Taiwanese EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Designs of Contextualized Vocabulary and Grammar Instruction

Chin-Wen Chien
National Tsing Hua University, chinwenc@ms24.hinet.net

Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Elementary Education Commons, and the Elementary Education and Teaching Commons

Find similar works at: https://stars.library.ucf.edu/jele

University of Central Florida Libraries http://library.ucf.edu

Recommended Citation

Taiwanese EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Designs of Contextualized Vocabulary and Grammar Instruction

Abstract

This case study used documents, observations, and questionnaires to explore nineteen participants' perception and designs of contextualized vocabulary and grammar instruction. This study has the following major findings. First, although the analysis of the questionnaires revealed that participants had better perceptions in learning and teaching vocabulary in context, they struggled in designing authentic contexts during the co-planning process. Participants' status, teaching experience, and hours of English instruction affected their perceptions. Secondly, there was a lack of coherence of tasks and clear directions on completing the tasks based on the authentic language contexts. A model on contextualized vocabulary and grammar instruction was proposed for English teachers' lesson planning and activity designs.

Keywords: authentic, context, contextualized instruction, grammar instruction, vocabulary instruction

Taiwanese EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Designs of Contextualized Vocabulary and Grammar Instruction

Introduction

In traditional vocabulary instruction, many teachers show learners word cards with associated pictures or definitions (Allen, 2006; Bromley, 2007; Kibby, 1989). Teachers design word plays such as activities or games for learners to become familiar with the vocabulary in terms of word form and meanings (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008). These isolated word practices are insufficient because learners may not be able to acquire knowledge in word use so they cannot use the vocabulary with the correct grammatical structure in daily life to express themselves. Hence, learning words from context is crucial for vocabulary development (Allen, 2006; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2004).

Pre- and in-service English teachers should be trained with a strong understanding of vocabulary development, instructional strategies on word and sentence instruction, and word-learning strategies (Blachowicz et al., 2006; Boyd et al., 2012). More emphasis on vocabulary instruction is called for in teacher preparation programs (Hedrick et al., 2004; Zhang, 2008).

This study aims to explore Taiwanese EFL teachers' perceptions and designs of vocabulary and grammar instruction in context. The study addressed the following three issues. First, what were Taiwanese EFL pre- and in-service teachers' perceptions of contextualized vocabulary and grammar instruction before and after the study? Secondly, what were the features or problems of their lesson plans? Third, what problems did Taiwanese EFL pre- and in-service teachers face when designing and implementing such lessons? Suggestions on effective professional development programs for pre- and in-service teachers on designing contextualized vocabulary and grammar instruction are provided.

Literature Review

Contextualized is defined as "the linguistic and experiential situation in which a piece of language occurs" (Nunan, 1999; p. 304). The need to contextualize English learning has been widely addressed (Kang, 1995). Grant and Wong (2003) called for making meaning for students by contextualizing teaching, in which language teachers engage their learners with the instruction for the target language to occur through building background and connecting with their prior experiences and what they have learned from their homes, community, and school (Tran, 2014). English should be presented and taught in an authentic context, so learners can be aware of a key word in the context of sentences and identify the use of that particular word in sentences (Al-Jarf, 2007; Blachowicz, 1987; Boyd et al., 2012; Feldman & Kinsella, 2005). Explicit vocabulary instruction can help learners acquire their vocabulary

knowledge (Nelson & Stage, 2007; Zaid, 2009). Language teachers should include definitional, contextual, and usage information when explicitly teaching EFL learners vocabulary words (Markham, 1989; Sedita, 2005; Stahl, 1999; Sternberg & Powell, 1983).

Word and grammatical knowledge is situated (Nagy, 1995). Knowing a word involves much more than knowing a definition. Word knowledge is generally recognized as "the syntactic frames in which a word occurs, the word's collocational potential, its register, potential morphological relationships, and its semantic relationships with other words" (Nagy, 1995, p. 11). Word knowledge includes word form, meaning, and use (Nation, 2001).

Grammar used to be taught under traditional PPP (presentation-practice-production) (Vornanen, 2008). In this method, grammar items are first presented and learners practice using these grammar items through exercises. Then learners are encouraged to use the item freely during the production stage. However, Ellis (1992) criticized this approach in that the exercises during the practice stage do not actually facilitate learners' learning and transfer the grammatical knowledge into the later production stage.

Ellis (2001) proposed two types of Form-focused instruction in language instruction. While Focus on forms (FonFs) refers to "the more traditional way where the aim is to teach grammatical forms effectively by going through grammar items one by one and grammar is very likely to be covered on separate grammar sessions," Focus on form (FonF) gives grammar "a more secondary role through meaning-focused activities and grammar-tasks place value for social interaction between the learners" (Ellis, 2001, pp. 13-15). In order to equip learners with grammatical knowledge, Ur (2012) recommended eight types of grammar exercise beginning with awareness; controlled drills; controlled responses through sentence completion, rewrites, or translation; meaningful drills; guided meaningful practice; structure-based free sentence composition; structure-based discourse composition; and free discourse.

For word instruction, scholars proposed two types of teaching methods. The first type is the context method in which words are presented in the context of a written sentence emphasizing the meaning and usage as well as visual analysis of words. The second type is the minimal context method in which words are presented in isolation with minimal attention to the words' usage and visual characteristics of the words (Kibby, 1989).

Francis and Simpson (2003) used a questionnaire to analyze 110 college students' beliefs about word knowledge and their performance on a vocabulary acquisition task. The college students responded that vocabulary words were rarely taught in class by being used in sentences by their teachers or other students. Word and grammar study seemed to have no

relevance to learners' communication and daily life. In Watts' (1995) study, English teachers did not provide their learners with opportunities for practice beyond workbook activities. Such word exercises did not seem to constitute meaningful practice.

In addition to teaching words or grammar in context, English teachers should create language and word-rich environments where word use and English are noted (Nagy et al., 1985). Under such an environment, learners are encouraged to use the designated words and sentence patterns meaningfully and in context by engaging in activities and tasks (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008; Blachowicz et al., 2006; Brabham & Villaume, 2002; Bromley, 2004; Thelen, 1986; Zhang, 2008). Lane and Allen (2010) suggested that teachers model sophisticated vocabulary use and integrate vocabulary into classroom routines and different content areas. Learners already know a word and phrase such as "feel happy," so teachers can use synonyms such as *glad*, *cheerful*, and *delighted*. Teachers model the use of vocabulary in context so learners can be aware that one of these words could be a more appropriate choice than another.

A limited number of empirical studies explore vocabulary and grammar instruction in context. Bild and Swain (1989) used cloze tests and storytelling tasks designed in both context-reduced and context-embedded formats to analyze 47 eighth graders' performance in Canada. These three groups included 16 English unilingual students, 16 bilingual Italian and English speaking students, and 15 bilingual students speaking a non-Romance Indo-European language and English. The data analysis concluded that bilingual students performed better than unilingual Anglophone students regardless of context-reduced or context-embedded formats.

The observations of 23 upper-elementary classrooms in Scott, Jamieson-Noel, and Asselin's (2003) study revealed that teachers employed sentences, passages, worksheets, discussions, pictures, or games for contextual information during vocabulary and sentence instruction. Moreover, compared to traditional instruction (words and definitions), extended and rich instruction (word meanings and diverse contexts) of fourth graders in McKeown et al.'s (1985) study outperformed in vocabulary knowledge tests. A program called "word wizard" helped these learners to be aware of the instructed words outside of the class and to use these words on their own.

In Kang's (1995) experimental study on 103 elementary school fifth graders in South Korea, in addition to regular classroom instruction, learners in a computer-based context (CC), employing the computer-based word-for-word (CW) and the computer-based word-for-word plus picture (CP), outperformed learners in paper and pencil (P&P) in terms of

definition recall, listening comprehension, and knowledge transfer. Under CC, vocabulary was presented and taught in a context prior to introducing definitions, utilizing visual, aural, and sentence contexts, the organization of instruction around common themes, and the provision of meaningful, situation-based tasks as practice activities. Hence, Kang (1995) concluded that the context-embedded approach to vocabulary learning was the most effective in promoting learners' knowledge transfer, listening comprehension, and long-term recall of vocabulary definitions.

The analysis of a questionnaire in Hedrick et al., (2004) revealed that there was a huge discrepancy between elementary school teachers' beliefs about vocabulary learning and their instructional practices for supporting vocabulary in social studies. These teachers were aware of the relationship between vocabulary learning and conceptual understanding. However, they seldom asked their students to write sentences with new vocabulary. Lu's (2017) survey of 20 ESL teachers in the United States mirrored Hedrick et al.'s (2004) study. ESL teachers' beliefs about vocabulary teaching were inconsistent with their instructional practice. Lai (2005) also used a questionnaire to explore 20 Taiwanese senior high school English teachers' beliefs and practice on vocabulary instruction. Only a limited number of partially contextualized vocabulary learning activities were employed among these teachers, such as "learn words in context," "vocabulary exercises," or "use words in real-life situations." Hence, although teachers might know the theoretical understanding about the importance of vocabulary development, they might know little about how to transfer such knowledge and understanding into effective classroom practice (Wasik, 2010).

This study moves beyond the traditional concept of learning words and grammar from the context, the reading or textual text (Kilian, 1995; Lai, 2005; Lubliner & Smetana, 2005). Instead, based on the current research on word and grammar instruction, "word and grammar instruction in context" in this study refers to English teachers' introduction of a context with targeted words and sentence patterns, followed by tasks or activities on words and sentence patterns designed under the authentic language context.

The above empirical studies mainly used questionnaires or tests to explore the influence of teachers' word instruction on learners' performance in vocabulary (e.g. Kang, 1995; Prince, 1996) or teachers' beliefs on word instruction and instructional practice (e.g. Hedrick et al., 2004). This study aimed to collect different types of data including observation, document (i.e., lesson plans, observation sheets), and questionnaires to analyze Taiwanese EFL teachers' perceptions and designs of vocabulary and grammar instruction in context.

Method

This study employed multi-cases and involved collecting and analyzing data from several cases. Individual teachers in this study were sub-cases embedded within two bounded systems, including one practicum program and one research project.

Setting and Participants

Participants in this study were chosen by convenience sampling and involved two educational settings. First, the participants included five student teachers who majored in English instruction and had completed their four-year undergraduate courses and elementary school English education credits in a teacher education program in the northwest of Taiwan. They were working on their practicum during the fall academic semester of 2017. The researcher was their practicum advisor who asked if they were willing to be involved in this study. Five of them agreed to participate in this study.

Participants were doing their practicum in five different schools in Taylor City (pseudonym) in the northwest of Taiwan. The student teachers' demographic details are provided in Table 1. While Ben's school was small in size in a remote area, Ina's school was large in an urban area. The other three schools were medium-sized ranging from 14 to 54 classes.

Table 1

Student Teacher's Demography

Student Teacher	School Size
Ben	small (6 classes)
Amy	medium (54 classes)
Eve	medium (46 classes)
Fay	medium (14 classes)
Ina	large (60 classes)

Another setting was conducted in Harvey City in the northwest of Taiwan. Participants included four elementary school in-service and twelve pre-service English teachers as in Table 2. Liz's school had the largest class sizes of all the three schools.

Table 2

In-Service and Pre-Service Teachers' Demography

In-Service Teacher	School Size/Area	Pre-Service Teachers
Liz	medium (35classes)	Ida, Ann, Kay
Jim	small (6 classes)	Ivy, Joy, Sue
Mag	small (6 classes)	May, Emma, Mia
Zoe	Medium (18 classes)	Eva, Ula, Pag

Participants were invited to join a research project that involved a three-step teaching demonstration conducted in Harvey City, and the researcher was invited to be the advisor to this research project. In-service and pre-service English teachers collaborated on lesson planning in August 2017. First, during a forty-minute pre-observation conference, the in-service English teacher who gave the demonstration was invited to describe his or her lesson plans, the learners' background, activity designs, teaching philosophy. Moreover, this teacher also explained the observation tools, and stated the purpose and focus of the observation. Second, during the observation, the twelve pre-service English teachers observed the in-service English teacher's forty-minute teaching demonstration and took notes on the students' performance and interaction. Finally, the teacher who taught the lesson shared how she or he felt about the demonstration and the pre-service teachers shared their observations and asked the in-service English teachers questions based on their observations.

Data Collection

Data collected in this study included both qualitative and quantitative data. The document and observation fieldnotes accounted for the qualitative data and the questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire and observation fieldnotes were used to answer the first research question about teachers' perceptions. The lesson plans were used to answer the second research question about the features and problems of the lessons. Observation fieldnotes and documents were used to answer the third research question in terms of the problems teachers faced for designing such lessons.

The documents included lesson plans, teaching aids, reflections, as well as the observation sheets that participants completed during the teaching demonstration. A total of ten lesson plans were collected. These ten lesson plans were designed by five student teachers, four in-service teachers, and one co-designed by Ann, Emma, Joy, and Mia.

A total of ten meeting minutes or notes including four during co-planning time between the four elementary school English teachers and twelve pre-service teachers, five

between student teachers and the researcher, and one between the four student teachers (Anna, Emma, Joy, and Mia) and Liz were collected.

The researcher observed ten teaching demonstrations and ten post-observation meetings, including four taught by four elementary school English teachers, five by student teachers, and one co-designed by Ann, Emma, Joy, and Mia.

The questionnaire was developed based on related studies (i.e., Bromley, 2004; Hedrick et al., 2004; Lai, 2005; Lu, 2017) as well as consideration of the elementary school English instruction in Taiwan. This questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part was about participants' demography regarding their teaching and education background. The second part queried the participants' perception of vocabulary and grammar instruction in context. A five-point Likert scale was applied in the questionnaire so that the researcher could collect participants' responses, with a score of 5 representing "strongly agree" and 1 representing "strongly disagree." A total of 21 questionnaires were collected for analysis.

Data Analysis

All of the names in this study are pseudonyms. Observation fieldnotes were transcribed as soon as possible after each observation. Initial transcriptions were checked for accuracy by the participants. Data analysis was an ongoing process. First, the data were coded (e.g., daily routine, camp, survey). Data were later coded categorically and patterns and emergent themes (e.g., co-planning, features) were searched for. Since the focus of the study was not individual cases but similarities across cases, the basic procedure was one of cross-case analysis (Patton, 1990). In order to ensure the validity and relevance of each step of data analysis, the data analysis and results were checked by the researcher's colleague for peer review.

Results

Based on the data analysis, four major issues were discussed in terms of perceptions of contextualized vocabulary and grammar instruction, features and problems of lesson plans, problems faced during co-planning, observation, and post-observation conferences.

Perceptions of Contextualized Vocabulary and Grammar Instruction. As revealed in Table 3, participants had better perceptions in "learning and teaching vocabulary in context" ($M = 4.5$, i = 0.7), followed by "word play and tasks" ($M = 4.4$, $SD = 0.7$). Participants' perceptions in "theories on learning and teaching in context" and "awareness of word acquisition" were the lowest with a mean of only 3.5. The median and mode for these statements were four (4), and it indicated that participants' had moderate awareness and understanding of contextualized instruction.

Table 3

Participants' Perceptions on Contextualized Instruction

Statements and Perceptions	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	**Mode**
theories on learning and teaching in context	3.5	0.9	4	4
input-rich environment on learning and teaching in context	3.7	1	4	4
model learning and teaching in context	3.5	0.8	4	4
context-embedded activities and tasks	4	0.9	4	4
awareness of word knowledge	3.9	1.1	4	4
awareness of word acquisition	3.5	0.7	4	4
word play and tasks	4.4	0.7	4	4
learning and teaching vocabulary in context	4.5	0.7	4	4
meaning-focused grammar activities	3.9	1	4	4
theories on grammar instruction	3.9	0.9	4	4

English teachers' beliefs can influence their pedagogical practices (Niu & Andrews, 2012). In this study, participants seemed to have positive perceptions in contextualized vocabulary and grammar instruction and word play. Such findings were consistent with Niu and Andrews' (2012) survey research on Chinese EFL teachers' shared beliefs on vocabulary pedagogy, particularly in vocabulary instruction and communication, and word self-study.

As revealed in Table 4, participants' status influenced their perceptions in "input-rich environment on learning and teaching in context" (.496) and "model learning and teaching in context" (.405). Moreover, participants' teaching experience and hours of instruction affected their awareness of word acquisition (.441 and .321, respectively).

Table 4

Relationship Between Factors and Perceptions

Factors	Statements and Perception
Status	. input-rich environment on learning and teaching in context (r=.496) . model learning and teaching in context (r=.405)
teaching experiences	awareness of word acquisition (r=.441)
hours of instruction	awareness of word acquisition (r=.321)

In this study, participants' differences influenced their perceptions of contextualized vocabulary and grammar instruction. Such a finding was in accord with Zhang's (2008) study

that Chinese EFL teachers' individual differences impacted their beliefs in vocabulary teaching and classroom practice, particularly their academic background, research interests, and experiences of staying in English-speaking countries.

Problems Faced During Co-Planning. The two biggest problems that participants faced during co-planning was "brainstorming meaningful context" and "designing communicative and meaningful activities based on the major context." Excerpt 1 revealed the problem that Zoe, Eva, Ula, and Pag faced when they co-planned for the topic of the daily routine. They tried to brainstorm some contexts, such as a survey or ideal day. But these contexts were neither meaningful nor related to young elementary school learners' lives.

Excerpt 1: Discussions on Our Daily Schedule
>   *Zoe: I plan to make a survey and ask my students to interview each other.*
>   *Researcher: A survey is just a type of drill practice. Under what circumstance will your students ask one another "What time does he/she ___?"*
>   *Eva: How about students make their own ideal day?*
>   *Ula: When will students have their own ideal day?*
>   *Zoe: My school will have a field trip. They can plan their own ideal day, such as getting up at ten, going to bed at twelve?*
>   *Researcher: Their own ideal day will not exist in elementary school students' real lives. When they have their own field trip, they have to follow a certain schedule?*
>   *Pag: Thinking of a meaningful context related to young learners' lives is not easy.*
>   *Eva: At first, I thought it was easy to design a meaningful context for the topic "daily schedule," but it was not as easy as I expected.*
>   *Zoe: I agree with Pag and Eva.*

Teachers should make the lesson become meaningful for their learners through contextualized teaching and curriculum based on the experiences and skills of learners' homes, communities, and life (Tran, 2014). Zoe planned to use a survey as the practice for the topic "daily routine." However, the researcher and Ula raised the question regarding the contextualized lesson. Instead of drill practice, language teachers should engage learners with instruction on the new language through connecting to learners' prior experience.

Excerpt 2 is Fay's problem of designing a meaningful context on "What are they?" and "They are ___ (animals)." Ben and Amy suggested showing pictures, but Fay identified the problem of some animals being zoo animals and some pets. Fay also identified the problem of the learners' cognitive development. Eva and Fay agreed that designing a meaningful context for simple sentences such as "What are they?" and "They are ___

(animals)" was challenging. Ina later suggested that an art gallery might be a more meaningful context for the sentence patterns "What are they?" and "They are ___ (animals)."

Excerpt 2: Fay's Context Designs

> *Fay: The sentence patterns are "What are they?" and "They are ___ (animals)." I have difficulties in designing an authentic context for these two sentence patterns.*
> *Ben: You can show them pictures taken from the zoo. Students can ask "What are they?"*
> *Fay: But you will not see "dogs" and "cats" in the zoo.*
> *Amy: How about showing a part of the picture of a dog or a cat?*
> *Fay: When will students see a part of a picture of a dog or a cat?*
> *Eva: I thought these two sentences were easy. But in fact, it is not easy to design an authentic context. Young learners know dogs and cats in Chinese. They will not ask the question, "What are they?"*
> *Fay: Eva, I agree with you.*
> *Ina: How about artwork based on abstract expressionism? You can post the artwork around the classroom as in an art gallery. Young learners might not be sure about the artwork, so they can ask "What are they?"*
> *Janet: Good idea.*

When learning and teaching a vocabulary, context determines the meaning of a word. Vague or ambiguous contexts will not be conducive for learners to accurately acquire the meanings of a new word (Zaid, 2009). In Excerpt 2, Ben and Amy's brainstorming on contexts did not supply sufficient support for the meaning of the word. Hence, contextual presentation of the words should be strongly advocated

Excerpt 3 reveals the conversation regarding the coherence of activity designs based on meaningful contexts. Ben shared the activity that he was going to use after the word and sentence instruction. However, Amy and Eve criticized the incoherence of the activity designs.

Excerpt 3: Ben's Activity Design

> *Ben: After the sentence instruction and vocabulary review, I want to ask students to do message sender. I will say a sentence to the first student in each group and he or she passes on the sentence to the second student.*
> *Amy: But how is this activity related to the original scenario on Judy's Life?*
> *Eve: You did not use the original context on Judy's Life to design your follow-up activity.*
> *Ben: Designing all the activities based on the original context was not easy.*

Language teachers should provide learners with multiple encounters with the vocabulary word, so learners will develop a more accurate understanding of the word's meaning and use (Zhang, 2008). In Excerpt 3, Ben aimed to design activities for his learners to practice the vocabulary; however, his activity "message sender" was identified as not related to the authentic context. Ben's activity "message sender" might not be an appropriate context for learners to retrieve and use the key words.

Features and Problems of Lesson Plans. Of all the ten lesson plans, two lesson plans did not include authentic and meaningful contexts based on the topic "daily routine" as in Table 5. Mia wrote in her reflection about Zoe's lesson plan, "The field trip was not included in the lesson plan eventually. No authentic and meaningful context was designed."

Table 5

Lesson Plans

Topics	context	activities	contextualized
daily routine	Email on daily routine	1. review	
		2. email	v
		3. unscrambled sentences	v
		4. read email	v
		5. poster designs	v
daily routine	sports day	1. greetings	
		2. sports day	v
		3. role play	v
		4. sentence patterns	
		5. drill practices	
		6. worksheet	
daily routine	dialogues in line, menu in malls	1. memorizing game	
		2. dialogues in line	v
		3. eating out	v
		4. role play	v
		5. homework	
daily routine	x	1. review vocabulary	
		2. review he and she	
		3. Bingo	
		4. write daily routine	
		5. interview	
		6. homework	

Shopping	DM	1. Ads on Facebook, ,	v
		2. vocabulary instruction	
		3. money and mission	v
		4. shopping mission	v
		5. review	
Who's talking	Classroom scenario act out	1. scenario acting out	v
		2. voc instruction	
		3. electronic shock	
		4. finding the missing one	v
Food	Instagram	1. Instagram	v
		2. listening exercise	v
		3. Instagram spelling	v
		4. Spy exercise	v
		5. homework	
Shopping	Christmas shopping	Christmas decorations	v
		Ad price	v
		ask the price	v
		the great shopper	v
		Wrap up	
What's this?	Art gallery	art gallery	v
		vocabulary review	
		spelling game	v
		animals' paws	v
Health	Health center	Health center	v
		voc instruction	
		a little nurse	v
		sentence instruction	
		help the people	v
		reader's theater	v

Meaningful contexts were included in the other eight lesson plans. These contexts included conversation in emails or Line, sports days, DM, Instagram, or an art gallery. Liz used her conversation with her coworker on discussing time to have lunch via Line. Kay wrote in her reflection, "The Line conversation was authentic." Liz's vocabulary instruction was based on the Line conversation. Such vocabulary instruction is anchored in a variety of rich contexts including connections to other words in sentences, discussions about the context in which the key vocabulary word appears and attention to word structure (Bromley, 2004).

As for the topic "health," Ina wrote in her lesson plans as follows: "Today, David and his classmates are going to visit our school. David is very excited. He jumps and runs everywhere. Oops, David falls on the ground." Then David goes to the "Health Center" as in the PowerPoint slide in Figure 1. The context about David's incident and the health center was related to Taiwanese EFL young learners' school life. Two or three examples should be provided for learners to grasp the meaning during vocabulary instruction. The context could provide learners with examples of health issues. These examples could be drawn from various contexts (Feldman & Kinsella, 2005).

Figure 1

PowerPoint Slide on Health Center

As for the topic "Food," Amy wrote the following scenario as the context in her lesson plan as follows:

> *"Vicky, Mei Ling, Linda, and Grace like to go to the coffee shops around C. Y. Elementary School. Vicky always goes to City Café on Tuesday and Thursday, and she likes coffee. On Friday, you'll see Mei Ling sitting in Starbucks and having some hot chocolate. In addition, she goes to Louisa Café every Wednesday. For Linda, spending time at 85 Café every Sunday is the best thing! And Grace likes to drink some lemonade at Louisa Café on Monday. Besides, she likes to have some milk at Let's Café every Saturday."*

The context that Amy designed on reviewing days of the week and food was related to her learners' lives around cafés in the local community. English is presented in an authentic context and young learners can examine the key word in the context of a string of sentences that can be used to exemplify the use of that particular word (Al-Jarf, 2007).

Of all the activities designed in these ten lessons, all of them included warm-up, presentation, practice, production, and wrap-up. Reviews on vocabulary and explanations on homework were designed for the warm-up and wrap-up activities respectively in all these lesson plans. Both in-service and pre-service teachers taught the sentence patterns during the presentations. A total of 22 activities for practice and production were designed based on the original context introduced at the beginning of the class, such as "unscramble the sentences," Little Detective," or "eating out" in Table 3. This PPP (presentation, practice, production) approach has been widely used by language teachers (Harmer, 2012; Vornanen, 2016). The form is presented with the meaning and use of the new language. Next, learners practice it through drilling or controlled practice. Finally, when the learners become familiar with the new language, they are asked to produce their own sentences using what they have just learned.

Figure 2 is the Little Detective worksheet. Fay asked her students to read the text in the paws on the artwork around the classroom and complete the worksheet. It was based on the context "art gallery" designed for "What are they?" and "They are __" sentence patterns.

Figure 2

Little Detective Worksheet

Blachowicz and Fisher (2004) suggested that learners should be given opportunities to revisit new words through activities such as games, word search, or worksheets. Learning words from context is crucial in vocabulary development, so learners can be adequately exposed to be familiarized with word meanings.

However, a lack of coherence in activity designs was revealed in the lesson plans. A total of nine activities were not designed based on the original context introduced at the beginning of the class, such as "My Daily Routine." Ann wrote in her reflection about Jim's interview activity, "The sports day context was good and introduced in the beginning of the lesson. However, it was not included in follow-up activities. The interview for my daily routine was not related to sports day."

Jim's activity design on My Daily Routine was just the drill practice, not related to the context "Sports day." Different types of vocabulary building activities should be designed in developing young learners' vocabulary. Practicing vocabulary and sentence patterns in context can enhance learners' vocabulary acquisition with meaningful lexical information (Al-Jarf, 2007).

Problems Revealed During the Observations. Two major problems occurred during the implementations of contextualized vocabulary and sentence instruction in these lesson plans. First, some of the activity designs were too complex and it was not easy for young learners to practice the language in the real context (e.g., Eating out). Young learners were asked to find the same partner and practice the dialogues; however, they were confused about who their partners were and how they could find their partners. Harmer (2012) suggested that teachers should keep their instruction simple and use short simple sentences. Moreover, teachers can also break the instructions down into manageable chunks, so learners can take in information at the same time.

Suggestions were made by the participants in their reflections. Eva wrote in her reflection, "The worksheet on Eating Out could be labeled in different colors, so it would be easier for learners to find their own partners." Ivy wrote, "The directions on the worksheets could be clearer."

Secondly, activities for helping young learners to be engaged could be integrated into the contextualized vocabulary and sentence instructions. Ann wrote in her reflection, "Reading the email can be changed into group activities instead of individual work. Other tasks could be designed for follow-up listening comprehensions, so learners could concentrate on the listening exercise." Kay also wrote, "The poster activity was not related to

the email context, but it was meaningful. The posters could be posted around the classroom and other types of activities could be designed after students have read through all the posters." Learners should be exposed to rich language experience and given scaffolding opportunities to use the language and engaged in word exploration (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2004). Learners should be able to work interactively in tasks to manipulate the word meanings (Bromley, 2004).

Discussion and Implications

Based on the data analysis of documents, observations, and questions, this study has the following three major findings. First, although the analysis of the questionnaires revealed that participants had better perceptions in learning and teaching vocabulary in context, they struggled in designing authentic contexts during the co-planning process. Participants' status, teaching experience, and hours of English instruction affected their perceptions. Hence, concepts and competence on contextualized vocabulary and grammar instruction should be highly integrated into language teacher education programs for both pre- and in-service English teachers. Language teacher education should provide language teachers with a strong knowledge base and competence in vocabulary development and grammatical awareness, an array of instructional strategies, and an appreciation for the role of word and grammatical consciousness (Blachowicz et al., 2006).

Secondly, the analysis of the lesson plans indicated that authentic contexts were not included in two lesson plans on the topic "daily routine and schedule." Warm-up, presentations, practice, production, and wrap-up were included in all the lesson plans. Authentic contexts should be designed for young language learners to use the target language. Shin and Crandall (2014) recommended that an effective contextualized young learner class should involve creating opportunities to use English with a meaningful purpose and link the class instruction with home, community, and local environments.

Finally, there was a lack of coherence of tasks and clear directions on completing the tasks based on the authentic language contexts. Hence, more meaningful tasks on authentic contexts should be designed for learners' engagement in using the vocabulary and sentence patterns. Shin and Crandall (2014) also recommended that an effective contextualized young learner class should involve organizing the classroom to facilitate communication among the children and keeping the language level of the tasks at a comprehensible level, just above their current proficiency level. Most importantly, teachers should have carefully planned and organized instruction with clear directions and classroom management strategies.

Based on the above recent empirical studies and the findings of this study, in order to

help English teachers design contextualized vocabulary and sentence instruction, a model was proposed in Figure 3. First, English teachers' beliefs and perceptions might influence their lesson plan and activity designs and then their instructional practices (Lai, 2005; Lu, 2017; Niu & Andrews, 2012). Gu (2003) proposed the person-task-context-strategy model for language learning. "Person" refers to the influence of learners' individual differences on their learning rate and results, such as intelligence, prior knowledge, learning styles, or motivation. Task is the end product in the learner's mind. Context includes both the learning and language context. While the learning context refers to the learning environment, language context refers to the textual or discourse in which a particular word or structure is used. Strategies mean a series of actions learners take in order to facilitate the completion of a learning task. English teachers' lesson plans and activity designs and classroom practice were influenced by these four factors.

Figure 3

Model on Contextualized Vocabulary and Grammar Instruction
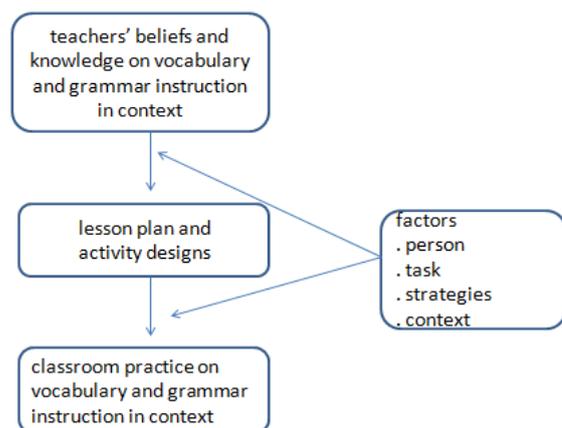
Limitations

This current study has limitations in that it confines the scope of research to a certain context. First, the participants were recruited by convenience sampling through the researcher's personal network under one single teacher education program, and the cases were all within a few elementary schools in two northwest cities in Taiwan. The small number of the participants was the limitation. Not all student teachers, in-service, or pre-service teachers in other educational contexts are familiar with contextualized vocabulary and grammar instruction. Hence, the results may not be transferrable to other educational systems, even though this study yielded significant results and implications. Therefore, it would be meaningful to conduct similar studies in other language teacher education programs in Taiwan or in other countries where educational contexts might differ from this study.

Secondly, this study has the methodological drawback of employing the case study. A further experimental study with a control group is necessary. Participants could be asked to teach the same topic based on contextualized lessons in the experimental group and the traditional non-contextualized lessons in the control group. Such a further study can compare and contrast participants' perceptions and classroom practice using these two types of lesson plans.

Conclusions

This study used documents, observations, and questionnaires to explore nineteen participants' perception and designs of contextualized vocabulary and grammar instruction in multiple cases. The findings of this empirical study might be taken into account in language teaching practice, particularly word and grammar instruction in context. Moreover, the model on contextualized vocabulary and grammar instruction can be proposed for English teachers' lesson planning and activity designs. Such a model can make a useful contribution to the issue of language teacher education.

References

Al-Jarf, R. (2007). Teaching vocabulary to EFL college students online. *Call-EJ Online*, *8*(2), 8-2.

Allen, J. (2006). Too little or too much? What do we know about making vocabulary instruction meaningful. *Voices from the Middle*, *13*(4), 16-19.

Berne, J. I., & Blachowicz, C. L. (2008). What reading teachers say about vocabulary instruction: Voices from the classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, *62*(4), 314-323.

Bild, E. R., & Swain, M. (1989). Minority language students in a French immersion programme: Their French proficiency. *Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development*, *10*(3), 255-274.

Blachowicz, C. L. (1987). Vocabulary instruction: What goes on in the classroom?. *The Reading Teacher*, *41*(2), 132-137.

Blachowicz, C. L., & Fisher, P. (2004). Vocabulary lessons. *Educational Leadership*, *61*(6), 66-69.

Blachowicz, C. L., Fisher, P. J., Ogle, D., & Watts-Taffe, S. (2006). Vocabulary: Questions from the classroom. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *41*(4), 524-539.

Boyd, F. B., Sullivan, M. P., Popp, J. S., & Hughes, M. (2012). Vocabulary instruction in the disciplines. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *56*(1), 18-20.

Brabham, E. G., & Villaume, S. K. (2002). Vocabulary instruction: Concerns and visions.(Questions and answers). *The Reading Teacher*, *56*(3), 264-269.

Bromley, K. (2004). Rethinking vocabulary instruction. *Language and Literacy Spectrum*, *14*, 3-12.

Bromley, K. (2007). Nine things every teacher should know about words and vocabulary instruction. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *50*(7), 528-537.

Ellis, R. (1992). *Second language acquisition and language pedagogy*. Longdunn.

Ellis, R. (2001). *Form-focused instruction and second language learning*. Blackwell Publishers.

Feldman, K., & Kinsella, K. (2005). *Narrowing the language gap: The case for explicit vocabulary instruction*. Scholastic.

Francis, M. A., & Simpson, M. L. (2003). Using theory, our intuitions, and a research study to enhance students' vocabulary knowledge. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *47*(1), 66-78.

Grant, E. A., & Wong, S. D. (2003). Barriers to literacy for language-minority learners: An argument for change in the literacy education profession. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 46*(5), 386-394.

Gu, P. Y. (2003). Vocabulary learning in a second language: Person, task, context and strategies. *TESL-EJ*, *7*(2), 1-25.

Harmer, J. (2012). *Essential teacher knowledge: Core concepts in English language teaching.* Pearson Education Limited.

Hedrick, W. B., Harmon, J. M., & Linerode, P. M. (2004). Teachers' beliefs and practices of vocabulary instruction with social studies textbooks in grades 4-8. *Reading Horizons*, *45*(2), 103.

Kang, S. H. (1995). The effects of a context-embedded approach to second-language vocabulary learning. *System*, *23*(1), 43-55.

Kibby, M. W. (1989). Teaching sight vocabulary with and without context before silent reading: A field test of the "focus of attention" hypothesis 2. *Journal of Reading Behavior, 21*(3), 261-278.

Kilian, A. S. (1995). *Learning vocabulary from context: effects of focusing attention on individual words during reading*. Center for the Study of Reading.

Lai, Y. L. (2005). *Teaching vocabulary learning strategies: Awareness, beliefs, and practices. A survey of Taiwanese EFL senior high school teachers.* (Unpublished MA Thesis), The University of Essex, Essex, England.

Lane, H. B., & Allen, S. A. (2010). The vocabulary-rich classroom: Modeling sophisticated word use to promote word consciousness and vocabulary growth. *The Reading Teacher*, *63*(5), 362-370. http://www.readingrockets.org/article/vocabulary-rich-classroom-modeling-sophisticated-word-use-promote-word-consciousness-and

Lu, D. (2017). *Teachers' beliefs and practices: ESL teachers' perceptions of vocabulary instruction* [Unpublished master's thesis]. St. Cloud State University.

Lubliner, S., & Smetana, L. (2005). The effects of comprehensive vocabulary instruction on Title I students' metacognitive word-learning skills and reading comprehension. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *37*(2), 163-200.

Markham, P. (1989). Effects of contextual versus definitional computer-assisted vocabulary instruction on immediate and long-term vocabulary tention of advanced ESL students. *Educational Psychology*, *9*(2), 121-126.

McKeown, M. G., Beck, I. L., Omanson, R. C., & Pople, M. T. (1985). Some effects of the nature and frequency of vocabulary instruction on the knowledge and use of words. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 522-535.

Nagy, W. E. (1995). *On the role of context in first-and second-language vocabulary learning*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Center for the Study of Reading.

Nagy, W. E., Herman, P. A., & Anderson, R. C. (1985). Learning words from context. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 233-253.

Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press.

Nelson, J. R., & Stage, S. A. (2007). Fostering the development of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension though contextually-based multiple meaning vocabulary instruction. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *30*(1), 1-22.

Niu, A., & Andrews, S. (2012). Commonalities and discrepancies in L2 teachers' beliefs and practices about vocabulary pedagogy: A small culture perspective. *TESOL Journal*, *6*, 134-154.

Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching & learning*. Heinle & Heinle.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Sage.

Prince, P. (1996). Second language vocabulary learning: The role of context versus translations as a function of proficiency. *The Modern Language Journal*, *80*(4), 478-493.

Scott, J. A., Jamieson-Noel, D., & Asselin, M. (2003). Vocabulary instruction throughout the day in twenty-three Canadian upper-elementary classrooms. *The Elementary School Journal*, *103*(3), 269-286.

Sedita, J. (2005). Effective vocabulary instruction. *Insights on Learning Disabilities*, *2*(1), 33-45.

Shin, J. K., & Crandall, J. (2014). *Teaching young learners English: From theory to practice*. National Geographic Learning.

Stahl, A. (1999). Vocabulary development. Brookline Books.

Sternberg, R. J., & Powell, J. S. (1983). Comprehending verbal comprehension. *American Psychologist, 38*, 878-893.

Thelen, J. N. (1986). Vocabulary instruction and meaningful learning. *Journal of Reading*, *29*(7), 603-609.

Tran, Y. K. (2014). Professional development and teacher efficacy: Contexts of what, when, and how in serving ELLs. *Multicultural Education Review*, *6*(2), 81-116.

Ur, P. (2012). *A course in English language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Vornanen, R. (2016). *Grammar instruction in Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

Wasik, B. A. (2010). What teachers can do to promote preschoolers' vocabulary development: Strategies from an effective language and literacy professional development coaching model. *The Reading Teacher*, *63*(8), 621-633.

Watts, S. M. (1995). Vocabulary instruction during reading lessons in six classrooms. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, *27*(3), 399-424.

Zaid, A. M. (2009). A comparison of inferencing and meaning-guessing of new lexicon in contexts versus non-context vocabulary presentation. *The Reading Matrix, 9*(1), 56-66.

Zhang, W. (2008). *In search of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Georgia State University.