

<sup>1</sup>Jingru Wang<sup>2</sup>Aminuddin  
Hassan

# A Comparative Study on Two Kindergarten Teachers' Phrase-Open Questions and Behaviour-Specific Praises



**Abstract:** - The quality and ability of students are greatly influenced by the words and actions of teachers, particularly those in kindergarten, who have a positive effect on the development of their mental and physical well-being. Investigating the language used by kindergarten teachers is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of preschool teaching practices and improving the overall quality of early childhood education. They must meet higher requirements for both phrase-open questioning and behaviour praise. Understanding both elements in the context of kindergarten teachers is vital for fostering the establishment of kindergartens and the progress of preschool instruction in China. Based on the definition of concepts, this study selected 2 kindergarten teachers in M province for sampling, as well as investigated and compared the phrase-open questioning and behavioural praise of kindergarten teachers.

**Keywords:** Kindergarten; Teacher language; Open-ended questions; Ask questions; Behaviour praise.

## Definition of concepts

### 1. Open-ended questioning

In the classroom, young children learn through questioning, typically through group teaching where the teacher asks questions and the children respond. This form of applicable interaction is essential, especially in kindergarten classrooms. The teacher must maintain objectivity while questioning to achieve a fair representation of perspectives (Pengjun W, 2022). Nevertheless, certain preschools that offer early childhood education have encountered difficulties with children not cooperating when asked questions by the teacher. Consequently, the use of simplified questions proves ineffective in engaging and captivating the children. Children may struggle to understand when teachers ask age-inappropriate questions (Lili Z, 2020 & Chengjia H, Yin Y, 2019). Children's capacity to spark interest in learning and facilitate understanding of issues can be stimulated by certain questions, resulting in discussions and analysis among them, ultimately promoting active participation in group learning activities. Thus, formulating appropriate 'how' and 'what' questions is imperative to collective teaching in kindergartens, where the use of teacher's terminology warrants emphasis.

The process of questioning is an essential aspect of teaching at this stage, influenced by Confucius' heuristic teaching and Socrates' midwifery teaching. As a crucial teaching skill, questioning can elevate the teaching quality. Throughout the teaching process, kindergarten teachers can advance the open-ended nature of

<sup>1</sup> Zhanjiang Preschool Education College

[181046804@qq.com](mailto:181046804@qq.com)

<sup>2</sup>Universiti Putra Malaysia

[aminuddin@upm.edu.my](mailto:aminuddin@upm.edu.my)

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questioning by employing good pedagogical language. Generally, there are two types of questions: closed and open-ended. The former typically steers children towards a specific thought process and a definite conclusion (Yiran Z, Qin G, 2022). Meanwhile, the latter tends to foster divergent thinking, without predetermined answers.

A multi-level classification scheme for questions comprises knowledge-based, application, comprehension, analytical, synthesis-based, and evaluation-based questions, along with variations in categorisation and question scope. Early childhood educators must implement appropriate language to encourage open-ended enquiries during group instruction, as this technique can promote greater divergence in children's thought processes. The teacher's language is directly correlated with the utilisation of open-ended questions, which is largely evidenced in their method of response (Qiong W, Biying H, Lin G, 2022 & Doris O, Jennifer F, Sarah F, 2023). Responding to queries usually entails providing both positive and negative replies, delving deeper, and rearranging the data. Varied outcomes can be observed when open-ended questioning is incorporated into teaching. In spite of this, some early childhood educators employ a closed questioning technique in their daily instruction, leading to a lack of enthusiasm among students when they respond to questions. Open-ended questioning can effectively offer clues and scientific motivation to pupils who face challenges or inaccuracies while addressing queries. Additionally, it can lead students towards divergent and profound thinking, thereby bolstering the overall quality of early childhood education.

## 2. Behavioural Praise

The Modern Chinese Dictionary defines behavioural praise as 'publicly acknowledging good deeds'. According to the biography of Su Wu in the Han Book, individuals 'who are virtuous and praiseworthy, and famous around the world, should be praised' (Giannakou K, Soulioti E, Kyprianidou M, 2023). This demonstrates how behavioural praise is primarily intended to acknowledge the actions of others in a manner that the recipient can comprehend and accept. In early childhood education, the language used for teaching is correlated with behavioural praise. The influence on this stems from both subjective and objective elements, as well as defined measures of praise.

Early childhood educators must actively employ both non-verbal and verbal means to affirm, motivate and commend positive behaviour or performance, providing positive assessments to young learners (Silin C, 2021). Scholars involved in the study have categorised praise into three types: individual-, process-, and result-oriented praise<sup>[9]</sup>. The first type pertains to comprehensive evaluations of children, which can thoroughly capture their abilities and personality traits. Examples include phrases such as 'You have done exceptionally well', 'You have shown great bravery', and 'You are very clever'. It is recommended to refrain from utilising the first form of praise, which entails subjective assessments of the child's overall abilities and traits. The second type of praise focuses on evaluating the child's efforts and application of knowledge while learning, as exemplified by phrases like 'You have tried hard', 'You have succeeded in the challenge' or 'You have done your best' (Ya Z, Peng Z, Yuan Q, et al, 2022). The concluding category of praise encompasses a behavioural assessment that furnishes objective feedback on results and is deemed appropriate. Illustrative examples consist of 'You have answered 10 questions correctly' and 'You have scored 100 points'.

Behavioural praise has psychological and pedagogical implications. Existing literature has shown that praise can improve the intrinsic motivation of young children. Moreover, various forms of behavioural praise can positively influence the self-perception and sense of self-identity of young children, as well as their anticipation for the future. These positive outcomes encourage active participation in early childhood teaching and learning activities (Defeng W & Yiyi Z, 2021). Furthermore, this approach can significantly heighten children's eagerness to learn, boost their self-confidence, and foster a sense of esteem and acknowledgement, thus reinforcing their emotional experience and facilitating the development of positive behavioural habits within the learning process. To optimise the effectiveness of behaviour praise, educators should prioritise sincerity and autonomy in their interactions, as this tends to promote higher levels of engagement and innovative thinking amongst the recipients (Faisal J, A. I H, 2023 & Lisa M, Ruddy I M, L. C S, et al, 2023).

In conclusion, this study sought to expand upon the understanding of open-ended questioning and behavioural praise in the language used by kindergarten teachers. Subsequently, it investigated the reliability and validity of using open-ended questioning and behavioural praise in a kindergarten environment and then assessed the internal framework and dimensions of research on the topic. Equally important, in this paper, objective evaluations were used, technical terminologies were explained, and a logical flow of information was maintained with causal connections between statements. The text follows conventional academic structures and maintains a formal register with precise word choice. Consistent citation and footnote style were maintained while also ensuring grammatical accuracy and adhering to language-specific spelling and grammar conventions. Biased language and filler words were deliberately excluded.

### **Testing the Reliability and Validity of Verbal Open-Ended Questioning and Behavioural Praise Methods Utilised by Kindergarten Teachers**

#### 1. Objects of Study

We chose 1156 early childhood teachers as our study participants to perform project and content factor analyses. Electronic questionnaires were distributed and collected through a network platform. A total of 1156 questionnaires were issued, all of which were recovered and deemed valid, resulting in a validity rate of 100.00%. Table 1 itemises the basic data of the research object.

Table 1 Analysis of Project Data from Study Population (n=1156)

Category	Project	Numbers	Percentage (%)
genders	Male	15	1.30
	Female	1141	98.70
years of teaching	≤5	323	27.94
	5-10	393	34.00
	10-20	440	38.06
academic qualifications	High school, junior college and below	93	8.04
	College, Bachelor's	502	43.43

	Degree and above		
	postgraduates	561	48.53
region	Cities	612	52.94
	Towns	345	29.84
	Rural areas	199	17.20
Monthly salaries(RMB)	≤2000	100	8.65
	2000-5000	370	32.00
	6000-8000	686	59.34
Nature of kindergarten	Public kindergartens	901	77.94
	Private kindergartens	255	22.06

## 2. Data processing and analysis

Our study involved the compilation and examination of data using SPSS 23.0 software, which allowed for facilitated item analysis, exploratory factor analysis, reliability and validity analysis.

## 3. Results of the study

### (1) Exploration and validation factor analysis:

Six items were chosen for the study, and a Chi-square test was performed to examine the differences in percentage heights among the items. The data collected from kindergarten teachers showed that there were no significant differences between the items ( $p > 0.05$ ).

By studying the exploratory factors pertaining to phrasing-open-ended questioning and behavioural praise among kindergarten teachers, it was discovered that there were interoperability factors between the variables that satisfied the variance analysis. Four dimensions exist for categorizing questioning style: low-level closed, low-level open, high-level closed, and high-level open. Behavioural praise can be categorised into five dimensions: the object of praise, the method of praise, the situation of praise, the nature of praise, and the emotional purpose of praise.

The exploratory factors consisted of 2 dimensions, each containing 9 subdivisions that have been reordered accordingly. Low-level closed questioning was composed of 3 items (A1-A3), while low-level open questioning included 2 items (A4-A5). High-level closed questioning included 3 items (A6-A8), and high-level open questioning included 3 items (A9-A11). Table 2 presents the analysis of the factor loadings.

Table 2 Teachers' open-ended questioning factors (n=1156)

Number of questions	Factors			
	F1	F2	F3	F4
A9	0.885	-	-	-

A10	0.848	-	-	-
A11	0.876	-	-	-
A7	-	0.859	-	-
A8	-	0.808	-	-
A6	-	0.798	-	-
A4	-	-	0.895	-
A5	-	-	0.881	-
A2	-	-	-	0.806
A1	-	-	-	0.769
A3	-	-	-	0.715

Behavioural praise includes the object of praise comprising 2 items (A1-A2), the manner of praise 3 items (A3-A5), the situation of praise 4 items (A6-A9), the time of praise 2 items (A10-A11), and the purpose of praise and affective characteristics 2 items (A12-A13). These were analysed for factor loadings, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Teacher's behavioural praise factors (n=1156)

Number of questions	Factors				
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
A10	0.848	-	-	-	-
A11	0.865	-	-	-	-
A3	-	0.847	-	-	-
A5	-	0.841	-	-	-
A4	-	0.852	-	-	-
A1	-	-	0.823	-	-
A2	-	-	0.832	-	-
A8	-	-	-	0.825	-
A6	-	-	-	0.833	-
A7	-	-	-	0.841	-
A9	-	-	-	0.837	-
A13	-	-	-	-	0.843
A12	-	-	-	-	0.851

Through the KMO experiment and sphericity test, it was demonstrated that each of the fit indicators is satisfactory, with a KMO coefficient of 0.864 and  $\chi^2 = 12.635$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that the study of verbal open-ended questioning and behavioural praise done by kindergarten teachers carries sound structural validity (Table 4).

Table 4 Kindergarten Teachers' Phrase-Open Questioning and Behavioural Praise Model (n=1156)

Test Statistic	Fit Standard or Critical		Test Result	Model Fit
		Value	Data	Judgment
Degrees of Freedom		-	-	-
	$\chi^2$	P<0.05	12.635	yes
	$\chi^2/df$	<5 good (≤2excellent)	3.221	good
Absolute Fit Index	RMSEA	<0.08good (≤0.05excellent)	0.057	good
	GF	>0.80good (≥0.90excellent)	0.94	excellent
	AGFI	>0.80good (≥0.90excellent)	0.916	excellent
	IFI	>0.80good (≥0.90excellent)	0.958	excellent
Incremental Fit Index	TLI	>0.80good (≥0.90excellent)	0.947	excellent
	GFI	>0.80good (≥0.90excellent)	0.933	excellent

## (2) Analysis of Reliability, validity

This research involved graduate students of psychology, doctoral students of education and teaching, researchers in education, directors of kindergarten and ten kindergarten teachers. They assessed the suitability of the abovementioned factors and arrived at a comprehensive conclusion. After conducting an expert validation analysis, it was established that utilising open-ended questioning and behavioural praise by kindergarten teachers is essential in promoting the healthy physical and mental development of young children.

Moreover, it can satisfy the standards of early childhood education development in kindergarten. The investigation analysed the content reliability of kindergarten teachers' language use, specifically in terms of open-ended questioning and behavioural praise. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was revealed to be 0.815. Nine dimensions also met the internal consistency criteria, generating Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values of 0.845, 0.863, 0.884, 0.861, 0.843, 0.881, 0.843, 0.861, and 0.881, respectively. Moreover, 0.843, 0.861, and 0.881 exhibited the same internal consistency within the research.

### The study of kindergarten teachers' language-open-ended questioning and behavioural praise

#### 1. Research objectives

Through this research, it is anticipated that people's comprehension of the terminology used by early childhood educators, particularly kindergarten teachers, will be strengthened. Open-ended questioning and behavioural praise were objectively discussed to develop a genuine and comprehensive comprehension of educational theory, which, in turn, serves as the foundation for developing the corpus of early childhood teaching terminology.

#### 2. Content of studies

The paper delved into kindergarten education and executed extensive observations. It conducted interviews with teachers and completed a thorough presentation of their open-ended questioning and behavioural praise. With the goals to collect basic data and analyse the characteristics of kindergarten teachers' open-ended questioning and behavioural praise, the research was divided into three parts:

- (1) Basic data collection and examination of the characteristics of kindergarten teachers' open-ended questioning and behavioural praise
- (2) Analysis of the issues surrounding the teachers' use of open-ended questioning and behavioural praise
- (3) Exploration of effective strategies for enhancing teachers' use of open-ended questioning and behavioural praise

### 3. Research object

The researcher selected two kindergartens for this study. Kindergarten Y in Guang Dong Province had 100 teachers aged 30-37 years old, with teaching experience ranging from 1-10 years. Meanwhile, Kindergarten Z had 102 teachers aged 25-40 years old, with teaching experience ranging from 1-10 years. Every teacher in these kindergartens engages in group teaching exclusively, with two classroom teachers alternating shifts.

### 4. Methodology

(1) **Observational Method:** The author carried out an empirical investigation by directly observing and documenting the use of open-ended questions and behavioural praise by teachers in two nurseries. Upon initial use, technical abbreviations were clarified. The study took place during early childhood teaching activities, using direct observation as its primary method.

(2) **Interview Method:** Through interviews with kindergarten teachers, we obtained insights into their attitudes towards and reflections on open-ended questioning and behavioural praise. Moreover, we gained valuable information on children's viewpoints regarding teachers' use of open-ended questions and praise, as well as their understanding of what defines praiseworthy behaviour.

### 5. Result

- (1) Comparison of questioning approaches

#### **Number of questions asked by teachers in each category**

The number of low-level closed-ended, low-level open-ended, high-level closed-ended, and high-level open-ended questions in Kindergarten Y was 124, 26, 162, and 90 times, respectively, totalling 402 times. Meanwhile, in Kindergarten Z, the number of question distributions was 132, 53, 150, and 101 times, respectively, totalling 436 times (Table 4). The statistical analysis revealed that the two kindergartens' high-level questioning  $\chi^2$  test statistically differed significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) (Table 5).

Table 5 Number of questions asked by teachers in various categories

Type of questioning approaches	Low-Level Closed-Ended Questions	Low-Level Open-Ended Questions	High-Level Closed-Ended Questions	High-Level Open-Ended Questions	Total
Teachers in Kindergarten Y	124	26	162	90	402
Teachers in Kindergarten Z	132	53	150	101	436

### Level of questioning

Instructors classify questions into low-level and high-level questions, based on the children's level of thinking in answering the question. Children use a combination of knowledge, information, and memory to answer low-level questions. Children must use their existing knowledge and intellectual abilities to generate information when engaging in high-level questioning. Both high and low levels of teacher questioning influence the development of children's thinking ability. Table 5 presents the hierarchy of teacher questioning in the two kindergartens.

Table 6 Comparison of high-level and low-level questioning

Element	Low-level questions	High-level questions
Teachers in Y Kindergarten	37.31% (150/402)	62.68% (152/402)
Teachers in Z Kindergarten	42.43% (185/436)	57.57% (251/436)

Table 6 displays the difference in the use of high-level and low-level questions by teachers in both kindergartens. At the time of this study, teachers in Kindergartens Y and Z were observed to employ high-level questions, but Kindergarten Y had a higher percentage of high-level questions. Table 7 shows the statistical test.

	$\chi^2$	df	P
Pearson $\chi^2$	30.451	1	0.000

### Open-ended questions

Teachers' closed questioning accounted for 43.28%, and open questioning was responsible for 56.72% in Kindergarten Y. Teachers' closed questioning accounted for 64.68%, and open questioning accounted for 35.32% in Kindergarten Z. The data indicated that Kindergarten Y had a higher percentage of open questioning by teachers (Table 8).



Table 8 Comparison of the openness of teachers' questions

Element	Low-level questions	High-level questions
Teachers in Y Kindergarten	43.28% (174/402)	56.72% (228/402)
Teachers in Z Kindergarten	64.68% (282/436)	35.32% (154/436)

The two kindergarten teachers' use of open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. The results revealed that the teachers at Kindergarten Y primarily utilised open-ended questions, while those at Kindergarten Z predominantly relied on closed-ended questions. The results of the statistical analysis were  $\chi^2=20.125$ ,  $P<0.05$  (Table 9).

Table 9 Statistical results of closed versus open-ended questioning

	$\chi^2$	df	P
Pearson $\chi^2$	20.125	1	<0.05

### Low-level open-ended questioning and high-level open-ended questioning

Kindergarten Y educators had a tendency to use high-level questions in their open-ended questioning. Conversely, Kindergarten Z focused on low-level questions and memorisation. In this case, there were differences between the two kindergartens in terms of the teachers' focus. Kindergarten Y teachers were more inclined to the development of children's thinking ability in the questioning process, and the questioning process required the children to harness their intelligence to answer the questions. This was statistically analysed through the two questioning methods, where  $\chi^2=18.452$  and  $P<0.05$  (Table 10).

Table 10 Statistical results of closed-ended and open-ended questions

	$\chi^2$	df	P
Pearson $\chi^2$	18.452	1	<0.05

### (2) Comparison of kindergarten teachers' behavioural praise

Kindergarten Y and Z children were selected for observation in the older class. The study involved observing 25 group teaching activities for a total of 15 days. A comprehensive total of 362 occurrences of teachers' praising behaviours were noted in Kindergarten Y, with 104 of those instances coming from Chinese teachers and 258 from foreign teachers. The teachers' praising behaviours were observed 401 times in Kindergarten Z, with 121 of those instances being attributed to Chinese teachers and 280 to foreign teachers.

### Praise time

After the study found that the educators' teaching language, in the context of praise behaviour time, occurred in

the latter part of the collective activities, behavioural praise during the activities of the session introduction was less. Then, the teaching activities of the practice session, as well as the children's innovation session and knowledge development session of the behavioural praise, accounted for more. Additionally, Chinese and foreign teachers in the behavioural praise time on the Kindergarten Z accounted for a higher proportion, in addition to the 0-10 min praise time. Finally, the rest of the statistical analysis exhibited statistical significance at  $P < 0.05$  (Table 11).

Table 11 Time and frequency of praise (%)

Time and frequency of praise		Y Kindergarten Teacher	Z Kindergarten Teacher	$\chi^2$	P
0-10mins	Chinese Teachers	10(9.62)	15(5.81)	1.666	0.197
	Foreign language teacher	66(54.55)	73(26.07)	30.246	<0.05
10-20mins	Chinese Teachers	39(37.5)	44(17.05)	17.534	<0.05
	Foreign language teacher	78(64.46)	85(30.36)	40.736	<0.05
20-30mins	Chinese Teachers	55(52.88)	62(24.03)	28.210	<0.05
	Foreign language teachers	114(94.21)	122(43.57)	89.483	<0.05

### Praise objects

Kindergarten teachers commonly use individual behavioural praise in their teaching language, while collective and group praise is relatively rare. Young children undergo holistic development. When instructing young children, it is crucial to focus on fostering their learning capacity. Simultaneously, the comprehensive development of young children should be emphasized, particularly in terms of enhancing their learning aptitude and critical thinking capacity. Praise for collective and group behaviour can enhance children's sense of cooperation. By doing something together, children can learn how to cooperate with others. Individual and group praise behaviours must be diversified, which can improve children's language skills and enable them to learn about respecting and understanding others (Yuqing B, Limin H, 2021).

The research revealed that foreign language teachers accounted for 73.26% of individual praise in Kindergarten Y and 69.64% in Kindergarten Z. For the collective praise, concerning the teachers in Kindergarten Y and Z, students were praised by Chinese language teachers more often, which were 34.62% and 38.84%, respectively. After statistical analysis, the results were  $\chi^2 = 0.279, 0.858, 0.429, 0.858$ , and  $P > 0.05$ .

### Praise Scenarios

Play serves as a mirror of young children's development and allows them to convey their thoughts freely. While

playing, children can constantly think and reflect, as well as communicate with others in the game. Playing games can aid children in expressing their emotions and cultivating their excellent learning qualities at the same time. Kindergarten teachers can enhance young children's brain development by incorporating praise and games into their teaching activities (Qiangqiang S,2022).

Our research revealed that language teachers in both kindergartens primarily used praise during the teaching and play sessions. Chinese instructors placed greater emphasis on teaching in the praise process rather than the game design process. In play sessions, foreign language teachers predominantly used praise, as the foreign language curriculum heavily relies on play.

Following the statistical analysis, a noticeable contrast in the praise patterns of Chinese teachers was noted in the two kindergartens. The results showed that in Garden Y, 65.38% of behavioural praise occurred during teaching, which was higher than 52.07% in Kindergarten Z.

The statistical findings were  $\chi^2=4.079$ ,  $P<0.05$ . In this study, foreign language teachers were more inclined to praise behaviours in games, with 66.28% of praise for playful behaviours in Kindergarten Y, which was lower than that in Kindergarten Z at 70.00% ( $\chi^2=0.857$ ,  $P>0.05$ ) (Table 12).

Table 12 Praise scenarios and frequency (%)

Praise scenarios	Chinese Teachers		Foreign language teachers	
	Teaching and Learning	Games	Teaching and Learning	Games
Teachers in Y Kindergarten	68(65.38)	36(34.62)	87(33.72)	171(66.28)
Teachers in Z Kindergarten	63(52.07)	58(47.93)	84(30)	196(70)
$\chi^2$	4.079		0.857	
P	0.043		0.354	

### Praise Methods

Teachers must recognize that young children are typically dynamic and therefore, during language instruction, should actively praise their behaviour and demonstrate lively and vibrant characteristics. Moreover, behavioural praise, as a vital manifestation of teacher-student interaction, can cause young children to respond, which is considered successful behavioural praise(Mingyu X, Xinqiang W,2021) . Instructors often express praise through a variety of behaviours, including smiling, giving high fives, clapping, and using decals, which clearly elicit positive emotions in children.

According to the findings of this research, verbal forms of praise were the most commonly used by Chinese and foreign language teachers at Kindergarten Y, accounting for 75.96% and 50.78%, respectively. Chinese and

foreign language teachers at Kindergarten Z also used verbal forms of praise, accounting for 74.38% and 50.71%, respectively. Statistical analyses revealed that the teachers' behavioural praise of young children at both kindergartens was mainly verbal praise ( $\chi^2=0.075$ , 0.000,  $P>0.05$ ) (Table 13).

Table 13 Mode and frequency of praise (%)

Mode and frequency of praise	Chinese Teachers		Foreign language teachers	
	verbal	non-verbal	verbal	non-verbal
Teachers in Y Kindergarten	79(75.96)	25(24.04)	131(50.78)	127(49.22)
Teachers in Z Kindergarten	90(74.38)	31(25.62)	142(50.71)	138(49.29)
$\chi^2$	0.075		0.000	
P	0.784		0.989	

### Purpose of Praise and Emotional Characteristics

There are differences between Chinese and Western cultures. During the act of giving behavioural praise, foreign kindergarten teachers tend to focus on the group, while Chinese teachers prioritize praising the individual.

Chinese teachers mainly set up role models for their children in the process of early childhood teaching. Concurrently, foreign teachers tend to cultivate children's capacity for independent thought and self-improvement during early childhood instruction. Regarding the development of thinking mode, Chinese teachers place greater emphasis on the holistic nature of intuition, as opposed to foreign educators who prioritise logical analysis. Therefore, Chinese teachers generally use a combination of criticism and education in the process of behavioural praise, with admiration and suppression. This study found that the Chinese teachers in Kindergarten Y and Z both have their praise behaviours based on role modelling as the main purpose, accounting for 87.50% and 69.42%, respectively, where the former was higher than the latter. Statistical analysis yielded  $\chi^2=10.576$ ,  $P<0.05$ . The foreign language teachers of both kindergartens focused on the children themselves and praised them purely, with Garden Z having a higher percentage of pure praise (97.86%) compared to Kindergarten Y (98.84%), and Kindergarten Z being higher than that in Kindergarten Y, which was 98.84%.

Statistical analysis generated  $\chi^2=0.781$ ,  $P>0.05$  (Table 14).

Table 14 Purpose and frequency of praise (%)

Purpose of praise	Chinese Teachers		Foreign language teachers	
	Merely praising	role model	Merely praising	role model

Teachers in Y Kindergarten	13(12.5)	91(87.5)	255(98.84)	3(1.16)
Teachers in Z Kindergarten	37(30.58)	84(69.42)	274(97.86)	6(2.14)
$\chi^2$		10.576		0.784
P		0.001		0.376

## Discussion

### 1. Analysis of the differences in teachers' use of phrasing-open-ended questions at the two kindergartens

The findings highlight the differences in the use of high- and low-level questions by the teachers of the two kindergartens. In Garden Y, 43.28% of teachers used closed questions, while in Kindergarten Z, this percentage was 56.72%. Then, 35.32% of the teachers of Garden Y asked open questions. This demonstrates that the teachers of Garden Y asked more open questions than the teachers of Kindergarten Y. Out of all the teachers in Garden Z, 64.68% utilised closed questions while 35.32% used open questions. It was found that teachers in Kindergarten Y had a higher percentage of open-ended questions (35.32%). In most cases, teachers can adjust their questioning techniques to align with the intellectual capacity of their students. To a certain extent, setting low- and high-level questions can improve children's thinking level for low-level questions. Children can generally respond to low-level questions using their existing knowledge and mastery of the content, whereas answering high-level questions involves using intellectual play to generate new information. Both types of questions can enhance children's thinking ability. However, if the question is closed, the answer is normally clear. Open-ended questions, on the other hand, can be guided to make children give creative answers based on their knowledge and experience, which usually do not have a fixed answer, and therefore play a vital role in improving children's thinking.

### (2) Analysis of the differences between the two kindergarten teachers' verbal-behavioural praises

The results of this study showed that Chinese and foreign teachers had a higher percentage of teachers at Kindergarten Z in terms of behavioural praise. More specifically, teachers at Kindergarten Y praised 73.26% of the time. Foreign teachers did so in terms of personal praise, and the teachers, specifically foreign instructors, at Kindergarten Z praised 69.64% of the time. The percentage of behavioural praise occurring in Kindergarten Y was higher than that in Kindergarten Z in terms of teaching and learning. Equally important, the foreign teachers were more inclined to conduct behavioural praise in the game. Educators in both kindergartens had good behavioural performance. Concerning praise time, it was mostly in the process of play. Through the praise of collective and individual behaviour, it can elevate the students' interest in learning and acceptance of classroom knowledge. Nevertheless, kindergarten teachers tend to use praise less frequently and with less emphasis on time and concentration. Also, in the entire process of collective activities, the way of praise is essentially verbal praise, which has a single nature.

Additionally, the teachers' praise situation was relatively single, paying more attention to praise in the context of the game but overlooking behavioural praise in the teaching process. Behavioural praise in general leads to

fatigue in young children, so there is a lack of interaction among them during teaching activities, which influences their psychological state for a long time. Hence, kindergarten teachers must actively take effective measures in the process of young children's behavioural praise.

## **Suggestions**

### **1. For kindergarten teachers to use open-ended questioning suggestions**

Kindergarten teachers, as the chief initiator of teaching activities, must improve the effectiveness of teaching young children through 'child-friendly' questions. Closed and open-ended questions have a certain questioning effect, where the latter is more like diffused thinking and more capable of improving children's creativity and language skills, but there are usually shortcomings. Close-ended questioning enables children to grasp fundamental knowledge and fortifies their memory. Kindergarten teachers need to consider the needs of early childhood teaching, based on the learning level of young children's knowledge to opt for a scientific method of questioning. In this way, young children can better grasp the internal information of the questioning in thinking, so as to stimulate their potential (Pinar K, Serap B, 2023).

By strengthening the research on high-level open-ended questioning of kindergarten teachers' language, we further realise the accumulation of young children's knowledge and experience. Along with that, we stimulate their critical thinking and improve their ability to integrate and create information. Good teacher-student interaction can be attained through effective open-ended questioning. It must be emphasised that the level of open-ended questioning must be controlled, and low-level open-ended questioning should prioritise creating space for children's imagination, which can also improve their imagination and language expression ability (Xiaotong P, 2021). In order to effectively engage in high-level open-ended questioning, teachers must actively monitor the questioning process. Taking into account the individual differences of young children, not everyone can express their personal ideas through their own language. In this case, teachers must provide guidance and encouragement to young children (Zixuan W, Fang J, Wanyu Z, 2023).

### **2. Suggestions for kindergarten teachers' behavioural praise of language**

Kindergarten educators pay attention to the theoretical level of behavioural praise during the teaching process, not habitual praise but in-depth behavioural praise. Young children make progress and excel in their daily lives. Teachers should make a point to praise young children's shining points during teaching activities and games. At the same time, the ways and scenarios of behavioural praise should be enriched, so as to diversify the subject of praise. In addition, it is imperative to pay attention to the diversification of praise methods. For instance, teachers can directly interact with children, including hugging and high-fiving, among several other behaviours. Teachers can also make indirect contact with children through an object, such as a stuffed animal, a robot cat, or other toys. The amplifying impact of behavioural praise can be strengthened through direct and indirect physical contact. It is also beneficial to incorporate 'privileged' and 'surprise' forms of praise, if feasible (Niannian G, 2022).

The targeting of behavioural praise in early childhood teachers should be based on the psychological and physiological traits of young children. Praise needs to be more clear and have specific reasons. In order for

young children to truly accept the teacher's praise, it is necessary for the content of behavioural praise to be fully clear and specific in this situation. This approach becomes the driving force behind a child's healthy psychological growth (Qi W, 2021). Moreover, young children have a natural inclination for imitation and can be influenced by receiving praise for their actions, leading to further imitative behaviour. This can make other children feel that such choices are better and worthy of praise, so they will continue to imitate accordingly.

Ultimately, it aims to improve the overall well-being of young children by promoting healthy living and learning habits.

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