate the “the-younger-the-better” message in learning English.

### ***Symbolic aspects***

Three categories can be applied to 142 images: English as a gateway to the world (103 images), future success (20 images), and American English as the standard (19 images). Images of airplanes, astronauts, costumes from different countries, flags, globes, world-famous landmarks, world maps, spaceships, vast oceans, and the universe can be interpreted as representing English as a gateway to the world. Taiwanese children are shown learning English for their future success by wearing various outfits symbolizing white-collar jobs (such as businesspeople, doctors, attorneys, etc.), as well as being associated with spotlights and awards. American flags, landmarks, and Sesame Street characters depict American English as preferred over other varieties of English.

## **DISCUSSION**

As outlined in the Methods section, *social practice*, the third dimension of Fairclough’s three-dimensional model, examines how private English language school television commercials are connected to and reflect power relations and ideologies within Taiwanese society. The Discussion section is organized into two components: (1) the underlying ideological construct of the-younger-the-better in private English language school commercials, and (2) the social injustices associated with early English education in Taiwan.

### **Underlying ideologies**

The present study identifies several core ideologies that underpin the-younger-the-better perspective in English language learning. These ideologies include: (1) English as a gateway to the world, (2) English as a means for future success, (3) English for self-improvement, (4) American English as the standard, (5) the ideal English teacher, (6) the ideal English teaching method, and (7) joyful English language learning. These ideologies are closely interconnected and will be examined in subsequent sections, following a brief overview of English language policies in Taiwan.

English proficiency is widely regarded as essential for Taiwan’s global competitiveness. In response, the Taiwanese government introduced English instruction in elementary schools in 2001, initially starting in Grade 5 and later advancing to Grade 3 in 2005 (Chen, 2013). Furthermore, the Bilingual 2030 policy, launched in 2018, aims to bolster the global competitiveness of young learners by improving their future career and salary prospects (Shelton, 2024). As discussed in the Introduction, the relatively late introduction of English in public elementary schools has contributed to the development of a robust private language school industry. Many parents seek early English exposure for their children, hoping to ensure academic and future success. Private English schools in Taiwan therefore take advantage of policy gaps and parental anxieties, reinforcing reliance on early private English education.

The results illustrate that learning English will make Taiwanese children competitive for self-improvement, a successful future in the context of globalization. In other words, the ideological constructs of English as a gateway to global opportunities, English as a prerequisite for future success, and English as a tool for self-improvement are deeply interconnected. In this way, the belief that Taiwanese children can only succeed in the future by learning English is frequently reinforced. However, Chang (2015) and Hsieh (2010) contended that fluency in English does not guarantee competitiveness or future success, either in Taiwan or globally. Moreover, research by Chang (2022), Kajee (2023), and Wang (2024) revealed that Taiwan's 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy—which positions English as the global language essential for Taiwan's international competitiveness—is an ideological construct. Moreover, no research has examined how learning English fosters Taiwanese children's self-improvement (e.g., confidence, gratitude, helpfulness, kindness, and so on), as claimed in private English language school advertisements. Collectively, Taiwan's English language policies, parental expectations, and private English language schools form a complex educational ecosystem shaped by globalization and the prevailing belief in English as a vehicle for future success.

The results indicate that American English is the standard or preferred variety of English in Taiwan. The research of Chang (2016), Chien (2014), and Seilhamer (2019) demonstrated that Taiwanese English language learners aspire to acquire a North American accent, and the preference for American English in Taiwan is an ideological construct. Moreover, this ideology affects English language learners, policymakers, and educators, resulting in linguistic and racial inequalities in Taiwanese society (Chang, 2016). Rüdiger et al.'s (2022) research illustrated that Taiwanese English is one variety of world English that has received little attention in English language teaching and learning in Taiwan. In other words, as Taiwan is a multilingual and multicultural country, English language teaching should not be restricted to American English and culture. Taiwanese people need to become aware of other varieties of world English.

The results indicate that NESTs are considered the ideal teachers. They use engaging and interactive English-only instruction (in the classroom or online) to create an immersive English learning environment, which is viewed as the ideal English teaching method. However, research into English-only instruction by NESTs for teaching Taiwanese children is limited. Four relevant studies are presented below. Chen's study (2015) with 385 4th and 5th graders, and Fang's study (2018) with 928 5th and 6th graders, examined Taiwanese elementary school students' perceptions of NESTs and non-NESTs. The findings show that, in terms of teaching efficacy and sparking students' interest in learning English, there is no significant difference between NESTs and non-NESTs in Taiwan. Wang's (2018) study illustrated that English-only instruction by NESTs in immersion kindergartens is not suitable for all Taiwanese preschool children, as children have different levels of English comprehension and varied learning styles. Chen's (2019) study focused on 268 NESTs and 232 non-NESTs collaborating on lesson plans and game-like activities in 156 Taiwanese elementary schools. The results indicate that NESTs employed contextualized language teaching, game-like activities, cultural materials, and kinesthetic-oriented teaching, which were beneficial to Taiwanese elementary students. However, Chen's study did not demonstrate how NESTs and non-NESTs collaborate or contribute to the teaching process. In other words, both NESTs and non-NESTs can be ideal English teachers. Therefore, the assumption that NESTs are the ideal English teachers and that English-only immersion by NESTs is the ideal teaching method are ideologies.

The data also suggests that children who attend private English language schools are pleased to learn the language earlier rather than later. However, recent studies (Huang, 2022; Kung, 2021; Kuo, 2021; Wang, 2022) showed that Taiwanese children have experienced English learning anxiety since the implementation of English education in 2001. These studies indicate that the sources of Taiwanese children's anxiety include English tests, teachers' teaching styles, not attending private English language schools, and teacher-student interaction in class. One notable finding (Huang, 2022; Kung, 2021; Kuo, 2021) showed that children who start English earlier in English language schools tend to have lower levels of anxiety, but this does not necessarily mean they enjoy learning English. The belief that learning English as early as possible is not only closely tied to the aforementioned English language teaching and learning ideologies, but it has also contributed to inequalities in contemporary Taiwanese society.

### **Social inequalities**

Fairclough's three-dimensional model emphasizes how discourse is deeply intertwined with social, political, economic, and cultural inequalities. The dynamic relationship between Taiwan's English language policy, parental expectations, and commercial interests in private English language schools is complex and mutually reinforcing. This dynamic perpetuates various forms of social injustice, notably in educational inequity, class stratification, and linguistic hegemony.

In elementary English education, a notable finding (Huang, 2022; Kung, 2021; Kuo, 2021) revealed that the parents of early starters in English learning or high achievers tend to have higher educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. Due to financial constraints, low-income parents often cannot afford to send their children to private English language schools, leading to weaker English language skills among their children. This lack of access causes anxiety among elementary school children who do not attend these schools, highlighting social inequality for Taiwanese children (Huang, 2022; Kung, 2021; Kuo, 2021). English language education for children has disproportionately impacted economically disadvantaged families and their children. This phenomenon highlights the social injustice faced by underprivileged children in English language learning.

Taiwan's Pre-school English Education Policy, announced in 2004, stipulates that the sequence of language acquisition should be as follows: first the mother tongue, then Mandarin Chinese, and finally English (Lu, 2017). More recently, national policy has set the goal of transforming Taiwan into a bilingual Mandarin-English nation by 2030 (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 2018). In response to this initiative, President Lai, who was then serving as Premier, instructed the Ministry of Education (MOE) to explore ways to relax regulations restricting English language instruction in preschools. ("Premier seeks easing of rules barring English," 2018). However, numerous scholars (Batchelor & Lin, 2020; Chang, 2022; Ferrer & Lin, 2021; Rigby, 2021; Tiun, 2020; Wang, 2024) have argued that the Bilingual 2030 policy prioritizes the enhancement of national English proficiency for the purposes of globalization, while neglecting the preservation and development of Taiwan's native languages. Ferrer and Lin (2021) contended that the Bilingual 2030 policy embodies an implicit monolingual language ideology. The Save Compulsory Ethnic-Language Secondary Education Aboriginal Teachers' Union noted that although the Taiwanese government acknowledges the threat of extinction facing Aboriginal languages,

these languages are overlooked in the Bilingual 2030 policy (Chen & Kayleigh, 2021; Wang, 2024). Ferrer and Lin (2021) also argued that the policy fails to address not only Aboriginal languages but also other native languages. In contrast to native languages, the government has allocated extensive educational resources, time, attention, and effort to English teaching and learning (Rigby, 2021), without significantly improving Taiwan's English proficiency (Chang, 2023). In summary, the elevation of English has posed a threat to native languages and negatively impacted native language learning.

Liao (2018) contended that teaching English at an early age may hinder Taiwanese children's proficiency in their native language without necessarily improving their English skills. Tiun (2020) argued that learning English at a young age could harm the acquisition of Taiwanese children's mother tongue, as mother tongues are crucial to the English learning process. Eliassen's study (2021) demonstrated that most Taiwanese people would not support an English language policy if it threatens native languages. As mentioned in the Introduction, private English language schools are ubiquitous in Taiwan. The growing number of such schools suggests that parents are increasingly sending their preschoolers to study English at an early age, disregarding the fact that this may place their children at a significant disadvantage by limiting access to their native languages.

The results of this study indicate that NESTs with a Western appearance, especially those who speak American English with an American accent, are considered the ideal teachers in private English language schools in Taiwan. This creates a distinction between native and non-native English speakers, American and non-American accents, and white and non-white English speakers in these schools. Everington (2018) reported that a well-known kindergarten posted a job advertisement in a Facebook group stating that black or dark-skinned foreign teachers were not acceptable. This advertisement reflects the ideology that white Caucasian NESTs are seen as ideal English teachers. Additionally, there is an injustice in the form of unequal pay between NESTs and non-NESTs. According to Taiwan's most popular online job-search platform, 104 Job Bank (2024), non-NESTs receive lower salaries compared to NESTs, even though they may have similar or better qualifications and experience. The inequities faced by both NESTs and non-NESTs include lower pay, fewer teaching opportunities, and discrimination based on skin color or accent. These inequities contribute to social stratification among English teachers in private English language schools.

The results indicate that private English language schools market NESTs as ideal instructors for elementary school students and preschoolers. In 2000, approximately 8,000 foreigners were illegally teaching English to preschoolers in private English language schools or kindergartens in Taiwan (Quartly, 2000). Taiwan's Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Child Welfare Bureau have confirmed that it is illegal for private English language schools to subcontract foreign teachers to teach English to preschoolers in private institutions or kindergartens (Workforce Development Agency, Ministry of Labor, 2016); nevertheless, this practice remains widespread (Shelton, 2024; Thomas & Chu, 2023). In other words, regardless of their qualifications, NESTs employed under such conditions are considered illegal English teachers. This phenomenon reflects systemic inequality within Taiwan's private English language school sector. Illegally employed NESTs face job insecurity, potential deportation, lack of legal protections, and labor

exploitation (Thomas & Chu, 2023). Furthermore, this situation underscores the inadequacy of existing legislation governing private English language schools, particularly the insufficient enforcement mechanisms that permit the continued illegal employment of NESTs in Taiwan.

## CONCLUSION

The results show that the CPH in English language learning has ideological connotations in Taiwan. The ideology of the-younger-the-better in teaching English at private English language schools is intertwined with other ideologies of English teaching and learning. These beliefs include the notion that Caucasians with American accents are the ideal English teachers, that English learning should be pressure-free, that English-only instruction is the preferred method, and that English is essential for self-improvement, future success, and global competitiveness. Taiwan's private English language schools, responding to market forces, accommodate parental demands that contradict national English language policy, inadvertently reinforcing social inequalities. The first injustice is that the effects of English language education on children have been disproportionately burdensome for economically disadvantaged families. Additionally, while the status of Taiwanese native languages is being undermined, the importance of English remains unchallenged, resulting in linguistic injustice. Lastly, the system creates inequalities not only between NESTs and non-NESTs but also among NESTs themselves.

The-younger-the-better ideology has pedagogical implications for elementary English language education in Taiwan. First, despite significant investments in early English education by both the government and parents, Taiwan has not seen substantial improvements in national English proficiency, resulting in negative social impacts. Taiwanese people need to reconsider who truly benefits from early English language instruction.

Second, as mentioned in the Introduction, the timing of early English education in Taiwan is influenced by the country's language policies, which place a high economic value on English. Consequently, early English instruction has contributed to the marginalization of native languages. The government overlooks the fact that Taiwan is a multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual nation. Learning native languages is essential for developing bilingual or multilingual advantages and enhancing Taiwan's international competitiveness.

Third, the native speaker ideology is more nuanced than simply categorizing people as white or non-white, or as having an American accent or not. This ideology has had a profound impact on the lives of children, parents, policymakers, as well as NESTs and NNESTs. Both NESTs and NNESTs need to become critically aware of their respective roles and contributions to Taiwan's English education.

Fourth, the widespread belief in Taiwan that American English is the superior variety is an ideology. However, this preference has led to linguistic and racial inequalities between different English varieties and their speakers, as Taiwan often overlooks other English varieties. English is primarily learned for international communication in Taiwan, and to effectively communicate globally, Taiwanese people need to reconsider the importance of linguistic diversity and avoid sole reliance on American English.



Fifth, regarding the illegal employment of NESTs, the Taiwanese government must strengthen oversight and enforcement mechanisms to prevent private English language schools from circumventing existing regulations. Furthermore, greater transparency in the recruitment processes of private English language schools is essential to ensure that teachers are legally employed and comply with governmental standards.

Finally, Taiwan's language policies influence the timing of English language instruction and the learning of native languages. Early English education involves a variety of complex learner factors, including motivation, personality, learning styles, and attitudes toward English learning. While age is a key determinant, other factors must also be taken into account. A well-designed curriculum, certified English teachers, sufficient instruction, appropriate teaching materials, positive attitudes toward native languages, and a comprehensive assessment of the educational impact are all essential for a successful early English education in Taiwan.

The primary limitation of this research is that it relies solely on television commercials from private English language schools. While the data offer valuable insights, further research is needed to confirm whether these results accurately reflect classroom practices. To address this gap, an ethnographic investigation is required. The ideal approach would be to expand and generalize the study's conclusions through participant observation, classroom observations, ethnographic interviews, photography, and document collection in private English language schools.

## THE AUTHOR

**Jackie Chang** is an associate professor at the English Department at National Pingtung University, Taiwan. She teaches English teaching methodology and curriculum design and evaluation for elementary English teachers. The focus of her research interests is the teaching and learning of EFL, in particular, the social, cultural, and political contexts of EFL.

[2012sijackie@gmail.com](mailto:2012sijackie@gmail.com)

## REFERENCES

- Batchelor, T., & Lin, R. (2020, November 30). *Taiwan's bilingual nation policy is well intended but reflects cultural colonialism*. New Bloom. <https://newbloommag.net/2020/11/30/2030-bilingual-nation-policy/>
- Bhatti, Z. I., Nijabat, A., & Khan, A. (2020). An analysis of Pakistani advertising discourse (TV commercials). *Elementary Education Online*, 19(3), 2998–3008. <https://ilkogretim-online.org/index.php/pub/article/view/7194/6937>
- Bukhari, N. H. S., & Wang, X. (2013). Critical discourse analysis and educational research. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 3(1), 9–17. <https://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jrme/papers/Vol-3%20Issue-1/B0310917.pdf?id=6762>
- Camasta, L. O. (2020). *Ideology in Taiwanese English senior high school textbooks of the 9-year and 12-year curricula: A critical discourse analysis approach* [Master's thesis, National Sun Yat-Sen University]. ND LTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/ey54t7>

- Chang, E. (2023, January 30). *'Bilingual nation' push needs new vision*. Taipei Times. <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2023/01/30/2003793341>
- Chang, J. (2016). The ideology of American English as standard English in Taiwan. *Arab World English Journal*, 7(4), 80–96. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol7no4.6>
- Chang, Y. J. (2015). Being a part of the globalized world? Globalization, English, and world membership from students' perspectives. *English Teaching & Learning*, 39(1), 69–97. <http://doi.org/10.6330/ETL.2015.39.1.03>
- Chang, Y. J. (2022). (Re)imaging Taiwan through "2030 bilingual nation": Languages, identities, and ideologies. *Taiwan Journal of TESOL*, 19(1), 121–146. [https://doi.org/10.30397/TJTESOL.202204\\_19\(1\).0005](https://doi.org/10.30397/TJTESOL.202204_19(1).0005)
- Chen, A. H. (2013). An evaluation on primary English education in Taiwan: From the perspective of language policy. *English Language Teaching*, 6(10), 158–165. <http://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n10p158>
- Chen, H. Y. (2019). *A study on common characteristics of native speaker teachers' classroom activities* [Master's thesis, National Taiwan Normal University]. ND LTD Taiwan. <https://etds.lib.ntnu.edu.tw/thesis/detail/0510a63e6db803722b784095a0f14ef4/>
- Chen, S., Zhao, J., de Ruiter, L., Zhou, J., & Huang, J. (2022). A burden or a boost: The impact of early childhood English learning experience on lower elementary English and Chinese achievement. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 25(4), 1212–1229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2020.1749230>
- Chen, Y., & Kayleigh, M. (2021, January 14). *Union urges compulsory native-language classes*. Taipei Times. <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2021/01/14/2003750554>
- Chen, Y. H. (2015). *A study on teaching English effectiveness of an elementary school foreign teacher in New Taipei City* [Master's thesis, National Taipei University of Education]. ND LTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/3j5gk5>
- Chien, S. (2014). Varieties of English: Taiwanese attitudes and perceptions. *Newcastle and Northumbria Working Papers in Linguistics*, 20, 1–15. <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/media/wwwnclacuk/crills/files/importedresearch/vol21-chien.pdf>
- Chu, Y. C. (2018). *EFL teachers' perceptions on English education for elementary school students* [Master's thesis, Ming Chuan University]. ND LTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/bx7wuv>
- Crosby, R. (2015). Relationship between the phonetic aspect of second language acquisition and age: Testing on the critical period hypothesis in a selected function of language. *Gifu Shotoku Gakuen University Journal*, 54, 15–28. <http://www.shotoku.ac.jp/data/facilities/library/publication/gaigo54-2.pdf>
- Department of Statistics, Taiwan. (2024a). *Educational statistics of the Republic of China – before 2005*. [https://depart.moe.edu.tw/ED4500/News\\_Content.aspx?n=48EBDB3B9D51F2B8&sms=F78B10654B1FDBB5&s=7BDCA619BC04BB85](https://depart.moe.edu.tw/ED4500/News_Content.aspx?n=48EBDB3B9D51F2B8&sms=F78B10654B1FDBB5&s=7BDCA619BC04BB85)
- Department of Statistics, Taiwan. (2024b). *Educational statistics of the Republic of China – 2005 – up-to-date*. <https://eds.moe.gov.tw/edust/webmain.aspx?sys=210&funid=edufld&clear=1>
- Dwaik, R., & Shehadeh, A. (2015). The starting age and ultimate attainment of English Learning in the Palestinian context. *English Language Teaching*, 8(10), 91–99. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n10p91>
- Eggs, S. (1994). *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics*. Pinter.
- Eliassen, I. R. H. (2021). *Public perceptions of language education in Taiwan: English in a multilingual context* (Paper 907). Mahurin Honors College Capstone Experience/Thesis Projects. [https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/stu\\_hon\\_theses/907](https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/stu_hon_theses/907)
- Everington, K. (2018, June 12). *Taipei kindergarten teacher posts job ad saying 'black or dark skinned' people not wanted*. Taipei News. <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3454928>
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media discourse*. Edward Arnold.

- Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and power* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Fang, Y. J. (2018). *A study of the relationship between English learning interest and learning engagement of 5th and 6th graders taught by indigenous and foreign teachers* [Master's thesis, National Changhua Normal University]. NDLTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/4888jb>
- Ferrer, A., & Lin, Z. B. (2021). Official bilingualism in a multilingual nation: A study of the 2030 bilingual nation policy. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(2), 551–563. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.1909054>
- Gölbacı, Ş (2017). Critical approach in social research: Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. *The Online Journal of Communication and Media*, 3(4), 5–18. <http://mhnlakgilnojmhinhkckjpnpcpbhabphi/pages/pdf/web/viewer.html?file=https%3A%2F%2Ftojam.net%2Fjournals%2Ftojam%2Farticles%2Fv03i04%2Fv03i04-02.pdf>
- Hsieh, P. T. J. (2010). The impact of globalization on foreign language education policy in Taiwan – policy initiatives and industrial demand. *International Journal of Educational and Psychological Assessment*, 5(2), 237–254. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228464133\\_The\\_Impact\\_of\\_Globalisation\\_on\\_Foreign\\_Language\\_Education\\_Policy\\_in\\_Taiwan-Policy\\_Initiatives\\_and\\_Industrial\\_Demand](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228464133_The_Impact_of_Globalisation_on_Foreign_Language_Education_Policy_in_Taiwan-Policy_Initiatives_and_Industrial_Demand)
- Hsu, H. C. (2018). *Case study of parental expectations on children learning English at preschools in Taipei* [Master's thesis, National Taipei University of Education]. NDLTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/sds7jx>
- Huang, H. W. (2022). *A study on the English learning motivation, English learning anxiety and English reading comprehension of the fifth-grade children in Tainan City* [Master's thesis, National Tainan University]. NDLTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/b4pgau>
- Huang, J. (2004, February 10). *Ministry cracks down on kindergartens*. Taipei Times. <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2004/02/10/2003098165>
- Iedema, R. (2001). Analyzing film and television: A social semiotic account of hospital: An unhealthy business. In T. van Leeuwen & C. Jewitt (Eds.), *Handbook of visual analysis* (pp. 183–206). Sage.
- Jaekel, N., Schurig, M., Florian, M., & Ritter, M. (2017). From early starters to late finishers? A longitudinal study of early foreign language learning in school. *Language Learning*, 67(3), 631–664. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12242>
- Jen, C. (2024). *A study on the relationship between television commercial's tone and manner as well as production crew's personality traits* [Master's thesis, Dayeh University]. NDLTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/jdmd5j>
- Jia, S. (2022). A study on the influence of age on learning effectiveness of English second language learning. *Proceedings of the 2022 3rd International Conference on Language, Art and Cultural Exchange (ICLACE 2022)*, 673, 74–84. <https://www.atlantis-press.com/proceedings/iclace-22/125976217>
- Jindapitak, N., & Teo, A. (2013). Accent priority in a Thai university context: A common sense revisited. *English Language Teaching*, 6(9), 193–204. <http://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n9p193>
- Kajee, J. (2023). Unveiling linguistic dynamics: A critical discourse analysis of Taiwan's bilingual nation 2030 policy and its impact on Taiwanese identity. *Journal of Research and Innovation in Higher Education*, 4(2), 86–109. <https://rihe-journal.com/index.php/rihe/article/view/46>
- Kung, T. C. (2021). *A study of the relationship between the use of English learning strategy and English learning anxiety of the fifth and sixth graders in Chiayi County* [Master's thesis, National Chiayi University]. NDLTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/ptn3p9>
- Kuo, L. M. (2021). *A correlational study of English learning anxiety and English learning motivation of elementary and junior high school students in Taitung County* [Master's thesis, National Taitung University]. NDLTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/3ea63y>

- Lee, E. K. R. (2020). Age of onset, type of exposure, and ultimate attainment of L2 morpho-syntactic sensitivity. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 42, 801–823. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263119000731>
- Lee, W. H. (2020). *Global language and local imagination: On the ideologizing process of English in the Taiwanese context* [Doctoral dissertation, National Taiwan Normal University]. NDLTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/g2v762>
- Lenneberg, E. H. (1967). *The biological foundations of language*. Wiley.
- Liao, G. (2018, September 16). *Report: Taiwan should be cautious about making English a 2nd official language*. Taiwan News. <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3531320>
- Lin, H. Y. (2020). The impact of global English: Perceptions of English promotion, English education and the ELT industry in Taiwan. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 24(1), 102–140. <https://www.elejournals.com/asian-efl-journal/volume-24-issue-1-january-2020/>
- Lin, H. Y., Hung, M., & Wang, H. J. (2016). The critical period hypothesis revisited: An investigation of Taiwanese university EFL learners' production of two English consonants. *Arab World English Journal*, 7(2), 417–428. <https://awej.org/images/AllIssues/Volume7/Volume7Number2june/28.pdf>
- Lin, J. (2005, November 20). *Some foreigners may be illegal due to ignorance: CLA*. Taipei Times. <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2005/11/20/2003280914>
- Lu, W. Y. (2017). "Teaching" English in kindergarten?: An experiment in integrating English into early childhood curriculum. *The Elementary Education Journal*, 64(4), 46–58. [https://doi.org/10.6701/TEEJ.201712\\_64\(4\).0003](https://doi.org/10.6701/TEEJ.201712_64(4).0003)
- Ministry of Education, Taiwan. (2018, December 17). *Implement in full scale bilingualization of Taiwan's educational system; cultivate bilingual talents to bring Taiwan to the world*. <https://English.moe.gov.tw/cp-13-17790-80201.html>
- Ministry of Education, Taiwan. (2024). *Short-term tutorial center information management system*. <https://bsb.kh.edu.tw/>
- Muhammad, H. (2015). Myth and ideology construction in Indonesia television advertising: A semiotic based approach. *International Journal of Communication and Media Studies*, 5(1), 1–14. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/132584326.pdf>
- Pao, H. C. (2019). *Exploring the role of English cram schools in Taiwan – A case study on four private language schools in Taichung* [Master's thesis, National Changhua University of Education]. NDLTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/42fb67>
- Pei, Z., & Qin, K. (2019). The younger, the better? A multi-factorial approach to understanding age effects on EFL phonological attainment. *Journal of Language and Education*, 5(1), 29–48. <https://doi.org/10.17323/2411-7390-2019-5-1-29-48>
- Premier seeks easing of rules barring English. (2018, September 29). *Taipei Times*. <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2018/09/29/2003701369>
- Quartly, J. (2000, February 27). *Illegal educators*. *Taipei Times*. <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/feat/archives/2000/02/27/0000025850>
- Rehman, K. U., Rafique, K., & Ali, M. (2023). Role of language in TV advertisements of Pakistan. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 13(1), 141–162. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368607583\\_Role\\_of\\_Language\\_in\\_TV\\_Advertisements\\_of\\_Pakistan](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368607583_Role_of_Language_in_TV_Advertisements_of_Pakistan)
- Rigby, K. A. (2021). *Evolution and impact of English language policy in Taiwan* [Undergraduate thesis, University of Mississippi]. Honors Theses. [https://egrove.olemiss.edu/hon\\_thesis/1732](https://egrove.olemiss.edu/hon_thesis/1732)
- Rüdiger, S., Leimgruber, J., & Tseng, M. I. L. (2022). English in Taiwan: Expanding the scope of corpus-based research on East Asian Englishes. *English Today*, 39(2), 100–109. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078422000062>
- Seilhamer, M. F. (2019). *Gender, neoliberalism and distinction through linguistic capital: Taiwanese narratives of struggle and strategy*. *Multilingual Matters*. <https://portal.igpublish.com/iglibrary/reader/NBNIB0006282/1>

- Shariq, M. (2020). Tools and techniques used in the language of advertisements: The linguistic perspective. *Media Watch*, 11(3), 565–580. <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/74103#>
- Shelton, P. (2024, May 15). *Taiwan's bilingual 2030 policy*. EUROVIEW. <https://euroview.ecct.com.tw/category-inside.php?id=1950>
- Singleton, D., & Le 'sniewska, J. (2021). The critical period hypothesis for L2 acquisition: An unfalsifiable embarrassment? *Languages*, 6(3), 149. <https://www.mdpi.com/2226-471X/6/3/149>
- Strid, J. E. (2017). The myth of the critical period. *TESOL Journal*, 8(3), 700–715. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.296>
- Taiwan Academy for Information Association. (2023). *2023 Taiwan internet report*. <https://report.twnic.tw/2023/en/index.html>
- Thomas, B., & Chou, C. P. (2023). The motivations of foreign teachers in Taiwan's private preschool institutions. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 12(1), 41–56. <https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrse.2023.6>
- Tiun, H. K. (2020). Mother tongues first: Planning Taiwanese native languages education policy for language revitalization. *Journal of Research in Education Sciences*, 65(1), 175–200.
- Tran, T. T. (2020). The myth of “the earlier the better” in foreign language learning or the optimal age to learn a foreign language. *NU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 36(1), 22–36. <https://doi.org/10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4496>
- van Leeuwen, T. & Jewitt, C. (Eds.). (2001). *The handbook of visual analysis*. Sage.
- Wang, H. J. (2022). *The influence of foreign language learning anxiety on foreign language learning motivation of primary school students the moderating effect of teachers' teaching styles* [Master's thesis, National Taiwan Ocean University]. NDLTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/g7wrw9>
- Wang, W. H. (2024). *A critical discourse analysis of the ideology of bilingual policy 2030 in Taiwan* [Master's thesis, National Chung Cheng University]. NDLTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/4t96er>
- Wang, Y. W. (2018). *A case study of children's experiential curriculum in an English immersion preschool* [Master's thesis, The University of Taipei]. NDLTD Taiwan. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/44q26p>
- Workforce Development Agency, Ministry of Labor. (2016, November 16). *Can cram schools assign foreign language teachers to teach at kindergarten or pre-school?* [https://ezworktaiwan.wda.gov.tw/en/News\\_Content.aspx?n=35C4C6202979ECD0&sms=2D58889BB41F75D7&s=B0423D8FF5E3D0C8](https://ezworktaiwan.wda.gov.tw/en/News_Content.aspx?n=35C4C6202979ECD0&sms=2D58889BB41F75D7&s=B0423D8FF5E3D0C8)
- Yang, M. (2024, June 24). *Taiwan's student numbers plunging, report says*. Taipei Times. <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2024/06/24/2003819802>
- 104 Job Bank. (2024). *Find your ideal job in Taiwan*. <https://www.104.com.tw/expats/>