

Chinese Children's Experiences of Biliteracy Learning in Scotland

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Abstract

This thesis explores the experiences of Chinese children acquiring literacy in both Chinese and English in Scotland. A three-dimensional research design is adopted in order to take into account the influential domains where children are exposed to literacy learning. First, it investigates the attitudes and approaches to literacy learning in fourteen Chinese homes, with evidence gathered from semi-structured interviews with parents. Second, observations of and conversations with children and Chinese teachers in a Chinese complementary school in the central belt of Scotland provide insights into the approaches to teaching and learning Chinese literacy. Third, miscue analysis of reading and thinking aloud protocols are conducted in mainstream schools with six Chinese boys, aged eight to nine years, in order to analyse in depth the reading strategies deployed by children in their attempts to gain meaning from both Chinese and English texts. The findings reveal that Chinese parents provide a rich learning environment where children consolidate and in some cases extend the literacy learning experiences gained in the complementary Chinese school. What also emerges from the research is that while the children in the study have a great deal of metalinguistic and metacognitive knowledge gained from learning diverse writing systems, this knowledge is not recognised within policy or practice in mainstream schools. Finally, Hornberger's Continua of Biliteracy are used as a model both in order to analyse the mosaic of qualitative data generated during the research process and to provide a framework for a discussion of educational policy and practice in multilingual Scotland.

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Abbreviations

ASN	Additional Support Needs
BSA	Bilingual Support Assistant
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
DfES	Department of Education and Skills
EAL	English as an Additional Language
HMIe	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
HSLW	Home-School Liaison Worker
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LTS	Learning and Teaching Scotland
MCA	Miscue Analysis of Reading
PBL	Problem-Based Learning
PRC	People's Republic of China
SAR	Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong)
SCILT	Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching
UKFCS	United Kingdom Federation of Chinese Schools

Chapter 1

Introduction

At the centre of your being you have the answer; you know who you are and you know what you want.

*Lao Tzu, Chinese Taoist philosopher
c.600BC*

1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter sets out the orientation of the study and indicates the research questions that helped shape its structure and organisation. The choice of the research topic will be justified whilst making the researcher's background and interests visible within the 'frame' of the inquiry. In the final section the main outline of the thesis will be presented, including summaries of the content and major focal points of each chapter.

According to McBride-Chang (2004) 50% of school children across the globe learn schooled literacy through an additional language. The central concern of this thesis is to investigate Chinese children's lived experiences (Gadamer, 1975) with biliteracy cutting across the three influential contexts central to the children: home, Chinese complementary school and mainstream primary schools in the central belt of Scotland. For the purposes of this inquiry, a working definition of biliteracy is taken from Hornberger (1990: 213), who describes it as 'any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in and around writing'. Furthermore, an attempt will be made to gain a more detailed insight into biliteracy experiences and the children's thinking by investigating the strategies adopted by six boys when reading two diverse orthographies – English and Chinese.

Literacy and literacy learning can be seen as operating on several different levels of practice: decoding, semantic, pragmatic and critical (Freebody and Luke, 1990). In the public arena literacy learning is often equated with decoding, or, at most, reading a text to extract literal meaning. On the other hand, pragmatic literacy is putting reading to use in a range of socio-cultural situations and sites. This is necessary if the

learner is to operate with any degree of autonomy in the world. Finally, critical literacy is essential for a transparent democratic society where texts are not taken at face value but critically evaluated. For the purpose of this study, it is not my intention to concentrate on functional literacy nor to quantify performance level. Neither is my stimulus to compare Chinese children to their monolingual peers. But the purpose of this thesis is to investigate the range of experiences and strategies used by Chinese children to support the construction of meaning and an examination of the influences of the socio-cultural spaces that literacy learning takes place in. According to Hudelson (1994) this language process in which an individual constructs meaning is a transaction with the written text:

Involves the reader's acting upon or interpreting the text, and the interpretation is influenced by the reader's past experiences, language background, and cultural framework, as well as the reader's purpose for reading.

(Hudelson, 1994: 130)

Phenomenology guides the research approach as it provides a vocabulary and a resource of reflexive ideas to support the description and interpretation of the phenomena of biliteracy. A characteristic of phenomenology is that it allows a consideration of the extent to which a researcher offers a convincing expression of the lived experiences of others and helps clarify the research task from a researcher's perspective which lies outside the cultural and linguistic framework of the participants (Glendinning, 2008). According to Sokolowski (2000:2) phenomenology explicitly addresses these epistemological issues 'because it considers human reason as ordered toward evidence and truth'. Ethical issues also pervade phenomenology as it allows an opportunity to reflect carefully on the subject of the researcher's conduct and the process of building respectful relationships during the course of the fieldwork. Finally, the pursuit of knowledge in this thesis involves the procedure of obtaining 'thick description' through a mosaic of interconnected qualitative research methods such as observation, semi-structured interviews and conversations (Geertz, 1973: 9).

1.2 Terminology

Campbell *et al.* (2000: 43) state that ‘the field of ethnic diversity is characterized by long and unresolved controversies about the very words that are used to frame debate’. They believe that it is not just a matter of mere semantics but the form of words used and their meanings can have intended and unintended consequences. At the present time there is some concern with the identification of individuals in terms of their ‘ethnicity’, which some authors argue is socially constructed, and its complex interrelationship with ‘race’ (Hall and du Gay, 2003). The contested term ‘Chinese’ has been used throughout this thesis to describe both the ethnicity of the participants and their literacy. The ethnic term ‘Chinese’ (as opposed to ‘British-Chinese’) is used for brevity and consistency although it is recognized that the majority of the children involved in this research are of Chinese origin but born in Scotland. The term ‘Chinese’ also refers to the written form of the language and is used as a collective term for the different spoken varieties of Chinese. For example, spoken varieties differ substantially within Hong Kong and mainland China to the extent that a speaker of Putonghua¹ is unable to understand a speaker of Cantonese or other southern spoken varieties such as Hakka. This controversial issue surrounding the linguistic definitions of ‘dialects’ or ‘languages’ within Chinese studies is frequently debated. Yang (1996) accepts that the principle notion of mutual unintelligibility between different spoken varieties of Chinese but also argues that languages are influenced by politics and the state’s homogenous ideologies in relation to language standardization.

1.3 Conventions on translation

Whenever a Chinese character appears in the text, a Cantonese phonic transliteration and English translation is provided immediately afterwards. For example, [口] (hau2) “*mouth*”. Cantonese is used to reflect the dominant variety of Chinese spoken by the families in the research. Cantonese is transcribed using a system called Jyutping [粵拼]. It is a Romanization system for Standard Cantonese developed by the Linguistic

¹ Putonghua (Trans. ‘common speech’) also referred to as Standard Mandarin which is based on the language variety spoken in Beijing. Putonghua functions as the official spoken language of the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan. It is also one of the four official languages of Singapore, one of three official languages of Hong Kong and one of the six official languages of the United Nations.

Society of Hong Kong (LSHK) in 1993. The name Jyut6Ping3 is a contraction consisting of the first Chinese characters of the terms jyut jyu [粵語] meaning “Yue language” and ping jam [拼音] translated as “phonetic alphabet”. Digits placed at the end of each Cantonese syllable represents the six tone markers. A comprehensive description of the system can be found in Tang *et al.* (2002).

1.4 Chinese names

The data for this thesis was gathered with the understanding that identities of individuals and schools would remain anonymous. All names of the participants have been changed to preserve confidentiality. The children’s pseudonyms are either English or Chinese in line with the original name given by the parents. This follows the common practice in Hong Kong where children are given both a Chinese and ‘British’ first name. The nuclear structure prevails in all the families who took part in the research and as a consequence all parents are referred to as Mr or Mrs reflecting the manner in which they wished to be addressed.

1.5 Genesis of the current study

The pursuit for value free research has been widely debated by social scientists and can be traced back to the philosophical quandary of early phenomenologists. Husserl (1931/1964) believed that in the process of understanding another person’s point of view or experience, a phenomenological inquirer must suspend all judgements or ‘bracket’ their own assumptions. Whilst Husserl recognized the challenges of this pursuit, his student, Heidegger, saw the ‘bracketing’ of belief systems, in order to investigate a phenomenon, as an impossible quest, as one cannot stand outside the pre-understandings and historicity of one’s experience (Heidegger, 1927/1962). So it may be argued that these inherited prejudices and distortions prevent us from seeing what needs to be seen (Glendinning, 2008). Rather, the quest for knowledge demands what Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) claims as re-looking at the world without blinkers or according to Heidegger reflective re-visioning that frees us from what stands before our own eyes.

While the researcher’s own world view is undoubtedly embedded in any inquiry, this thesis draws on the principle that personal values play a positive role in deciding

what is worth investigating. But once the topic under study and the framework of analysis has been determined it is researcher's responsibility to search for the truth and minimize the capacity to produce distorted results by engaging with others' experience without preconceived notions about what will be found in the investigation. At the same time, the researcher must recognize the limitations of their work. This process of reflexivity calls for constant critical 'self-awareness' of the researcher actions and the values they adopt during the fieldwork alongside a rigorous scrutiny of their role in generating and applying research knowledge (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000).

Therefore it is my intention to bring out into the open certain epistemological issues. That is, the nature of the data produced and the roles of the researcher and the researched. As a consequence, there is a need to make explicit at the beginning of the research process how my career experiences have helped shape the orientation of the study and how as an 'outsider' access was gained to the Chinese community. This acknowledgement will allow readers to judge for themselves the possible impact on both the construction of the research methodology, execution of research methods, and the interpretation of the research data.

My personal interest in the issue under study can be traced back to my first teaching job as an upper primary class teacher in a multilingual school in inner London. Only three of the children in my class spoke English at home. During the course of the academic year several children arrived in my class from Sri Lanka, Egypt, India and Bangladesh. These new arrivals had limited English but I soon discovered that they had already attained an age-appropriate level of literacy in their first language during schooling in their countries of origin. This was used as a springboard to share their knowledge and lived-experience of different writing systems with their peers. It became apparent that the nine and ten year old children in my class showed a sophisticated awareness of literacy and were capable of understanding that writing systems work in different ways. As a result classroom displays soon reflected the children's own writing using a wide variety of scripts.

This period of work coincided with staff development opportunities provided by the Centre for Language in Primary Education (CLPE) and the ground breaking Primary Language Record (Barrs *et al.* 1988) which advocated Literacy conferences between children and class teachers to take account of and record bilingual children's progress and development in their first languages as well as English. The record also encouraged the exchange of information between teachers and parents about literacy use in the home and cooperation with community language teachers. As Barrs *et al.* (1988) state:

The purpose of the discussion between parent(s) and teacher is to encourage a two-way communication between home and school, to let parent(s) share their knowledge of the child, at home and at school, their observations and concerns, hopes and expectations. Regular informal conversations between parents and teachers can help to establish a real partnership between home and school and can create a forum where achievements as well as concerns can be discussed.

(Barrs *et al.* 1988: 12)

A further two years teaching in a government secondary school in Zimbabwe were followed by a position as a peripatetic language support teacher in central Scotland where the minority ethnic population is small and scattered, and which forms the location of this present study.

Most of the teachers with whom I came into contact with, during the course of my work in central Scotland were unaware that the bilingual children in their class were involved in learning literacy outside of school, and they showed little interest in their accomplishments outside English literacy acquisition. These views echo research by Mehmedbegovic, (2003) who discovered mainstream teachers were not aware of linguistic minority children's attendance at complementary classes at the weekend. Also, Kearney (2003) who carried out in-depth interviews with minority ethnic adults and discovered that only one participant talked of a single teacher who was felt to have made contact with their cultural background.

Similarly, the Nuffield Languages Inquiry (2000) reports that the multilingual talents and linguistic resources of minority children in the UK are under-used and all too often viewed with suspicion. According to Cummins and Swain (1986) to be told whether directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, that your language and the language of your parents, is non-functional in school is to negate your sense of self.

1.6 Search for research questions

During my time as a language support teacher one of the Chinese pupils I was working with was excluded from secondary school as a result of reacting violently to racist taunts in class. While the education authority deliberated on Nicky's future schooling I was assigned to provide home tuition using the course materials provided by his subject teachers. The parents sent Nicky to the Chinese complementary school on a Sunday and the mother encouraged her son to regularly practice his Chinese writing. The only evidence in the house of writing in English was associated with the children's schooling: homework and library books and correspondence. The script environment of the home was predominantly Chinese. Chinese calligraphy contained in pictures, wall hangings and calendars adorned the walls. There was a variety of reading materials, such as workbooks in Chinese, as well as Chinese newspapers and magazines. Notes around the house were written in Chinese characters. Some of the literacy practices in the home extended beyond the traditional boundaries of reading and writing. Exposure to Chinese writing also came through visual media such as watching satellite television channels and DVDs from China and Hong Kong, with a choice of subtitles (traditional or simplified Chinese characters). This was a very popular recreational interest for the whole family. On my twice-weekly visits to Nicky's house I observed the multifaceted nature of literacy. That is, how reading and writing serves different functions in the home demanding different types of responses and that 'schooled literacy' is only one form of literacy that Chinese children encounter (Street and Street, 1991). It seemed to me that these practices, referred to as 'alternative' or 'unofficial' literacies by Gregory and Williams (2000), which frequently remain hidden from mainstream pedagogy, offered the possibility of further investigation.

It was also during this period of employment that I began my long association with the local Chinese complementary school, which is central to this present study. I was involved in developing modular teaching and learning materials for a Scottish qualification in Chinese. This work was done in collaboration with one of the Chinese teachers at the school who also worked part-time with the Support Service as a Bilingual home-school liaison worker. My time spent in the classes highlighted not only some of the connections between mainstream schooling and the Chinese school but also how literacy may be taught and learnt in different ways as a result of the writing system and associated cultural practices. I also became aware that while the approaches to teaching and learning literacy in the English speaking world have attracted a great deal of attention (Harrison, 2003), less is known about the nature of Chinese orthography and the ways in which Chinese literacy is learnt (Watkins and Biggs, 2001; McBride-Chang and Chen, 2003).

But what is often neglected in this discussion of Chinese literacy is the diversity across Chinese societies. There are different orientations to teaching and learning literacy, depending on what Chinese society the teaching occurs. For instance, Cheung and Ng (2003) highlight a number of significant issues concerning reading instruction across Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, and Singapore in terms of traditional versus simplified characters; the use of alphabetic transcriptions to support early reading; the stage at which English is introduced and how different spoken varieties of Chinese are mapped onto scripts.

Literacy is inextricably bound together with an individual's or group's cultural identity and has its roots in history (Ferdman, 1990). The Chinese invented paper and were pioneers in the fields of printing. There is a far longer cultural tradition than that of any western nation, with symbols of the language appearing in stone inscriptions as early as 1600 B.C. Chinese characters have multivarious meanings in themselves. The decomposition of characters into separate elements have different possible interpretations. These phenomena will be explored in more detail in chapter 2.

A growing interest in Far Eastern literature among western writers was exemplified by Ezra Pound, the imagist poet, who drew on the deconstruction of the Chinese character as a method of literary criticism. In his scholarly work 'The ABC of Reading' (Pound, 1960) he explained the difference between Chinese and European cognition and language claiming that the Chinese character was a means of transmission and registration of thought. An example of this is [東] "east" being essentially a superposition of the character for [木] "tree" and [日] "sun". That is the abstract concept of "east" is pictured as the sun rising behind tangled branches of a tree. Pound argued that language written in this way, charged with meaning, (as opposed to English letters just representing various sounds) was a powerful way to study poetry or literature.

In Chang and Halliday's (2005) biography of Mao Tse-tung, the authors describe the inveterate aspirations of Chinese 'peasants' for their sons, where high-ranking positions in the civil service were open to all males, regardless of social class. In fact, the social aims of the examination system were to restrict nepotism and to draw into the bureaucracy able young men from the rural areas (Price, 1979). For seven centuries this meant studying, being well versed and reciting with rhythm and resonance in the moral teachings of Confucius and Mencius, (such as the *Analects* and the *Mencius*) which in turn constituted much of the content of the imperial examinations. The authors give an account of Mao's education starting at eight years of age:

Confucian classics, which made up most of the curriculum, were beyond the understanding of children and had to be learnt by heart. Mao was blessed with an exceptional memory, and did well. His fellow pupils remembered a diligent boy who managed not only to recite but also write by rote these difficult texts. He also... began to learn to write prose, calligraphy and poetry, as writing poems were an essential part of Confucian education. Reading became a passion. Peasants generally turned in at sunset, to save on oil for lamps, but Mao would read deep into the night, with an oil lamp standing on a bench outside his mosquito net.

(Chang and Halliday, 2005: 6)

As such the importance of literacy is frequently stressed in Chinese children's lives and viewed as an intrinsic part of the formation of their cultural identity. Chinese people take pride in being able to master the script; for a person 'to be Chinese in a proper sense, he or she must also be a fully literate person' (Verma and Mallik, 1999: 32).

The symbolic role of literacy and cultural identity formation within the Chinese community is captured well by Ingulsrud and Allen (1999):

To learn Chinese characters is to be identified as Chinese and true Chinese literacy is literacy in Chinese characters. It is not simply for national communication. The acquisition of literacy is participation in the cultural heritage: the learning of the strokes, the learning of stroke order, the learning of the radicals, the learning of brush calligraphy, and learning them all precisely. All these are segments of a process that constitute a tradition that is largely unbroken for over three millennia. To participate in this acquisition process is to participate in a literate tradition that reinforces the notion that knowledge of the script brings access to the entire literary tradition. Identifying with the nations' history and its culture presupposes a degree of knowledge about the literary tradition; consequently literacy is seen as prestigious

(Ingulsrud and Allen, 1999: 133)

It is not surprising that Li Wei (2000) believes that the distinctiveness of Chinese writing system (more so than spoken language) provides a major means for unifying people of Chinese heritage and their culture in Chinese communities in the UK where Chinese writing has tended to become a symbol of minority community identity and cultural cohesion. In the same vein, Zhou and Kim (2006) sees the maintenance of literacy within Chinese communities in the United States as a form of social capital that contributes positively to academic achievement.

When I became the manager of a local authority Bilingual Support Service in the central belt of Scotland I found that a disproportionate amount of requests from schools involved difficulties in communicating with Chinese parents. Enquiries showed that Chinese parents were the least 'visible' parents in schools and were among the most reluctant to attend parent consultation meetings and social events organised by the school. Some teachers also commented that the parents never

signed homework books or home reading records. Non-attendance at parent consultation evenings is, however, frequently interpreted negatively by teachers within the terms of their own cultural expectations, i.e. they see it as signifying a lack of interest by Chinese parents in their children's education. In my own experience these attitudes appear to have resulted in a stereotyping of Chinese families in the staffrooms of some schools visited. The Chinese parents were often categorised as 'self-contained' and 'self-sufficient', and too involved in family business. As a result, Francis and Archer (2005a) believe that the Chinese are undoubtedly the least understood of all Britain's minority ethnic communities.

Anecdotal evidence suggested there were a number of reasons for this lack of dialogue between home and school. These included the parents' limited proficiency in English, their lack of knowledge of the Scottish education system and their unsocial working hours. These are frequently put forward as reasons explaining the limited research carried out by educationalists on the Chinese community. In order to bridge the language barrier, and to support Chinese pupils and enhance the dialogue between home and school, I decided to recruit a Chinese teacher for the Service that I managed.

The subsequent experience of arranging alternative meetings in the afternoon with the assistance of the Bilingual Teacher showed that Chinese parents, like most parents, do indeed have a deep interest in their child's education. It in fact became clear that one of the primary reasons for migrating to Britain was the hope that the life chances of their children would be enhanced through education (Wong, 1992; Powney *et al.* 1998).

This picture of educational achievement is replicated in Scotland where available statistics indicate that Chinese young people are outperforming all other ethnic groups, including their white peers pupils in Scottish schools, in their examination results. When gender is factored in to the findings, it is revealed that Chinese girls achieve better than any other group in Scotland (The Scotsman, 2004). Furthermore, Chinese young people are proportionately more likely than any other ethnic group in

England to be admitted to higher education and they constitute the group least likely to be excluded from school (DfES, 2006). Although the reliability of results may be open to question because of the small numbers involved in the ethnic categories, this type of monitoring tool can provide a useful starting point for further investigation into the reasons behind the high achievement or the significant under-achievement of certain minority groups. However, a note of caution is required here. Francis and Archer (2005b) believe that Chinese pupils' behaviour and achievement is in danger of being conceptualized stereotypically by educationalists. That is, positive stereotypes of 'intelligent', 'hard working' and 'conscientious' Chinese children can lead to their needs being ignored by teachers.

Discussion of the factors contributing to this Chinese 'academic success story' in Scotland has generally been confined to the press and has been speculative in nature. Much has also been made of the culture of learning in the Confucian tradition but which is frequently interpreted within the norms of 'Western' psychology (Watkins and Biggs, 2001). Recent research carried out amongst thirty Chinese parents in London by Francis and Archer, (2005a) demonstrates the extreme high value placed on education by these parents (regardless of their social class and gender) and how this value is transmitted to their children. Unfortunately, this home stimulation and parental motivation were not discussed in terms of literacy learning unlike a study carried out by Shu *et al.* (2002) which discovered that literacy practices conducted in families in mainland China were a strong predictor of literacy levels in school and subsequent educational success.

Initial discussions with Chinese parents hinted at a dilemma they faced. For while they were anxious to send their children to weekend complementary schools to retain the literacy of the home and keep traditional Chinese cultural beliefs and values alive, they were also aware of the importance of acquiring the literacy of the dominant society as a route to qualifications and higher education opportunities (Tsow, 1984). Therefore getting to know Chinese parents and finding out more about their attitudes and approaches to learning literacy seemed an obvious starting point for research. This will be the focus of chapter 4.

The pivotal role of reading as a passport to knowledge, the school curriculum and personal growth was another area of literacy I felt was worth pursuing. The Early Intervention programme in Scotland initiated in 1997 further stimulated the debate about the conflicting research evidence surrounding what is considered the most effective form of reading instruction in predominantly English-speaking countries (Goswami and Bryant, 1990; Geekie *et al.* 1999; Krashen, 2003). Discussion of the merits and limitations of these approaches (such as phonological awareness, analytical phonics, synthetic phonics and whole language) has led to an eclectic mix of policies and practices amongst the thirty-two Scottish education authorities (Fraser *et al.* 2001).

But what is frequently absent from this debate is an informed discussion of what pedagogy best fits the needs of individual English as an additional language (EAL) learners who may be exposed to more than one writing system, and of the obligation to recognise how this may impact on their English literacy development. Learning to read in English for the Chinese children in this study brings with it a number of challenges: decoding a script in an additional language, attempting to make sense of an often culturally unfamiliar text and finally their reading skills based on assessments referenced on monolingual English-speaking peers (Landon, 1999). According to Lo Bianco (2001) the dictates of national curriculum initiatives assume children with EAL to be pre-literate because assessments are based on English literacy alone and ignore rather than identify with the complexity of their multiliterate lives. The strategies employed by learners reading more than one writing system is a much under-researched area in multilingual Britain and chapter 6 attempts to fill that gap.

It was with all the above thoughts in mind, that I took the decision to provide as integrated a picture as possible of the nature of biliteracy development of Chinese children attending primary schools in Central Scotland. I wanted to gain a fuller understanding of the scope of bilingual learners' lived experiences and involvement with literacy in different learning environments and a recognition of the linguistic

and cultural capital that these children possess but a knowledge that lacks status and power in mainstream schools (Cummins, 2000). Furthermore, I wanted to gain an insight into children's metacognition and discover the reading strategies learners' use when they come into contact with two diverse scripts.

This qualitative study therefore has the following two broad aims:

- To explore the experiences with literacy of Chinese children across the different domains of the home, complementary Chinese school and mainstream primary school.
- To examine the strategies Chinese children adopt when reading two diverse orthographies – Chinese and English.

1.7 Who will benefit from this work?

It seemed to me that research of this type would give teachers and educational practitioners a better understanding of the challenges faced by children with EAL in multilingual primary classrooms, especially in those schools with a small number of bilingual pupils. The need for educationalists to take account of the diverse nature of their schools continues to grow as a range of factors have seen the cultural and linguistic landscape change in Scotland in recent years. Demographic shifts mean Scotland is now anticipating a declining population and an increasingly ageing workforce. As a result, the Scottish Executive, unlike the rest of the UK, has put a different political face on the immigration debate, articulating a commitment to inward migration and actively encouraging migrant 'guest' workers and their families to live in Scotland in order to fill the existing skills gap (Scottish Executive, 2004).

A range of factors has seen the proportion of minority ethnic children in Scottish schools rise recently. The expansion of the European Union in 2004 and 2007 has seen Scotland receiving a higher share of new arrivals from new eastern European accession states, compared to the rest of the UK, seeking employment. Thus, in recent years, educational services across Scotland are likely to have seen children of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds; a situation that previously existed only

in areas around large cities. Issues relating to immigration are still a reserved matter and managed by the UK government in Westminster. However, changes in immigration and asylum policies in 1999 provided the legal basis for large numbers of refugee and asylum seeking families to be dispersed from England to Scotland. The City of Glasgow Council estimates that about 10% of the school population speaks a language other than English at home. Unlike Glasgow, other local authorities in Scotland have not made contractual arrangements with the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) to make available housing and education for asylum seekers. However, asylum seeker and refugee families are resident in urban areas, such as Edinburgh, as a result of being given leave to remain or having been provided with accommodation through family and friends. This diversity across Scotland has corresponding implications for the provision and planning of appropriate support for these families and children.

Another measure put in place to address Scotland's demographic shortfall is the Executives' 'Fresh Talent' initiative, which came into effect in 2005. This scheme has been successful in attracting highly skilled workers as it allows international students (and their children) to remain in Scotland and gain employment for two years after the completion of their studies without the need for a work permit (Scottish Executive, 2004). At present, Chinese students make up the largest overseas student body in Scotland and there is evidence of increasing number of Chinese students enrolling in Scottish universities since the launch of the initiative (Scottish Executive, 2006).

Both Scotland's Census 2001 and Scotland's School Census 2006² indicate that Scotland has become a highly diverse society. The 2001 Census showed that Scotland's minority ethnic population is a young group. Around 60% of minority ethnic people are under 30 years of age compared with just over 30% of the white population. Over 70% of the visible minority ethnic population were Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese or other South Asian). The census also shows the significant growing number of Scottish children of mixed parentage. Information

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gathered for the School Census for Scotland in 2007 (of all publicly funded primary, secondary and special schools) confirms that children in Scotland come from a variety of heritages with 137 different languages spoken in the home. The main ethnic groups in order of number are Pakistani, Chinese and Indian and the main home languages are Punjabi, Urdu, Cantonese, Polish and Arabic.² A recent audit conducted by City of Edinburgh EAL Service estimated that around twelve per cent of children in Edinburgh primary schools speak more than one language in their daily lives (Edinburgh EAL Service, 2008).

This diversity means most teachers in Scotland are likely to encounter bilingual children at some point in their careers and when they do, they will need to approach literacy instruction from a position of informed professional knowledge and understanding. A recent survey by the Teacher Training Agency found that only a quarter of newly qualified teachers felt they were adequately prepared to cater for the needs of pupils who have English as an additional language (Training and Development Agency, 2009). Although initiatives have been put in place to address these concerns of newly qualified teachers, much more needs to be done (Bourne and Flewitt, 2002). The present study will therefore also seek to address some of the fundamental questions about the changing nature of educational policies and practices currently being debated where both the importance of family and community support are clearly recognized in children's learning (NALDIC, 2005a).

Historical migration patterns have resulted in Chinese communities spread throughout the world and the Chinese diaspora (overseas Chinese) in Scotland is no exception. The first Chinese arrived in Scotland as a result of Scotland's colonial activities. Chinese seamen, hired as cheap labour in China, became stranded in Scottish ports and by the nineteenth century had become an integral part of the Lascar colonies, alongside Indian seamen. While Chinese communities developed earlier in England, it was not until 1960 that the first settled Chinese community developed in Glasgow.

² Statistics available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/02/27083941>.

China's emerging position within global economics and trading systems has fuelled a renaissance of interest in the nation's culture, history and language. China's prosperity has produced demands, within both business and political circles, for Chinese to be taught in Scottish schools to support Scotland's commercial activity with China (Scottish Executive, 2006). As a result Cantonese and Mandarin will be offered as part of the SQA Modern Languages suite of qualifications in and after 2008 with a corresponding need for Chinese language teachers. Another initiative to boost interest in Chinese language links between Scotland and China is the Government's Confucius Classrooms scheme (BBC, 2008). The initiative has seen the establishment of hubs in schools across fourteen authorities, which aims to provide lessons in Chinese language and culture to other schools and develop educational links with China, supported by the Scottish schools digital intranet link - Glow Meet. This interest in learning Chinese is not just restricted to Scotland but a recent British Council report shows that learning Chinese is growing more popular in Europe (Craddol, 2006).

On the other hand, this growing interest in learning Chinese by non-native speakers is not without its critics and Krashen (email, 2006) claims the revival in learning Chinese in the United States is stimulated purely by selfish economic motives rather than reasons associated with cultural or educational enrichment. That said, it is hoped that this study will expand on the current body of knowledge about how literacy is played out in young Chinese children's lives in multilingual Scotland and contribute towards an understanding of a writing system used by twenty-five percent of the world's population.

1.8 Analysing data

One of challenges of the phenomenological research approach is that it generates a large quantity of qualitative data, which has to be scrutinized, interpreted and described. Glendinning, (2008) attempts to unravel the predicament of the role of analysis and explanation in phenomenological research when one essentially can't claim new conceptual understandings or theoretical explanations for circumstances, which by all intents and purposes already exist. He argues that understandings just

need to be uncovered:

What the phenomenologist aims at is not a theory of this or that phenomenon..... but an effort to come reflectively to terms with something that is, in some way, already 'evident'. It is in this sense a work of explication, elucidation, explicitation or description of something we, in some way, already understand, or with which we are already, in some way, familiar, but which, for some reason, we cannot get into clear focus for ourselves without more ado.

(Glendinning, 2008: 36)

Lester (1999) claims any type of analysis is necessarily messy, as the descriptions do not tend to fall naturally into common themes or neat categories and there can be many ways of making meanings and connections between the various individual experiences in different contexts using a mixture of research methods. Biliteracy development may be a multifaceted and complex phenomenon but it will be argued in this thesis that Hornberger's Continua of Biliteracy (2003) provides a comprehensive framework to analyse the interwoven factors of biliteracy that can emerge within qualitative research of this type. Furthermore the use of power differentials within the framework allows for a robust interrogation of policy, practice and research in multilingual societies. These continua of biliteracy are outlined and described in more depth at the end of chapter 4.

1.9 The structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of a further eight chapters. It is structured in a way to follow the child across the significant domains in her or his life - from the home, into the complementary Chinese school and then the mainstream primary school. Chapter 2 continues to build on the initial picture of the background to this study. It outlines in more detail the nature of the Chinese writing system and previous research into literacy learning in Chinese families and its interrelationship with culture. It then provides an overview of research into literacy practices in different socio-cultural contexts and multilingual communities.

Chapter 3 and 4 address the research design and methodology for the study. This begins with an explanation of the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings to a phenomenological research focus. In order to disentangle the various fieldwork procedures adopted during the course of this study, three separate sections are devoted to considering first of all an examination of the main methods employed for collecting data alongside issues of triangulation. This is followed by a description of field relationships and the ethical issues involved with the research. The limitations of the research approach and aspects of validity and reliability are touched upon and interwoven throughout the chapter. In the final section of chapter 4 a detailed description is given of Hornberger's Continua of Biliteracy before discussing the appropriateness of this model as an analytical framework for the present study.

Chapter 5 reports on Chinese parents' relationship with their children's literacy development. It begins with an account of the parents' educational background and their experience with specific literacies. The focus then turns to an examination of the parents' attitudes and approaches to literacy learning in the home.

In chapter 6 the focus moves from home to community influences. It describes approaches to teaching and learning at a complementary school in central Scotland. The school context is described and classroom observations are supported with the views of the teachers and children. In chapter 7 the shift in emphasis is to mainstream schools. It looks at the school's role in shaping the literacy development of bilingual children. Miscue analysis of reading and thinking aloud protocols are conducted with six Chinese children aged eight to nine years, in order to analyse in depth the reading strategies deployed by children in their attempts to gain meaning from both Chinese and English texts.

Chapter 8 presents a synthesis of the key research findings that have emerged from the preceding three chapters and considers how Hornberger's Continua of Biliteracy can be used as a model to analyse the qualitative data. The thesis concludes in chapter 9 with a summary of the main issues and the implications for educational policy and practice in multilingual Scotland. Finally, a critical overview of the study

is provided and suggestions for future research in this area are outlined.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The seven grey exhibition halls [of the Forest of Steles Museum] house 2,300 stone tablets inscribed with classical Chinese texts of history and philosophy. A total of 600,252 characters are carved in stone. The earliest inscriptions are over a thousand years old. I wander breathlessly through the stone library, exhilarated and absorbed. Each tablet is a living testament to the past, each one deserves an exhibition room to itself.

Ma Jian (2001: 170) Red Dust: A Path through China.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the literature associated with minority families and biliteracy acquisition, paying particular attention to Chinese families with children of primary school age. The chapter is divided for convenience into three interlocking sections. The first section describes the nature of the Chinese writing system together with an analysis of how children learn to read Chinese characters alongside a comparison to reading English where appropriate. This informs the second part which examines the literature associated with the approaches to learning and teaching Chinese literacy in primary schools in Chinese societies. This leads into the third section which examines the social construction of reading and writing beyond the boundaries of mainstream schools and outlines research conducted into literacy practices within multilingual communities, specially the home environment of the Chinese diaspora.

Part I

2.2 The nature of the Chinese writing system

To understand the ensuing discussion of children's experiences of learning Chinese literacy (outlined in chapters 5, 6 and 7), it is first necessary to provide a detailed analysis of the nature of Chinese writing system and the range and type of strategies children may employ to gain meaning from the Chinese script. Recently there has been a growing interest in the study of the Chinese language. This is partly as a result of political and economic developments and China's place within global trading systems. But also the nature of the Chinese script has motivated researchers and educationalists to investigate any universal aspects and/or different cognitive processes involved when children learn alphabetic and non-alphabetic scripts.

However, much of the discussion of Chinese orthography in western literature is based upon a simplistic notion of the Chinese script (Lee *et al.* 1986) and it is the intention of this section of the literature review to engage with some of these misconceptions. For instance, Chinese is frequently classified as a logographic script, but some linguists believe this is to be misleading (Li, 2002). A logographic script is one in which each word in the language is represented by a distinct symbol in the writing system. Whereas, Chinese is written with characters which map onto morphemes (the smallest meaningful element of writing) not words and each character is typically monosyllabic. Thus it is more accurate to describe the Chinese writing system as *morphosyllabic* or *morphophonological* (Wang *et al.* 1999). This can be compared to English, where many morphemes are represented by words containing more than one syllable (e.g. tennis, carpet).

The number of Chinese characters is large and open-ended and they are complex in configuration. The most common characters have nine strokes whilst the majority of characters in the *Dictionary of Chinese Character Information* are between six and thirteen strokes (Taylor and Taylor, 1995). Some characters are more complicated and contain more strokes such as [鸚] [(jīng1) “parrot” has twenty-eight strokes. Each stroke has its own unique order in writing as will be explained later. The largest Chinese dictionaries include about 56,000 characters, but most of them are archaic, obscure or rare variant forms. To read classical Chinese literature you need to be familiar with about 6,000 characters whilst children in primary school require knowledge of about 3,000 characters.

Although Chinese appears a very complex script for children to learn, some authors would argue that once you have mastered the structural framework it has a clear and useful logic. The literature generally categorizes Chinese characters into four kinds: pictographic, ideograms, compound elements, semantic-phonetic composites. Each of these character sub-groups will be dealt with in turn below.

1. *Pictographs* graphically represent things and thus give a visual clue to its

meaning. Examples are the characters for [山] (saan1) “*mountain*” and [門] (mun4) “*door*”. At one time these Chinese characters vividly looked like the things they stand for, but have become increasingly stylized over the years and so that now few of them resemble the objects they denote anymore such as the present-day character for [月] (jyut2) “*moon*”.

2. *Ideographs* graphically represent abstract ideas and thus symbolically give a clue to their meaning. Some early characters were indicators or demonstratives, which tend to represent relational concepts. Examples of ideographic Chinese characters are the [三] (sam1) meaning the number “*three*” and [上] (soeng6) representing “*up*” and [下] (haa6) meaning “*down*”.

3. Modern Chinese also contains *compound ideographs* in which the components demote a complex idea with a semantic connection. For, example the character [木] (muk6) “*tree*” uses the semantic connection to form the character [林] (lam4) “*wood*” and [森] (sam1) “*forest*”. Another example is [明] (ming4) “*bright*” composed of a combination of [日] (yat6) “*sun*” and moon [月] (jyut6) “*moon*”. There is a common misconception that Chinese writing is purely pictographic or ideographic whereas these categories of characters, which represent meaning and not sound, consist of only about 18% of all Chinese characters (Shu and Anderson, 1999).

4. *Compound characters*: The vast majority of Chinese characters (varies between 80-90% in the literature) are comprised of two graphemic parts. These are referred to as ‘*semantic-phonetic composites*’ by authors such as Taylor and Taylor (1995). These compound characters include a semantic element or radical or which gives a clue to their meaning, and a phonological component (the phonetic), which sometimes hints at their pronunciation. For instance, the character [燈] which means “*lamp*” and is pronounced (dang1). When the left character [火] appears on its own, it means “*fire*” and is pronounced differently (fo2). This left part 火 is the semantic radical that gives the reader a cue to the meaning of the character (as fire was required to light an oil lamp in the past). The right part of the character 登 is the

phonetic that gives the reader a cue to the pronunciation of the compound. When 登 appears on its own, it means “*climb*”, and is pronounced (dang1). Radicals can be lexical or non lexical in isolation. For example “mutual” has two characters [互相] (wu6 soeng1). However, despite some exceptions, Packard (2000) believes that the composition of these compound characters reflects the Chinese propensity for balance and symmetry.

There are two hundred and fourteen different radicals used in a Chinese dictionary and large groups of characters, sometimes numbering more than one hundred, share the same semantic radical. For example, the radical [口] (hau2) “*mouth*” is a component of the characters [吻] (man5) “*kiss*”; [唱] (coeng3) “*sing*”; [喝] (hot6) “*drink*”; [吃] (hek3) “*eat*”; [吹] (ceoi1) “*blow*” each clearly related to the meaning of “mouth”. The semantic information, activated by the radicals, is most likely to appear on the left side of the character but this is not always the case. Some times the radical is positioned at the top of the compound character such as radical [雨] (jyu5) “*rain*” above [雪] (syut3) “*snow*” or half-circle structures such as [風] (fung1) “*wind*”.

Chinese linguists speculate that about 80% of compound characters have their meanings indicated by these semantic portions (Tan and Perfetti, 1998). However, as the writing system has evolved over thousands of years the relationship between script and meaning has become less transparent. An illustration of this is [虹] (hung4) “*rainbow*” with the radical [虫] (cung4) “*insect*”. Taylor and Taylor (1995) suggest this association may originally have been because an insect’s wings have rainbow colours but the meaning has been lost over time. That said, the significance of the semantic radical is demonstrated by the fact that a Chinese dictionary uses the radical to help locate characters and many Chinese teachers use the radical in lexical building exercises. The importance of the semantic radical is also provided by de Courcy (2002) and Pine *et al.* (2003) who illustrate how learners of Chinese make use of visual imagery through narratives to explain the meaning of characters.

Growing evidence suggests that the properties of radicals (such as frequency and

position) affect the speed and accuracy of character recognition. Shu and Anderson (1997) showed that by time children reach third grade in mainland China, most children are functionally aware that the radicals in compound characters contain information about meaning. Furthermore, children armed with this knowledge, are able to infer the correct meaning of many of the Chinese characters they encounter, even if they are unfamiliar with the complete definition of the character. These children who develop radical awareness (could detect meaning from unknown characters) developed metalinguistic skills and thus became better readers.

A further misconception, contained within the ‘western’ orientated literature is that reading Chinese is through ‘complete graphic recognition’. The important link between phonological awareness and learning to read in English and other European languages (such as German, Italian), is clearly recognised by authors such as Goswami and Bryant (1990) whereas the idea that phonology plays a role in Chinese character processing has only recently gained attention (Tan and Perfetti, 1998). As already stated, standard Chinese compound characters contain a ‘phonetic’ component which may be used by Chinese readers when pronouncing Chinese characters. This has stimulated a fierce debate amongst academics and educators about the exact role of phonology in Chinese character recognition. As a whole, three intriguing questions emerge from current studies of Chinese reading:

- how reliable are phonetics when children learn to read Chinese?
- what is the value of explicitly teaching children this strategy as an aid to the pronunciation of characters?
- at what age do children potentially make use this of strategy automatically as they gain increasing knowledge of the composition of Chinese characters?

The literature shows that children may use the strategy of derivation to access the pronunciation of a character via the phonetic element. That is pronunciation of the whole compound character is derived from the pronunciation of its phonological component. For example, [碼] (maa5) “yard” can be directly derived from the

sound of its phonetic [馬] (maa5) “horse”. It is claimed that as children progress through primary school they demonstrate increasing awareness of phonetic information. But the age at which children begin to use this strategy when reading Chinese is open to debate as phonetic loaning presupposes knowledge of many characters (Taylor, 2002). That said, a number of researchers have demonstrated that children from the earliest stages of schooling make use of phonological strategies and those who make more effective use of these strategies read better than less able readers (who rely less on phonological strategies) in both Hong Kong (Ho and Bryant, 1997a) and mainland China (Shu and Anderson, 1999).

Despite the growing interest in the significance of phonology when reading Chinese, some studies prefer to point to several reasons why the importance of phonetic component during compound character recognition may be relatively weak, and thus of limited use for young readers of Chinese. First, about 15% of the most frequent characters are pictographic or ideograms and therefore contain no phonetic element. Secondly, phonetics are numerous, over eight hundred, according to Hoosain (1992) and most phonetics occur in only a few of the 6,000 most common characters. This can be compared to 200 semantic radicals. Even, Ho and Bryant (1997a) point out that characters are more phonologically regular in low-frequency words than high-frequency ones. Third, it is not always clear to the reader which component is the radical and which is the phonetic as their positions within characters can change – top, bottom, left, right, outside, or inside the character (albeit this phonetic element is located to the right of the semantic radical in about three quarters of cases). Fourth, there are many irregular compound characters that have a completely different pronunciation from the phonetic; for instance the phonetic [工] (gung1) sounds different in [江] (gong1) “river” and [紅] (hung4) “red”. According to Ho and Bryant (1997b) the most common miscues children make when reading is this type of error. That is they use the pronunciation of the phonetic radical to incorrectly pronounce the entire character.

The reliability of the phonetic component also depends upon the variety of spoken Chinese onto which the Chinese script is mapped (McBride-Chang, 2004). For example, Cantonese pronunciation is different from Putonghua in terms of syntax

and sentence construction. In fact, studies show that Putonghua-speaking children may have an advantage in mapping phonetic information as they read as the phonetic is originally based on spoken Putonghua (Chan and Wang, 2003). A useful analogy here is the challenges facing broad speakers of Scots, whose syntax deviates notably from the discourse of 'standard' English used for literacy and educational purposes in Scottish schools.

All the above reasons have led a number of researchers to conclude that the relationship between the phonetic and character pronunciation is tenuous and using the phonetic as a strategy for pronunciation of characters only helps reading to a limited degree. Thus Taylor and Taylor (1995) argue that readers should not routinely use a phonetic to discover the sound of a new character and characters should either be learnt individually through rote memorization or in context of sentences. Nor do they believe that readers should learn the pronunciation of characters through a list of phonetics (similar to lists of semantic radicals provided for learners to support compound character building). In fact, Cheung (2003) goes as far to state that a Romanized script (similar to *pinyin*) should be introduced for Cantonese speakers in Hong Kong to support the pronunciation of characters.

In summary, there are several strategies at work when reading the Chinese script. Lee *et al.* (1986: 127) encompasses these processes as follows:

We are not necessarily given cues about pronunciation from the components of the character, and only in some cases can we deduce meaning from the contribution of elements within or between characters. Learning one meaning and one pronunciation for a character is only the beginning. A much more complex, rich and subtle set of meanings must be acquired in order to be a skilled reader of Chinese.

(Lee *et al.* 1986: 127)

2.3 Homophones

In Chinese each character represents a syllable and there are only about four hundred possible spoken syllables (in Putonghua), or more when tones³ are taken into account. This can be compared to (4-8,000) several thousands of possible syllables in English. An example of a single Chinese syllable with four unique meanings, depending upon which four Putonghua tones is used to pronounce it, is the syllable (ma) as in [媽] with the high level tone (mā) meaning “*mother*”; [麻] with rising tone (má) meaning “*hemp*”; [罵] with falling-rising tone (mǎ) means “*horse*”; and [罵] with falling tone (mà) “*to scold*”.

However, even with tonal distinctions, this does not eliminate lexical ambiguities associated with the massive number of Chinese homophones (syllables which sound the same but have different meanings and are distinctive in writing). Indo-European languages have homophones such the English words by/buy/bye, bear/bare, blue/blew, son/sun; in French *le houx* (holly) *août* (August) *ou* (or) *où* (where) and in German *er ist* (he is) and *er isst* (he eats). But these homophones are of a relatively low frequency event compared to Chinese. It is claimed that on average eleven characters share one pronunciation but the distinctive graphic form provides ‘an escape from rampant homophony’ (Tan and Perfetti, 1998: 168). This has implications for children making the links between listening and writing during dictation, an activity commonly used in Chinese complementary schools in UK (Li Wei, 2000). In other words, the distinctive relationship between different pronunciations of characters may be ambiguous to the listener during these writing exercises (Wong, 1992). Whereas, Li and Yip (1998) believe that able Chinese readers can disentangle alternative homophone meanings during listening or reading by using contextual information and sentence comprehension.

2.4 Visual layout

³ Cantonese has nine tones 1= high level; 2=high rising; 3= mid-level; 4= low falling; 5= low rising; 6= low level; 7= glottalized high; 8= glottalized mid; and 9= glottalized low (Ho and Bryant, 1997).

The layout of written Chinese is strikingly different from that of alphabetic scripts, where words appear as transparent language units clearly marked by spaces in writing, giving readers of English visual-spatial cues. In contrast, a Chinese text is constructed by arrays of equally spaced, box-like characters. Chinese characters are written one character after another in vertical strings or horizontal lines with no cues as to which characters should be grouped into meaningful lexical units. In fact, research shows that spatial layout factors such as spacing, case and word length can affect visual encoding and related reading processes (Chen and Tang, 1998).

2.5 Word concept and comprehension

A further common misconception is that a ‘word’ in Chinese is represented by a single character and is monosyllabic. But as phoneme and syllable manipulation is required when reading English words, so segmentation of characters into words or ‘meaningful units’ is necessary when reading Chinese. According to the literature, word segmentation and identification may be difficult for novice Chinese readers for several reasons. First, a Chinese lexical unit can be made up of more than one character and, similar to English ‘words’, are multisyllabic. Examples include [詩人] (si1 jan4) “poet” (poem + person = poet); [星期六] (sing1 kei4 luk6) “saturday” (week+ six = sixth day of week); [貓頭鷹] (maau1 tau4 jing1) “owl” (cat+headed+eagle = owl); and [超級市場] (ciu1 kap1 si5 coeng4) “supermarket” (super+class+market+place = supermarket).

Another reason why word identification may cause difficulties for the Chinese reader is that the meaning of a Chinese character is not always transparent by itself and can be highly context-dependent. This is because many individual characters can be used by themselves as words in text but the majority of characters can also join others to form multiple character words with distinctively different meanings (Chen, 1999: 260).

According to Hoosain (1992) the effect of these properties outlined above (alongside the absence of word boundaries), means that for Chinese readers the need for ‘words’ is obviated on the textual level. He claims that the greater proportion of

multimorphemic words in Chinese (compared to English) means that characters act as word building blocks and lexical items find their natural application in writing. Thus comprehension is arrived at in the course of language use. Similarly, Packard (2000), who devotes a whole book to the question of whether the Chinese reader's attention is given to the morpheme or the word, suggests that concept of a 'word' is a western construct:

Knowledge of the Chinese language, along with the 'culture of language' that accompanies that knowledge, suggests to Chinese speakers that the notion 'word' is a concept that comes from the West and so is based on the structure of western-type languages. Therefore the intuition of many a Chinese speaker is that words simply do not exist in Chinese, and that the hearer simply 'gets the meaning' of an utterance as it unfolds, without it necessarily being parsed into word-sized units.

(Packard, 2000: 17)

Comprehension occurs in reading at a variety of levels – encoding, interpretation, integration, context strategies and in the literature there is a great deal of support for universal principles in reading across orthographies (Chen, 1999). However, due to the orthographic specific characteristics of Chinese, it is believed that Chinese readers may pay more attention to graphemic information contained within characters and Chinese readers are more sensitive to the linguistic properties of different types of lexical units.

This section has explored the nature of the Chinese script and attempts to give an insight into the kinds of strategies children may employ when reading Chinese characters. However, what needs to be borne in mind is that the empirical research outlined above mainly stems from the fields of psycholinguistics where experiments are carried out under carefully designed conditions. This predominantly quantitative research considers reading in developmental stages and is also conducted exclusively on children learning Chinese literacy full time in educational contexts. How this informs the types and range of the reading strategies deployed by Chinese children in Scotland, who only experience Chinese literacy outside of mainstream schools, will be explored in more depth in chapter 6 and 7. In order to provide a more rounded

explanation this view of literacy also needs to be considered alongside socio-cultural perspectives where children's knowledge of literacy is influenced by their interactions with others in natural settings.

Part II

2.6 Approaches to teaching children to read Chinese

The nature of the Chinese writing system has an impact on the way characters are taught. To shed light on the ensuing discussion of children's experiences of learning Chinese literacy in the home and the Chinese school it is necessary to outline likely approaches deployed by both parents and teachers, to teaching and learning the Chinese script.

In Hong Kong many children will have attended kindergarten from the age of three where they will be exposed to Chinese characters and learn to read and write (Li and Rao, 2000). Thus primary teachers normally assume that children entering school, at the age of six, will know more than a hundred common Chinese characters. By the age of ten they will be expected to have learnt about two thousand characters for limited literacy. The task of learning to pronounce and gain meaning from this number of visually complex characters may appear very challenging for both teachers and children alike.

A number of researchers are of the opinion that very few teachers across Chinese regions provide systematic instruction of the composition of characters in both mainland China (Shu and Anderson, 1999) and Hong Kong (Ho and Bryant, 1997b). This practice is frequently based on the belief that radicals and phonetics remain an imperfect guide to meaning and pronunciation of characters leading teachers to be suspicious that too much emphasis on morphological awareness would lead to unreliable guess work. In addition, it contradicts the Confucian educational ideology of memorization and practice of texts. As a result, some traditional teachers believe that sustained vocabulary growth and character recognition depends strongly upon rote learning and holistic sight-sound repetition. This view of teaching and learning

is reinforced by McBride-Chang and Chen (2003) who state:

Character pronunciations are directly associated with the unanalyzed visual images of the characters. As in China, some teachers might be interested in showing pupils that many characters are in fact decomposable, and the phonetics in some complex characters could function as sound cues. However, these individual attempts tend to be scattered and unsystematic. The Hong Kong Department of Education has not promoted the method by developing any concrete guidelines for character composition.

(McBride-Chang and Chen, 2003: 121)

On the one hand, Taylor and Taylor (1995) describe how children may learn to read by being taught as many characters as possible in a short time using methods called *systematic learning* and *concentrated character recognition*. Whereas, Shu and Anderson (1999) advocate more modern methods including preparing children for reading texts by teaching characters systematically making full use of the visual, semantic and phonetic relations among them.

It is generally agreed that individual teachers' instructional practices are closely related to their beliefs and conceptions of teaching (Lau, 2007). But what also needs to be borne in mind is that there are different orientations to Chinese literacy instruction, depending in which Chinese society the teaching occurs. Cheung and Ng (2003) raise a r

What is often neglected is that there are currently two Chinese scripts. First, the simplified characters introduced in mainland China in 1956 in an effort to facilitate literacy amongst the rural population by making 2,000 characters less ornamental. These simplified characters have also been used in Singapore since 1969 whilst the traditional characters are still used in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and by many overseas Chinese communities such as those in Scotland.

Further differences occur among countries with regard to initial reading instruction. From 1958, *pinyin* ('spell-sound') was adopted throughout China, to assist children

with the pronunciation of characters in the first 6-8 weeks of starting (first grade) elementary school. *Pinyin* comprises of the 26 letters of the English alphabet (plus ü) using consistent sound-symbol correspondence to transcribe the sounds of Putonghua. Although *pinyin* is a very shallow alphabetic script, many of the grapheme-phoneme correspondences are different from those in English (e.g. q corresponds to ch in church). In addition, diacritics are used above the vowel (letters) to indicate the four tones of Puntonghua (albeit in principle the accent represents tonal information across the entire speech unit, not just the vowel letter). *Pinyin* was also introduced into the Singapore curriculum, but later than in China, and its use is generally discouraged except for dictionary work (Rickard Liow, 1999).

In contrast, Taiwan uses a non-alphabetic phonetic system, *zhuyin fuhao*, ('sound annotating graphs') to support the pronunciation of Chinese characters. It is also known as *bopomofo* (ㄅ ㄆ ㄇ ㄉ) after the first four letters of this Chinese phonemic alphabet (bo po mo fo). The thirty-seven simply shaped symbols, fashioned out of ancient Chinese characters in 1918, each represent either the initial (onset) or the final sound (rime) of the Chinese 'syllables' in Mandarin. i.e. syllable onsets and rimes not phonemic (21 consonants and 16 vowels of spoken Mandarin). *Zhuyin fuhao* is learnt by Taiwanese children during first ten weeks of first grade before they are taught to read any Chinese characters and used throughout the primary school years until grade 5 to annotate new characters. Meanwhile, in Hong Kong children begin learning Chinese characters with no aids to pronunciation. Unfortunately, studies investigating the effectiveness of transliterations as a teaching aid appear scant although it is claimed that children in mainland China have greater phonological awareness compared to children educated in Hong Kong (Taylor, 2002).

At the same time all children attending kindergarten in Hong Kong learn oral English from the age of three years of age and are taught to read English words from five years of age (or earlier) using the '*whole word look-and-say*' strategy. This involves pairing the word's meaning with its visual representation for reading. According to Li (2009) the popularity of this method is a legacy of the traditional Chinese pedagogical methods originally designed for learning Chinese characters. The

children may be taught decoding at a syllable level (but not phonemic) because of the grapheme-phoneme irregularity where letter names are taught but not the sounds. This contrasts with Scotland where the phonic approach to reading English is increasingly more common (Ellis and Friel, 2003).

Traditional Chinese literacy instruction is also generally regarded as a text-based approach (*jiao shu* or ‘the teaching of books’) in which the main purpose is to make children understand a prescribed lists of texts. Lau (2007) describes how teachers usually spend a lot of time on explaining the background information, vocabulary, content and rhetorical usage of the recommended texts and believe children will develop their reading ability indirectly through intensive and repetitive recitation of the texts. This is captured well in the Chinese saying ‘read the book a hundred times and the meaning appears’. According to Lau (2006) prescribed text teaching and mechanical drilling in Chinese language classes in Hong Kong means good readers usually develop their own reading strategies indirectly and unconsciously.

A recent comparative study, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (IAEEA, 2006), compares the reading attainment of children in their fourth year of schooling (10 years of age) in forty-one participating countries across the globe (including England and Scotland). Amongst the three highest achieving countries were Hong Kong and Singapore (the highest ranking being Russia). Hong Kong students did particularly well in reading for informational purposes and reading comprehension processes, which means they are very good at interpreting, integrating and evaluating. Evidence of these advanced comprehension skills is in stark contrast to some assumptions made about Chinese children only being taught to memorise and recite texts.

Comparative studies, such as the one described above, provide some interesting insights into similarities and differences between children processing different orthographies. However, cross-cultural research of this type needs to be treated with a degree of caution due to a number of methodological flaws (Edwards and Redfern, 1992). Comparing approaches to reading across countries is not straight forward as already stated as initial reading instruction is not uniform across Chinese speaking

societies in terms of support scripts and the role of phonology. A number of significant variables also need to be kept in mind in terms of children's emergent literacy experiences and parents' attitudes and values; as well as the complex types of educational provision, effectiveness of teaching and learning and pupil motivation.

In the literature approaches to teaching and learning Chinese literacy is frequently conceptualised in terms of Confucian principles. Central to this educational philosophy is teaching by example and the pursuit of knowledge gained through extensive individual study, vigorous practice and memorisation of texts of former sages and scholars. Furthermore, importance is attached to didactic teaching gained through the careful analysis of the literary texts. Added to this is the adherence to regular tests and preparation for norm-referenced and competitive examinations, which have long dominated children's learning in Hong Kong (Bray and Koo, 2004). These descriptions are supported by a number of observers of the literacy practices in primary schools in Hong Kong (Poon, 2008), and mainland China (Liljestrum *et al.* 1982; Ingulsrud and Allen, 1999; Pine *et al.* 2003) as well as personal accounts and recollections of students' own schooling in mainland China (Parry, 1998).

A corollary of these ethnographic reports is the temptation to exaggerate divergent pedagogical approaches to literacy learning in schools in the east and west (Biggs, 1996). That is, educational ideologies based on Confucian heritage countries are perceived as one of socialisation and correct conduct where the teaching and learning relationship is one of transmission and compliant reception of information. In this scenario literacy is transparent, with an emphasis on it as carrier of knowledge. Usually, such descriptions contrast with portrayals of child-centred classrooms in 'western' countries exhibiting an emphasis on the child's active construction of knowledge whilst the teacher's role is to stage manage appropriate literacy experiences for the learner. In these settings children's collaborative talk, around authentic literacy tasks, is seen as serving as a conduit for the expression of their thinking based on the socio-cultural perspectives of Vygotsky (1962) and Bruner (1978).

Whereas, some observers paint a more realistic picture and point out that conceptions of teaching and learning are not fixed but vary within different educational contexts. In other words, it is spurious to over-simplify the apparent dichotomous pedagogies based on individual snapshots of what is portrayed as ‘typical’ experiences of literacy lessons in primary schools in both societies (Cortazzi and Lixian, 2001). In fact, post-1997 curricular reform in Hong Kong has emphasized new generic skills such as collaboration, communication creativity, critical thinking and problem solving (Lo, 2004). *Per contra*, it may be misleading to suggest whole class direct teaching or memorisation plays no part in ‘western’ schools when one considers prescribed synthetic phonic programmes currently in vogue in Scotland. Or for that matter, assumptions drawn from a textbook orientated curriculum in Chinese societies when over 97% of primary schools in Scotland use commercial resources such as reading schemes and phonic programmes to teach reading (Ellis and Friel, 2003).

This section has provided an insight into the different approaches to teaching and learning literacy across Chinese societies. This will inform the range of children’s literacy practices influenced by the role of both parents in the home and teachers at the complementary school (outlined in chapters 5 and 6) who have mainly experienced education and literacy learning in the aforementioned diverse cultural contexts.

Part III

2.7 Literacy practices in multilingual communities: towards a socio-cultural understanding of literacy

The focus of this section moves away from the characteristics of the Chinese writing system and takes a broader view of literacy, to explore the nature of family contexts and the home literacy environment and the subsequent impact on a child’s experiences with literacy. Since the 1980s there has been an increasing understanding that literacy is not simply a narrow cognitive skills-based process but literacy is determined by the groups and institutions in which individuals are socialised (Gee, 1992). The interwoven nature of literacy and cultural practices, Gee (1990: 43) believes, is ‘part of the very texture of wider practices that involve talk, interaction,

values and beliefs'. Street also looked beyond the traditional boundaries of reading and writing and considered literacy as an ideological phenomenon. That is, he recognises a multiplicity of literacies, embedded in specific cultural contexts and social practices in the home and the community and that these practices are always associated with relations of power and ideology (Street, 1993). The consequence of this view of literacy in a multilingual society, such as Scotland, for educators is to investigate a number of questions: what are the different socio-cultural conceptions of literacy that children bring to school?; what type of literacy practices are promoted in school and why do some literacy practices have more status than others?

Shirley Brice Heath (1983) was the first to document the influence of culture on literacy. Her seminal ethnographic research richly describes the varying ways children learn about literacy in the home context in three diverse social and ethnic communities in the Piedmont Carolinas of the southern United States. On the one hand, she describes children listening passively when adults read books to them, in 'Roadville', the white working class community. But these literacy events ceased as soon as the children start nursery. These descriptions are compared to 'Trackton', the black working class community where solitary reading was frowned upon. Books were scarce in the homes but a more oral tradition meant reading was considered a social event and Heath describes the evening newspaper read aloud on the front porch over an extensive period of time and whilst being commented on by others. In both of these communities there was a mismatch between the experiences of literacy in the home and that of school. As a consequence children experienced difficulties with literacy learning. In contrast, the predominantly white middle-class families were observed to engage in school-orientated activities, such as interacting with books and answering questions that prepared their children for literacy learning at school. Heath described these social interactions around reading and writing as 'literacy events' whilst Street (1984) preferred the term 'literacy practices' to describe the conceptions of the reading and writing process that people hold when they are engaged in the event.

Other early studies interested in literacy development outside of school have shown that children from different cultural backgrounds gain both knowledge, and awareness, of literacy through a number of experiences in the home as part of their daily lives (Teale and Sulzby, 1986; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Auerbach, 1989; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Taylor, 1993). Literacy practices noted by these researchers include interacting socially with adults and siblings in reading and writing situations, observing adults modelling literate behaviours, and exploring print independently. These studies countered the prevailing deficit view of the role of parents from deprived and minority culture families whom, it is assumed, fail to provide adequate literacy-related experiences for their children at home. In fact, literacy was actively encouraged and valued by the parents, as it was perceived as a route to education and success. Meanwhile, also in the U.S., Teale and Sulzby (1986) looked at diversity and observed young children from White, Black, and Mexican American low-income families and found literacy activities occurring in all the homes but the authors also discovered that there was as much variation within the different ethnic groups as between them.

In short, these original and influential ethnographic studies provided valuable insights into the social construction of reading and writing within varied family and community cultural contexts and pointed to the discontinuities between the child's learning experience in the home and dominant practice in mainstream classrooms. However, many of these authentic accounts concentrated on one side of the mismatch and offered limited observational detail of literacy practices in the school. Furthermore the investigations were located predominately in the United States and conducted in English-speaking homes.

2.8 Multilingual literacies

It was against this backdrop of research in the U.S. that a growing body of ethnographic research has been published in the last two decades documenting literacy practices in multilingual communities in urban Britain. Minns (1990) was one of the first to study the literacy experiences of young children from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. She describes two children's encounters with

religious literacy (which has its own rules that the children must abide by) and the family patterns which underlie the reading of sacred texts. Minns found all the children had been involved in literacy practices in the home but also shows how each child enters school with unique reading histories, learned socially and culturally at home.

Meanwhile, Saxena (1994) preferred to highlight the diversity within the Punjabi community in Southall, London and described the complex literacy awareness and three distinct script choices associated with an individual's religio-political affiliation and educational background. For instance, reading the Gurmukhi script was symbolic of a Sikh identity whilst Hindus had a historical attachment to reading the Devanagari script. On the other hand, Urdu literacy, written using the Perso-Arabic script, acts as an informative function (e.g. newspapers) for those who had their education in Urdu before the partition of India. The author describes the community as existing as 'a constellation of differing language and literacy practices and ideologies' (Saxena, 1994: 112).

Gregory (1996) challenged the common view, held by some educators, of bilingual children's limited early reading development. She has, for example, shown beneficial transferences from their experience with reading non-Roman scripts, in Bengali and Arabic classes, to reading and writing in English. The different methods of tuition between the English and Community classes were highlighted such as letter naming at school and chanting and blending sounds in their religious classes. On average, a remarkable eleven hours per week were spent by the children in literacy classes outside mainstream school but these rich experiences were not always viewed as providing preparation for teaching and learning literacy in the mainstream school. This is congruent with both Sneddon (2000) and Robertson (2004) who provide further insights into the nature of literacy experiences of multilingual primary aged children in complementary schools.

Research replicated by Brooker (2002) also contested the common myth, held by some educators, that there were low levels of literacy amongst minority ethnic

parents. She found that parents did not play a passive role in literacy learning and uncovered a wealth of reading practices and materials in the community:

All the Bangladeshi parents cite daily reading of the Qur'an and other religious texts or books of prayers, while some read extensively beyond this. Four families buy Bengali newspapers locally, and read and discuss them in the family group, while several mothers use the local library, or read their older children's school books with enjoyment and interest. Most families' evening routines are built around the comings and goings of the older children who attend mosque school, or have Arabic tuition at home, and an hour set aside for homework, as well as around family prayers and reading the Qur'an.

(Brooker, 2002: 37)

Similarly, Martin-Jones and Bhatt (1998) documented the fluid nature of the literacy repertoires and identities of teenage young Gujarati speakers in Leicester. This research recognised the number of interactional factors which influence the shaping of the individuals' linguistic proficiency, affiliation and inheritance (Leung *et al.* 1997). These include the opportunities (time and location) available for learning literacy, the degree of allegiance owed to their cultural inheritance and to personal and recreational interests. Although this research focused on young people, rather than primary aged children, an important discovery for Martin-Jones and Bhatt was that this shift in literacies was not necessarily in the direction of literacies associated with the dominant language or culture.

A number of researchers have also drawn attention to the ways in which family members co-construct the meanings of literacy. Rogoff (1990) uses the term 'guided participation' to stress the active role of children in both observing and participating in routine cultural practices alongside significant adults, in order to support new understandings. Gregory (2001) takes the notion of scaffolding one step further in her study of siblings of Bangladeshi heritage playing and reading together. Here the older siblings, who have more knowledge and expertise in the majority language, act as literacy 'teachers' by employing a series of intricate and finely tuned scaffolding strategies to support the younger children in becoming independent readers. Examples of these strategies include correcting or supplying a word or *recital* where

the child recites the complete passage, similar to prayer recital in Arabic. Gregory and Williams (2000) refer to this scaffolding during work and play as ‘*synergy*’ whereby multilingual siblings act as mediators and support agents to stimulate each other’s learning. Meanwhile, the term ‘syncretic literacies’ looks at the way children develop their own unique versions of literacy practices by blending the literacies from the different cultural worlds they inhabit. This in turn shapes the formation of new identities as children engage simultaneously with different literacies and respond to the values and beliefs associated with their different cultural experiences (Gregory *et al.* 2004).

Kenner (2005) also approaches literacy from the point of view of social relationships and family support networks but she prefers to use the eco-system metaphor to account for the diversity of ways in which families may operate. Within the eco-system the skills and teaching roles of different family members, including parents, siblings and grandparents, complement one another to foster children’s learning. Thus, each family operates as a ‘literacy eco-system’ as it is dynamic and open to change.

2.9 Literacy practices in Chinese homes

It is obvious that the range of research, outlined in the previous section, has predominantly taken place in urban locations in England, with significant minority ethnic communities. In addition, these studies have focused on literacy practices concerning minority languages other than Chinese. This is no doubt partly because previous research conducted into Chinese communities in Britain has encountered barriers to gaining access to Chinese parents. The reasons often cited for failure to include Chinese communities in research studies of this sort include the reserved nature of the participants, parents working unsocial hours in the catering business and difficulties in locating qualified and experienced bilingual and bicultural investigators (Li Wei, 1994; Taylor, 1987). Little is known, beyond anecdotal evidence, of the availability of literacy materials in Chinese homes.

As part of a wider study of family life, Sham and Woodrow (1998) looked at reading

and writing in the homes of five Hong Kong Chinese families in Manchester. All the parents sent the children to Chinese Sunday school and wished their children to become biliterate. Notes for food orders were written in Chinese characters and in one case study the mother encouraged her daughter to help write letters to relatives in Hong Kong to practice her Chinese writing. The only evidence in the home of writing in English was the children's homework, but there was an abundance of reading materials, such as school textbooks in Chinese, as well as Chinese newspapers and magazines.

Gregory (1993) was one of the first to describe one child's very different experiences of learning two writing systems in a mainstream school and in a Saturday Chinese school. The preferred learning style of the five-year-old 'Tony' was based on perfection through practice and attention to detail emphasised by his family. Gregory felt the parents and grandparents influenced this style as a result of their own experience of acquiring literacy, in the more formal education systems of China and Hong Kong.

A significant contribution to research into literacy practices in Chinese homes has been provided by An Ran (2000a) who discovered that mothers living in Reading drew on what they remembered of their own schooling in mainland China when teaching their children to read and write Chinese at home. That is, the parents took a highly structured instructional approach working from standard textbooks rather than interacting with texts associated with reading for enjoyment advocated by mainstream schools. In addition, details are given of the range of strategies employed by five mothers, such as demonstration, particularly in relation to how characters are written and visualized. For example, one mother used techniques to help children fix a picture of the character in their memories. For example, for the character [捕] "fish" one mother drew attention to the hook on the left side, and reminded her daughter that you use a hook to fish. An believes that the nature of the Chinese script makes it necessary to give considerable attention to the composition and grouping of characters in the early stages of learning to read. Whereas, with older more experienced readers the mothers tended to emphasize the structure and meaning of

the text as a whole. According to An Ran (2001) the difference in emphasis in approaches to teaching and learning may give rise to misunderstanding between Chinese parents and mainstream teachers.

In a study in London, Kenner *et al.* (2004) found Chinese mothers keen for their children to become literate in Chinese as well as English and they played a key part in supplementing their children's literacy learning at the Chinese school. In addition older siblings took on a teaching role and supported younger children in practicing Chinese characters. However, during peer teaching sessions at school six-year-old Chinese children produced their own interpretations of the explanations provided by their parents whilst teaching Chinese characters at home.

In conclusion, these socio-cultural studies reveal the complex ways children participate in a variety of literacy practices in different domains of their lives and their significance for children's evolving identities. This research is imperative, as teachers working in diverse settings need to draw on this knowledge to inform and underpin their pedagogical approaches to literacy learning. As, according to Wallace (2005), the wealth of understandings and experiences of literacy on the part of these children find little space in mainstream schooling. However, it may be claimed that a number of these ethnographic studies outlined above lack epistemological rigour for a number of reasons. First, observational evidence is usually drawn from a very narrow sample of children and families making the generalising of experiences across children problematic. Secondly, children's comparative literacy achievement lacks detail and scrutiny. Here, Cummins (2001) refers to the 'romanticising' of community languages where issues of underachievement and structural inequalities are glossed over. Another related difficulty is the general lack of scholarly discussion of the implications of the white researchers' role and identity or conversely the use of bilingual research assistants or intermediaries to authenticate the experiences of minority communities. An exception here includes the insightful discussion of fieldwork relationships by Creese *et al.* (2008a). Nevertheless, without an informed debate about the nature of knowledge generated, ethnographic studies of this type will continue to be subjected to further critique from wider academic circles. Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology influencing the present study and includes an

examination of the epistemological issues surrounding field relationships in multilingual communities.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Part I

3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses in detail the research methodology influencing the study. It starts with an explanation of a phenomenological research approach and the theoretical orientation underpinning the research design. In order to disentangle the various fieldwork procedures adopted during the course of this study, three separate sections are devoted to considering first a description of field relationships and a critical evaluation of the ethical issues involved with the research. The factors influencing the choice of participants will be outlined as well as noting the obstacles encountered during the research process.

The debate continues amongst qualitative researchers regarding issues of reliability and validity and the importance of providing such checking strategies when documenting a social world which is in constant state of flux. Some phenomenologists feel the discussion of reliability and validity gives respectability and credence to their work within the mainstream research community whilst others have criticized the imposition and over reliance of these positivist concepts in research articles (Agar, 1996). A number of authors have addressed this issue suggesting new ways of articulating the quality of qualitative research evidence. Lincoln and Guba (1985) for example, have proposed four major criteria for assessing rigor in qualitative inquiry - truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. Furthermore, they have offered phenomenologists an alternative terminology and suggest replacing objectivity with confirmability, reliability with dependability, and validity with credibility and transferability. Similarly, Mishler (1991) has introduced verification procedures such as dependability and trustworthiness into their research. In the intervening time, Anderson and Burns (1989) have added to this discussion and state that they have no quarrel with these new concepts, but feel these substitute terms are just different labels for the same concepts. Given the fuzzy nature of the debate and lack of consensus in research

methodology literature the more familiar terms validity and reliability will be used for convenience and where appropriate throughout this chapter.

3.2 A theoretical framework for the research

As outlined in the previous chapter there is a dearth of educational research in Scotland on the biliteracy development of minority groups (Powney *et al.* 1998; Netto *et al.* 2001; McPake, 2005). Thus any examination of this issue is likely to be breaking new ground. At the beginning of the research process I entered the field with a general question in mind:

- what are the experiences with literacies of Chinese families, particularly primary aged school children?

For this reason, phenomenology, with its interest in the exploration of human experience through detailed descriptions of the people being studied was the most appropriate theoretical perspective for this research. Phenomenology translates into studying a small number of participants through extensive engagement and strives to portray phenomena from the personal and contextual perspective of those who experience them (Wilson Mott, 1992). This involves the gathering of as detailed a picture as possible or 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) using a variety of qualitative research methods such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations. As Spiegelberg (1975) (as cited in Mott, 1992: 3) puts it, the aim of phenomenologically inclined research is 'to explore, scrutinize and describe the phenomena so as to enrich our awareness of the richness of experience'.

Edmund Husserl, (1859-1938) the late 19th century German philosopher, whose views shaped modern phenomenology, believed that through rigorous examination of phenomena as they are presented in one's consciousness, a person could come to intuitively know the essence of those realities. As a consequence these realities are made meaningful and given a semblance of everyday familiarity (Gubrium and Holstein, 1995). Husserl believed that these aspects of experience are shaped by individuals' beliefs, attitudes and values.

Husserl, like other interpretivists opposed those who sought reliable measures of social life. Such 'positivists' viewed the social world as structured and governed by laws which are 'out there' or separate from the individual. As such, this orthodoxy stressed that human issues can be identified, predicted or controlled to yield universal statements of scientific theory (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Husserl and his phenomenological successors (Schutz 1972; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962; Spiegelberg, 1975; Van Manen, 1997) reject this natural science as a theoretical and analytical model for researching encounters within society and prefer to grasp the socially constructed meanings that individuals and communities give to their actions and institutions.

This view of people and the world as inextricably linked in cultural, in social and in historical contexts address the present study's focus on biliteracy and Ferdman's (1990) belief that a person's experience with literacy is historically embedded, culturally produced and socially constructed. Various researchers have adopted phenomenology as a research methodology in order to comprehend the meanings of a lived experience from the perspectives of those who experience them. Consequently, this approach has traditionally been confined to disciplines such as health care, counselling and occupational therapy as these fields involve eliciting personal information from participants using in-depth interviews. In contrast, applying a phenomenological flavour to qualitative research within educational circles has been largely ignored. Exceptions include work by Giorgi (1986) and Martin *et al.* (1993) which reveals how various conceptions of learning are experienced by different learners.

A number of benefits have been put forward for adopting a phenomenological based inquiry. Laverty (2003) argues that phenomenology more fully captures the dynamics and evolving nature of human experience and thus opens the field to discussions of reflexivity and accountability in a way that other methods do not. Furthermore a phenomenological research approach brings to the fore the various ways in which individuals conceive of, understand or experience something from

their own perspectives. These valuable insights are therefore effective at challenging structural or normative assumptions enabling the findings to inform and challenge educational policy and action as outlined in the final two chapters.

3.3 A search for key questions

While the methods described in the next chapter are presented in a structured or step-by-step fashion, it is important to note that the investigative process itself was more often than not cyclical rather than linear. A linear research design starts out with a well-defined problem or a hypothesis to be tested generated from previous research. As already stated I entered the field with a general question in mind. The initial fieldwork was exploratory in nature, data was collected and analysed to discover new meanings, raise new questions and give direction to the next phase of the fieldwork. This commitment to continual re-examination of data in the light of emerging themes and developing arguments is the principle feature of *grounded theory* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In this way, the research process is iterative and reflexive until a clear picture emerges.

Consequently, as the research process evolved I began to formulate a number of key questions which would help me understand the experiences with literacies of Chinese families, particularly primary aged school children:

1. What are the attitudes and approaches to literacy in Scottish Chinese families?
2. What are the approaches to teaching and learning literacy at a Chinese complementary school in Scotland?
3. What strategies do Chinese children deploy when reading English and Chinese?

The preference for ‘what’ questions rather than ‘why’ is intended to build up a detailed picture of literacy experiences as seen from a phenomenological perspective. That is generating insights and emergent interpretations of biliteracy which are new to the researcher though often taken-for-granted by the participants involved in those settings.

In common with other modes of qualitative inquiry a number of criticisms of a phenomenological approach have emerged. Central to this are issues surrounding the validity of the research when its scope is limited to a small number of interactions with participants making transferability to a wider population unlikely. As such, it can be argued that the findings are of little use to policy and practice and to wider understandings of social phenomenon, such as the importance of educational achievement.

Despite these complaints it will be argued within this study that the phenomena of biliteracy is explored in depth as opposed to breadth and as such insights into personal experience are situated and contextualised. Thus replication is rendered highly unlikely when individual children take part in everyday literacy practices conducted in naturalistic settings. Furthermore, these socio-cultural fields are determined by unique circumstances and by negotiation amongst the collective personalities of those involved (Block, 2003).

On this point, Denzin (1988) believes that the undue attention is frequently paid to the importance of being able to generalise across cases which get in the way of a detailed focus on individual characteristics of particular people. He states:

By making qualitative research 'scientifically' respectable, researchers may be imposing schemes of interpretations on the social world that simply do not fit that world as it is constructed and lived by interacting individuals.

(Denzin, 1988: 432)

Interestingly, discussions in the research methodology literature pay scant attention to the danger seeking of universal truths or generalizing about aspects of cultures where simplification can produce narrow stereotypes of cultural groups.

Another complaint frequently directed against phenomenology is the perceived lack of coherent argument and the incomprehensible nature of some of the writings. Such criticisms have been leveled against Jean-Paul Sartre, whose texts have been

described as a ‘monster of unreadability’ (Johnston, 2006). But the intention of this thesis is not to get embroiled in dense philosophical deliberations, such as the researcher’s capacity to convince or bring participants back to what they already know (Glendinning, 2008), as space does not allow for this. Rather, it is an attempt to shine a phenomenological light on what the researcher observes within the paradigm of culture and engage in reflexive clarity.

Further criticisms targeted at phenomenological inquiries relate to the role of the researcher, the ‘claiming’ of others’ experiences and the invasion of participants’ personal worlds. This concern becomes more sensitive when it involves the incursion into the lives of young children from minority communities. How these methodological and epistemological tensions were reconciled deserve more consideration and will therefore, be more fully explored later in the chapter.

3.4 Multiple methods

As stated earlier, social reality is constructed in different ways in different contexts. This is of particular interest when the nature of lived experiences of Chinese children settled in Scotland straddles across different literacies and practices are conducted in various socio-cultural spaces. This study has, therefore, adopted a three dimensional approach similar to that advocated by Bhatti (1999) who described the experiences of Asian families in the south of England. An advantage of this design is it enables the researcher to gather evidence from a variety of domains where the child is exposed to literacy learning and from different perspectives. For example, it would be neglectful to dismiss the important perspective of the parents’ role in their child’s literacy acquisition or ignore approaches to Chinese literacy instruction gained at a weekend school. So, unlike some of the previous research into literacy practices in multilingual communities, outlined in chapter 2, the present study is neither confined to the mainstream classroom or the home or the complementary school.

A significant feature of this research project is, therefore, the cutting across and linking all levels critical in a child’s life where they are exposed to literacy learning. At the home level I interviewed parents. At the mainstream school level children reading in English, conducted reading conferences with children and looked at their

educational records. I organised children reading in Chinese in collaboration with a bilingual home school liaison worker. Furthermore, conversations were held with head teachers, class teachers and support teachers. At the complementary Chinese school I interviewed teachers, observed lessons and had conversations with the children in the classroom. In addition, I participated in other aspects of the community life such as weddings, prize giving at the school and events at the community centre. At this juncture it is worth stating that I have not sought to produce a comprehensive description of the total experiences associated with biliteracy, as this is beyond the scope of the present study. Rather I have sought to generate a rounded and rich account of a sample of children and their families.

A number of researchers have referred to the limitations of this ‘cumulative’ or ‘holistic’ approach. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:189) address this point stating that ‘one should not adopt a naively ‘optimistic’ view that the aggregation of data from different sources will unproblematically add up to produce a more complete picture’. Similarly, Silverman believes that this ‘whole picture’ is an illusion which ‘speedily leads to scrappy research based on under-analysed data and an imprecise or theoretically indigestible research problem’ (2000: 99).

However, this combination of research methods supports the triangulation of data. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) believe this validation technique enhances confidence in the research findings. As different methods or sources are cross-checked and corroborate each other, the quality of the data is improved and in consequence the accuracy of the findings. For example, Glendinning (2008) points to the unreliability of man [*sic*] as a witness, whilst Cohen *et al.* (2007: 397) state that ‘what people do may differ from what people say they do and observation provides a reality check’.

Clark and Moss (2001) effectively use the *Mosaic Approach* as a methodological framework for collecting evidence about aspects of young children’s lives. It combines a range of voices to compliment the child’s and involves educationalists and parents as co-constructors of meaning. Such participatory and inclusive methods support the ‘mosaic of evidence’. In the present study the research methods are not

mutually exclusive, but are used to investigate participants' experience from more than one standpoint such as the observation of teaching and learning at Chinese complementary school is reinforced with the children's perceptions of this. In the same vein, the accounts of the literacy practices in the home are captured from the different perspectives of the parent and child.

When drawing on multiple methods, researchers generally call for a balance across contexts in order to make the research as inclusive as possible without any predispositions for assigning more importance to one method or another. That said, the fieldwork in the present study requires the researcher to cross boundaries and accordingly the data gathering techniques must remain flexible and sensitive to the social, cultural and institutional context in which researcher is operating. Integral to this is the researcher's critical role in pursuing access arrangements and fostering field relationships. This will be elaborated on in the next section of this chapter.

3.5 Entering the field

The setting for this piece of research is the central belt of Scotland. It represents the location of a small and scattered ethnic minority population. Whilst minority groups only make up one in every twenty-five pupils there is considerable ethnic, cultural and linguistic variation among this small population. For example, figures held by one of the Bilingual Support Services covering one of the Local Authorities in the present study states over forty five different languages are spoken by school aged children and young people in the home. Within primary schools in central Scotland, Chinese constitute the second largest minority group after Pakistanis. This reflects the national Scottish statistics, which differ from those in England where the Chinese have historically constituted the third largest ethnic minority since the 1950s, after those of African-Caribbean and Indian sub-continent background.

The main focus of the research will be on fourteen households with different migration histories, length of residence in Scotland, educational backgrounds and socio-linguistic profiles. The primary spoken language in all the homes is either Cantonese or Hakka. This information is presented in chapter 5. Class was not

considered as a significant variable as previous research has highlighted limitations of using this type of categorisation. Francis and Archer (2005a) claim the nature of the Chinese communities' association with the food catering business challenge traditional British understandings and applications of social class. The vast majority of the parents described their occupation as a 'chef' or 'working in' a takeaway or restaurant and it proved difficult to distinguish if the parents actually owned their own business. Similarly, mothers referred to themselves as 'housewives' yet they frequently were involved in the business as kitchen staff, cooks or serving customers at the counter.

From these fourteen families, six children were chosen for closer investigation. These children who became the focus of the study all shared three criteria: first, they are all boys attending mainstream primary schools in the central belt of Scotland; second, they are between eight and nine years of age; third, the children were old enough to have developed both Chinese and English literacy skills. These children are at the 'transitional' phase of reading (in both Chinese and English) where they are beginning to integrate a variety of reading strategies and able to adapt their reading to a range of purposes and texts (Barrs *et al.* 1988).

When the initial design was put into practice, I soon realized that I would have to reduce the sample size. Accessing a large sample of children proved particularly arduous given the nature of the small Chinese community and self-imposed restrictions placed upon the participant's narrow age range. Further barriers to involvement included families relocating home, children transferring to another school and children using their right to refuse to participate. This ethical issue of consent will be discussed in the next section. Added to this, the process of gaining access and building a trusting relationship with children was much more time consuming than originally anticipated. As Silverman (2000) notes, one of the strengths of qualitative research is the ability to change the size of sample during the course of the research. Although the sample size may appear small, it is sufficient enough to reveal commonalities, differences and variations between the participants' involved in the study.

3.6 Negotiating access and field relationships

Gaining access to most organisational settings is not a matter to be taken lightly but one that involves some combination of strategic planning, hard work and dumb luck.

(Van Manen, 1988: 11)

The multi-site fieldwork necessitated navigating multiple layers of access arrangements and establishing positive working relationships with a variety of people. This proved to be the most challenging aspect of the research process as a great deal of patience and diplomacy was required. While the potential ‘gatekeepers’ outlined here are described in a hierarchical or top-down manner (i.e. from Director of Education to child) it is important to note that these negotiations did not fit such a prescribed sequence but frequently occurred simultaneously and remained on-going throughout the research process. This is summed up well by Delamont (2002) who states:

issues of topic choice, selection of research sites and sampling cannot be separated from access negotiations... These (sic) access negotiations are likely to be continuing and even may be continuous and continual.

(Delamont, 2002: 90)

The initial approach was via letters to the Directors of Education, covering four different Local Authorities within central Scotland, requesting access to schools for the purpose of educational research. With this agreement, letters were then sent to the head teachers asking permission to carry out research in their school. The research was eventually conducted in six mainstream schools. This was followed by a face-to-face meeting with the head teacher to explain the aims of research and its data collection methods, including the impact this would have on class teacher and pupil time. It was stressed at these meetings that the benefits of the project would be mutual. That is, the school would profit from the research by gaining a deeper understanding of the needs of Chinese and other bilingual pupils and the research process would foster home-school links. With the head teachers’ assistance the class teachers were then consulted. Finally, Educational Support Services were informed

and discussions held with relevant staff to outline the research and inform them that I would be conducting research with children whom they were supporting at the time or had supported in the past. On occasions these meetings also required permission to be granted from their line-managers.

My past employment as a peripatetic EAL support teacher and manager of a Local Authority Bilingual Support Service, in conjunction with my present role as an ITE tutor involves visiting schools and working in collaboration with staff. These experiences frequently acted as a 'passport' to entry to mainstream schools. However, a number of obstacles were encountered when gaining and sustaining access to schools. One school refused to take part in the research, with the head teacher stating in a letter that they had no Chinese pupils that could participate in the research. This was despite already having gained permission from the local authority and the parent of the child involved. There were also a number of practical difficulties with school-based research. On numerous occasions I was denied access to classrooms and children because of other demands. These ranged from setting for language and mathematics to practicing for Christmas concerts. It necessitated working around curriculum timetables whilst accommodating the agendas of senior management teams. This required perseverance and sensitivity to intruding on people's time.

Negotiating access to the Chinese school did not follow a similar pattern as described above. I knew the head teacher well in a personal and professional capacity and I had been involved with the school on a consultative basis in the past. The research was therefore cleared after a telephone conversation. However, the nature of the school set-up created some obstacles. Some of the teachers were parents whilst others were international students from the local university on a one-year course. These students had agreed to support the school on a voluntary basis. This led to a lack of continuity amongst teaching staff and subsequent communication difficulties. On occasions my presence at the school has not been discussed with any of the staff in advance and the task of explaining the research was left to me. In addition, the nature of the Chinese school curriculum meant that my requests to observe classes were sometimes met

with the reply ‘they are just preparing for a test’. Notwithstanding this, I remained conscious of my status as a ‘research guest’ (Delamont, 2002) and the ethical issue of intrusion was constantly borne in mind as I attempted to deal with this sensitively throughout the course of the study.

I cannot speak Cantonese or Hakka and the majority of the parents in the study have limited English. In order to collect the data in the three different sites of the research I required the assistance of a Chinese interpreter and translator who could negotiate access to the families, support observations in the Chinese school and who also had experience of working with children in primary schools. The initial intention was to use only one research facilitator for continuity and consistency but a number of circumstances beyond my control resulted in the collaboration with three different research assistants by the end of the research. First, I approached Yin Ying Cairney, who was employed as a peripatetic Bilingual Support Teacher. She helped with the first eight interviews with parents before withdrawing because of ill health. Second, I sought the help of Kam Li a home-school liaison worker. With Kam’s assistance the remaining six parent interviews were completed before he relocated to another country. I had developed a close relationship with both Yin Ying and Kam in the past as we all worked in the same local authority Bilingual Support Service. Also I was very familiar with their work having collaborated with them on language awareness projects in primary schools and accompanied them on visits to Chinese homes. Both these research facilitators were keen to take part in the research as they recognised the positive impact it would have on their own personal and continuing professional development (CPD).

Initial contact had already been made to all of the households by the research assistants before the interviews with parents commenced. This was facilitated by the fact that their main employment consisted of supporting the Chinese children in educational settings. In addition, home visits were an important element of their professional duty to establish communication with parents and prepare profiles of the pupils they support in schools. Therefore, some of the difficulties associated with undertaking home-based research (Hannon and Weinberger, 1994) were absent in

that a rapport and trust had already been established over a period of time with the participants of the research. How the interviews with parents were conducted (and the challenge of working with two layers of interpretation) is explored in the next chapter.

Finally, I approached Ka Yee Chiu (Kam's replacement as home-school liaison worker in the Bilingual Support Service) who was known by all the children who became participants in the research. Ka Yee's role in the research required participating in joint observations in classrooms at the weekend Chinese School and collecting data for the Chinese reading sessions. Due to the time consuming nature of these activities I felt it was necessary that appropriate recompense was guaranteed for these professional interpreting and translation skills. This aspect of the research was financially supported by a research committee grant from the University of Edinburgh. The nature of the joint observations and miscue analysis of reading is explored in more depth in chapter 4.

All the research assistants had a number of credentials in common. All were born in Hong Kong and all had the experience of both the education systems in Hong Kong and Scotland. At the time of the research all were working in the field of education and had wide experience of interpreting and translation within educational settings for a variety of purposes. These included Additional Support Needs (ASN) case conferences, parental consultations, and home-visits with EAL support teachers.

The deployment of several Chinese research assistants is similar to Guthrie's (1985) ethnographic study of bilingual education in a Chinese-American community. A potential limitation of this type of fieldwork is comparability of data, since differences in the research assistants' view of the world will lead to different perspectives on the phenomenon being investigated. On the other hand, an advantage of this method was each individual research assistant offered a distinctive insight into the Chinese community and they brought their own unique interpretation on the research process. For example, two assistants were Hakka speakers whose families originated from the

rural New Territories part of Hong Kong whilst another was from the more wealthy and educated urban area of Hong Kong Island. Furthermore two of the research assistants had experience of both sides of the Chinese school - one as a former pupil, the other as a teacher. These important and diverse perspectives of each research assistant were incorporated into field notes throughout the research process. Goldstein (1995) claims it is this knowledge that strengthens the analysis of data. Li Wei's (1994) sociolinguistic study of the Chinese community in Newcastle upon Tyne provides important insights into the politics of field relationships and the socio-political characteristics of the different divisions that exist within the Chinese population in Britain.

As well as acting as interpreter and cultural broker for the parents, the research assistants' role also involved the drawing up a list of parents whom they felt would cooperate in the research. When choosing the parents the research facilitators used several criteria such as, the quality of the relationship, their aptitude as participants, their willingness to talk and evidence of displaying a wide range of opinions and life experiences. This is characterised as *opportunistic sampling*, where the aim is follow leads during the fieldwork and select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under investigation (Patton, 1990).

It may be argued that the selection of the Chinese families is a form of systematic bias as evidence gained from parents and their children is distorted and unrepresentative of the views of the Chinese community. The very nature of the parents' involvement with the research may reflect those who are committed and show a keen interest in their children's education. However, it needs to be borne in mind that research carried out on Chinese communities in Britain in the past has highlighted some significant barriers in gaining access to Chinese parents (Sham, 1997; An Ran, 2001; Francis and Archer, 2005a). Wong states:

Chinese communities in Britain...are reserved, conservative and

complex. Many of the Chinese people are reluctant to reveal their problems as they are afraid of 'losing face'...the majority of Chinese parents work unsocial hours, including weekends, in the food catering business...it is therefore not surprising that previous research... indicates that gaining access to Chinese people is a major problem in conducting research on Chinese communities in Britain

(Wong, 1992: 6)

As detailed in chapter 2, some of the literacy-related research conducted within Chinese families frequently relies on single case studies and the subsequent inherent danger of homogenizing the cultural meanings of literacy to which children are socialized. Other research raises questions of credibility as the participants are hand picked and based on convenient close personal relationships with the fieldworker. Or in the case of An Ran (2001) the small sample of Chinese parents is restricted to an 'elite' group of doctoral international students.

Although, the fourteen families in the present study are not a random sample, all were unknown to the researcher at the outset of the study and they do represent 'authentic' members of settled Chinese community in central Scotland. My intention here is not to produce broad generalisations but attempt to document diversity and gain an understanding of variation within the Chinese community. As such, the sample is sufficient in number to explore the phenomenon under question, portray idiosyncratic experiences and reveal the heterogeneity of the settled Chinese community in central Scotland in terms of migration patterns, educational background, biliteracy proficiency and attitudes to developing different literacies.

3.7 The role and identity of the researcher in cross-cultural research

Studying culture today is like studying snow in the middle of an avalanche.

(Agar, 2006: 2)

As touched on in chapter 1 the philosophical roots of phenomenology pose particular moral and ethical challenges for the researcher seeking to better understand and interpret the lived experience of others. This debate entails many complicated issues, such as the relationship between the researcher and the participants, the researchers' ideology and cultural background and finally, the researchers' responsibilities to

determine the findings in a value-free manner.

One of the most frequent questions posed to the researcher during the course of this study was how can you produce authentic research when you do not share the language and culture of those you seek to investigate? This section attempts to discuss this legitimate question concerning the researcher's cultural identity and perspective.

As already mentioned in chapter 2 the methodological discussion surrounding the role and identity of researchers studying literacies in multilingual settings has been patchy and inchoate. This can be compared to fierce debates exercising social scientists for the last two or three decades regarding the nature of anti-racist (Griffiths 1998), feminist (Stanley and Wise, 1993, Hertz, 1997) and disability (Corker, 1999) epistemology. The controversial issues and dichotomous views have centered on who is best placed to engage in valid research and the researcher's potential role in promoting social justice through a politicised research agenda.

The radical standpoint, adopted by 'emancipatory' researchers (on gender and race for instance), is to argue that the researcher has the knowledge and power to interpret reality and make apparent the inequalities inherent within the structures of society (Lyle, 2004). Thus, the researcher acts as an advocate for marginalized and disempowered social groups and disseminates research findings to facilitate change in order to improve the participants' life conditions. Here there is a tendency for researchers to seek answers that support their own preconceived notions. A number of academics have taken issue with this argument of 'epistemological privilege' believing that researchers should not position themselves as 'experts' or elevate their own perspectives over that of the participants (Davis, 2000). This echoes the debate within phenomenological circles where the true search for knowledge requires freeing oneself from any pre-conceptions or 'bracketing' subjective experience.

Becker's eminent essay '*Whose side are we on?*', based on a study amongst 'deviants', questions the researcher's relationship to the group they study and guards

against the notion of one-sided research. Becker argues:

What we are presenting is not a distorted view of 'reality', but the reality which engages the people we have studied, the reality they create by their interpretation of their experience and in terms of which they act. If we fail to present this reality, we will not have achieved full (sociological) understanding of the phenomenon we seek to explain.

(Becker, 1973: 174)

Another critique of cross-cultural research is that white researchers cannot elicit meaningful data from black and minority ethnic respondents because of the inherent differences in life experiences and power relationships between them. This argument can also be extended to those working with a bilingual research assistant, which some believe reflects a form of institutionalised racism, in that situations are created where there is a 'black recipient' and a 'black mouthpiece' but more often than not a 'white authority' person guiding and controlling the research process (Barnett, 1989: 92).

A further criticism of the 'cultural outsider' is the danger of confirming and perpetuating stereotypes and endorsing racist assumptions held by the dominant population when a researcher is unfamiliar with the participants' view of the world. A situation may occur where the researcher's carries cultural prejudice based on their own life experience outside of the culture under investigation. Here Griffiths (2003: 41) believes there is a fine line between giving the participants a voice whilst running the risk of 'exploitation and betrayal'.

Thus it may be argued that such studies ought to be conducted only by presumed members of these minority groups. That is, taking on the research position that 'you need to be one to understand one'. The practical advantages associated with this lived familiarity and shared cultural inheritance during the research process cannot be refuted as it includes knowledge of the language and tacit awareness of cultural rituals and rules of behaviour whilst conducting access arrangements, interviews and participant observations. As Mani (2006) believes having a familiarity of how assertion and privacy are viewed on a cultural level by participants facilitates

communication and successful collaboration.

There are other views that contrast with this. Francis and Archer (2005a), who conducted research on the Chinese community in London, recognised the less than ideal nature of this ‘insider’ compatibility. They claim that this ‘matching’ exercise between interviewer and interviewee may disguise the ‘insider’ researcher’s own cultural worldview during fieldwork and data interpretation. As such data gathered might be misconstrued in order to fit the researcher’s own perceptions, values or linguistic background. Similarly, there is a concern that the minority researcher is so immersed in their own culture that it leads to the problem of over-familiarisation, so that they may be oblivious to the fact that themes exist during analysis.

Thompson (2000) suggests that there are advantages to the researcher in not being a member of the minority community under study; that it is possible for an outsider to act naively and ask further questions or for clarifications that an insider would be expected to know. In addition, it is possible for an outsider to elicit more knowledge from the participants in a more naturalistic manner, simply because as an outsider they would not be expected to know or understand certain things. An illustration of this is asking for clarification and posing additional questions during interviews to seek to further understanding of issues under discussion.

Bhatti (1999) reflected on this ‘*us* and *them* discourse’ and the diverse ways individuals relate to one another during social interaction in her inquiry into an Asian community in England. Despite being linguistically acceptable to the participants she believed the relationships with those she came into contact with were subject to hierarchical differences as a result of her age, gender and status as an academic and researcher, whilst recognising that even these categories are in danger of oversimplification and homogenous understandings.

A number of contributors to this debate have warned against creating false dichotomies assuming ‘culture’ is a fixed category and consequently the basis of cultural solidarity. Okely (1996) views cultural identities as proliferating, contested, negotiated, and taking on multiple forms within minority ethnic groups as a result of

globalisation and migratory movements within our contemporary world. In this sense, the culture possessed by one person has been pluralised and culture remains relative and defined in terms of values and cultural practices shaped by political and power relationships in social structures and institutions (Agar, 2006). Therefore, it may be argued that a preoccupation with the researcher's identity is outmoded as the researcher's relationship to the community is not fixed but is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated through everyday interactions. Thus researchers are rarely insiders or outsiders, rather our relationship with the fieldwork is always conducted in a relationship with many 'others' (Griffiths, 2003).

Kearney (2003: 110) draws on Ang (1994) to summarise the contradictions at play within the complex nature cultural identities:

The post-modern ethnicity can no longer be experienced as naturally based upon tradition and ancestry, it must be a provisional and partial site of identity, which must be constantly (re)invented and (re)negotiated...In short, if I am inescapably Chinese by descent I am only sometimes Chinese by consent. When and how is a matter of politics.

(Ang 1994: 18)

Some phenomenologists have rejected the bipolar 'insider' versus 'outsider' discourse and prefer to use an *etic* and *emic* approach to cross-cultural research. This terminology draws on the language of literacy where the *etic* approach (from *phonetics*, the study of the sounds made in spoken languages) which attempts to describe data using a single system applicable to all languages and cultures of the world. On the other hand, an *emic* approach (from *phonemics*, the study of sounds as they relate to the structure of a language) attempts to discover aspects of language and describe them in relation to each other as they are used in context. Researchers usually aspire to employ both *etic* and *emic* approaches within both the ethnography of communication (Creese, 2005) and childhood studies (Rogoff, 2003). However, given the lack of agreement about the interpretations of *etic* and *emic* in the literature this thesis retains the traditional 'insider' versus 'outsider' terminology as there is no denying the potential criticisms of conducting phenomenological research as a non-Chinese person.

As in any multi-method research approach there is a complex network of role relationships and standpoints employed by the researcher in all its phases. That is, the form of participation varies depending on the circumstances in which the researcher find themselves and the ways individuals react or respond to the researcher. For example within this study, my perceived roles are not fixed but remain interchangeable. This is illustrated by the different encounters and collaborations in the three sites of the research. Firstly, I accompanied the research assistants on each visit home visit and in their role as interpreter of my questions a bridge was provided between the parents as participants and me as an outsider researcher. Secondly, by special arrangement with the Chinese teachers I observed the classes along with the research assistant. In this process we drew on each other's strengths – the research assistant's interpretation skills and insider understanding of the Chinese School combined with my knowledge of classroom pedagogies drawing on the skills involved in my present role as an ITE tutor observing student teachers on placement.

The third and final aspect of the research saw both the research assistant and myself acting independently and taking sole responsibility for tape recording and interacting with the children during the reading sessions in Chinese and English. These reading episodes mirror classroom realities where the role of the adult is to judge how and when to intervene to support the child when reading aloud and discussing the salient aspects of the story. From a phenomenological perspective, the dilemma here is one of 'investigator effect' and the dual roles of 'teacher' and researcher. That is the intentional or unintentional actions of the adult influences the child's reading and as such impacts on the validity of the data. On the other hand, an advantage of this procedure is that by putting adult behaviours under scrutiny it can highlight the different social, cultural and ideological processes involved in reading practices (Bloome and Dail, 1997).

Assigning a data collection role over to a third person raises questions of inconsistent data and the challenges of working with two layers of interpretation. However steps

where taken to minimize this by ensuring pre-planning sessions and post data collection feedback conferences throughout the research process. As such the aims of the research were made explicit and by comparing field notes and experiences it allowed for cross-checking the reliability of our individual accounts. In fact, as already stated, these interactions and reflections become a tool in itself for generating knowledge as observations and understandings were shared, explored and debated (Creese *et al.* 2008a).

Crane *et al.* (2009) talk of the creation of ‘hybrid spaces’ that exist between researchers and research assistants operating in multilingual contexts which:

involves moments of friction and hesitation, and it is this particular moment where our thinking is challenged by new ideas and thoughts – be it while speaking with an interpreter, while reflecting on our positionality or while striving to transfer meaning from one culture into another – that moves things forward in constructive way.

(Crane *et al.* 2009: 52)

The collaborative process described above involves researching with integrity from a character-based perspective involving respectfulness and reflexivity (Macfarlane, 2009). Throughout all phases of the present study I remained receptive to the potential asymmetries of power and to the varied roles and relationships played out by the researcher and the bilingual research assistants and our ‘different ways of knowing’ in different cultural and institutional contexts.

This chapter addressed the research methodology influencing the study. It started with an explanation of the theoretical orientation underpinning the multi method research design including a discussion of the strengths and limitations of a phenomenological research approach. This was followed by a consideration of the field relationships and access arrangements. Finally, the interchangeable roles and identity of the researcher conducting research in multilingual settings was debated. The next chapter outlines the principle research methods employed for collecting data in the three domains central to the child - the home, the Chinese school and mainstream schools.

Chapter 4

Research Methods

4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses in detail the main research methods and procedures employed for collecting data. The limitations of the research tools and aspects of validity and reliability are touched upon and interwoven throughout the chapter. In the final section a description is given of Hornberger's Continua of Biliteracy before discussing the appropriateness of this model as an analytical framework for this research.

As already illustrated in the previous chapter a phenomenological research approach describes a package of data collection practices but this should not be construed as demarcating the boundaries of separate research methods. As will be illustrated in the following section, central to gaining an understanding of participants' experiences with literacy, is an important blend between participant observation, conversations and semi-structured interviews. That is, the interface between what people *say* and what people *do*, as some thoughts gained from observations can be elaborated on during subsequent interviews; whilst, some insights that emerge from interviews can be followed up with further targets for participant observation (Agar, 1996).

4.2 Participant observation

...data gathered by watching and listening...are the sweetest jams and the
most aromatic oils...

(Delamont, 2002: 130)

Participant observation is an established research method within a phenomenological inquiry as it enables the researcher to observe and learn from participants' lived experiences over a period of time whilst immersed in the context in which these experiences naturally occur. Within this present study, descriptions and assessments were made whilst children were actively engaged in literacy practices during their learning and teaching daily routines. An advantage of this type of extended participation is that more intimate and informal relationships with the children being

observed can be developed. How the process of gaining the confidence of young Chinese children was facilitated will be elaborated on later.

The nature of the role and identity of the researcher and access arrangements are central to participant observation and aspects of these issues have already been explored in the last chapter. The intention here is not to be drawn into the anthropological and ethnographic discourse where participant observation is discussed in relation to ‘assimilation’, ‘integration’ and ‘immersion’ into cultural groups. Delamont (2002) rightly views phrases such as ‘the danger of going native’ as objectionable. Rather, the questions faced by the phenomenological researcher when involved in participant observation are how do you suppress or ‘bracket’ your own previous world experiences and what information to reveal about yourself and your purposes? There is no doubt that in the present study the fieldworker will always be considered ‘outwith’ the observed group whether as an ‘outsider’ to the Chinese community or an ‘adult’ to children.

Throughout the research, I remained reflexive and aware the role boundaries were relatively fluid. I kept in mind Christensen and James (2000) who feel participatory methods function as ‘mediators’ between the researcher and participants and aimed to ascertain the views and opinions as unblemished by researcher interference as possible. To be effective, these participatory methods would, to a large extent, depend on the quality of sensitive, facilitator application.

4.3 Research with children

The importance of listening to and gaining views from children is at the centre of this study as:

The meanings that they [children] attach to their experiences are not necessarily the meanings that their teachers or parents would ascribe.

(Lloyd-Smith and Tar, 2000: 61)

In the last decade there have been a seismic shift in emphasis from traditional and psychological research ‘on’ or ‘about’ children to emancipatory

research ‘with’ children (Fraser *et al.* 2004). This new paradigm challenges the objectification of children and is designed to be child-friendly and respectful of children’s agency as individuals in their own right. This assertion, has a number of implications for research ethics and research design as it recognises children as competent and knowledgeable participants and experts in their everyday worlds (Prout, 2003). As James (2005: v) states:

We have to learn to listen to children in new ways and to learn the new languages that children speak or, perhaps more correctly, to relearn the languages of childhood that appear new to us, as adult listeners.

Thus the rights and citizenship discourse, influenced by new childhood studies, view children as actively involved in the decision making process (Clark *et al.* 2005). This has repercussions for research and the principal of informed consent. Coupled with this is the growing anxiety within society of children inhabiting risky spaces and as a consequence measures are put in place at an institutional and personal level to protect children (Bessant *et al.* 2003). This is particularly relevant in schools where conducting educational research encompasses a very different set of ethical values in comparison to ‘teaching’ children (David *et al.* 2001).

It was interesting to note that in this present study after some parents gave permission for their children to be involved in the research a number of children refused to participate. This view had to be respected by the researcher even though it had repercussions on the sample size and original research proposal.

As already stated power differentials between researcher and research participants are particularly acute when investigating marginalised or minority groups but adult-children relationships are made more complicated in the authoritarian context of a school. Attempts to establish an ‘intimacy between strangers’ (Alderson and Morrow, 2004) and to minimize the power dynamics at play in school settings had implications for the research procedures. These were addressed in a number of ways.

A major strength is that participant observation is not really a single method but can

embrace different ways of gathering data and styles of observation. Thus a phased approach, similar to Guthrie (1985 19-20), was considered the most appropriate. The relationship with the children was fostered over a series of initial visits which helped me to approach their learning environment with respect. Initial visits to mainstream schools began with the researcher teaching in classrooms in partnership with the class teacher so that the children became familiar with my presence. Reading conferences were then conducted within class reading groups with a view to observing children as 'social actors' (Einarsdóttir, 2005) and avoid the potential stigma of individual withdrawal.

Finally, the children were taken out of classrooms purely for logistical and technical reasons as the reading sessions had to be tape-recorded without distractions. Details of these reading sessions are provided in chapter 7. Before being withdrawn for the reading sessions attempts were made to negotiate a shared understanding of the research aims that 'made sense' to the children. This is a contentious issue as some researchers of childhood studies have argued that research is a set of values and assumptions which are held predominantly by middle-class, academic adults employing methods that have been invented by adults. Furthermore, it may be argued that research methods cannot be fully comprehended by children as these activities, at present, are not part of children's culture or everyday experiences (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2005). However, the participation and views of the children were vital in this study so I was heedful of Clark *et al.* (2005) that whilst listening is an expression of rights it is also part and parcel of ethical practice. In line with Greig and Taylor (1999: 149), the children were reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any stage and informed of my role in the research process. During the reading sessions it was important to be vigilant of any anxiety or embarrassment. This was prevented by watching out for indications that children might prefer to withdraw from the research despite the fact that they may not express this desire verbally (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). This was reminiscent of the understanding shown by Sacha Powell who describes a situation in her fieldwork when a Chinese parent and child felt uncomfortable during an interview:

My dilemma was whether to foreshorten the discussion or to continue and try sensitively to encourage the boy to talk and express his own views. I made the decision to stop the discussion and to not attempt to coerce the boy to participate. At the time, I was concerned that that my evidence from this family was incomplete...it was only later that I understood that by stopping the interview I had truly 'listened' to the boy, who had expressed his views through his silence and body language.

(David *et al.* 2005: 129)

Although this 'staged access' arrangement described above was very time-consuming it allowed positive working relationships to be developed with the children over a period of time. This supports Walford's (1991) belief that the quality and validity of data is likely to be higher when it is part and parcel of a longer-term involvement in schools.

Observational field notes from Chinese school were analysed and written up as vignettes to illustrate emerging patterns in teaching and learning episodes. However, the time consuming nature of highly detailed observation in the home would have been beyond the self-imposed limits of this piece of research. And, in addition, given the extreme reluctance of most parents to have their remarks tape-recorded, as described later, close observation of this kind would have encountered and been impeded by a number of insurmountable obstacles. For example, after interviewing a very cooperative parent I asked if I could observe some of the literacy practices in the home but further access was denied as I was told that it would be best to observe the teaching of Chinese literacy at the weekend school. As indicated in the literature review previous research in this area is extremely sparse and only involves a limited number of case studies.

4.4 Participant observation and reading sessions

As part of the participant observation process, reading sessions (in both Chinese and English) using miscue analysis of reading (MCA) and think-aloud protocols were conducted with six children. Although it may be claimed that reading is principally a 'silent' and private activity, observations show that reading aloud with a teacher remains part and parcel of classroom practice in both the Chinese school and mainstream classrooms.

Miscue analysis of reading was first devised by Kenneth Goodman and provides a 'window onto the reading process' (Goodman, 1969). It is a technique for observing, evaluating and monitoring oral reading 'miscues' or errors to assess children's use of reading strategies and significantly for educators to inform subsequent teaching. Miscues here refer to any replacement, omission or addition the reader makes to the text related to three levels of language: graphophonic (sound and sight cues); syntactic (grammar, word order and sentence structure cues) and semantic (meaning-related cues drawing on the reader's prior knowledge and experience). Several simplified versions of Goodman's original procedure have been developed over the years to make it more manageable for the mainstream classroom (Moon, 1990; Arnold; 1982; Campbell, 1993) and with bilingual learners (Barrs *et al.* 1988; Gregory, 1996).

All reading sessions were tape-recorded and the procedure adopted for the reading sessions was an amalgamation of three versions. First, Wallace's study (1988) conducted with bilingual learners envisages reading as a shared experience between teacher, learner and the text and data is drawn from these interactions in order to also put adult behaviours under the microscope. Secondly, older readers need to be assessed on their ability to read silently as well as their ability to read aloud. As such, an adaptation of Marie Clay's running record developed by Rowe *et al.* (2000) in New Zealand is used. The text can be introduced as 'I want you to read it to yourself, then tell me about it'. Thirdly, the children were also engaged in think aloud protocols to allow the readers to articulate their reading strategies when interacting with different texts and scripts (Afflerbach, 2000; Lau, 2006). These closely resemble retrospective miscue analysis used by Goodman *et al.* (1987) and Paulson (2001). However, think aloud protocols not only involve the reader in commenting on their miscues but they also directly ask the reader to think about their thinking before, during and after reading (Sainsbury, 2003). Probes to elicit additional information about the children's thinking processes include 'What was the first thing you thought of when you read the passage?' 'What did you think of the passage?' 'What are you thinking now' 'What is in your mind when looking at that word/character' or 'Why do you say that?' 'If you don't know a word/character what

do you do?’ ‘What do you do when you don’t understand what you are reading?’ ‘Did anything about the reading make it hard for you?’ ‘Have you any other thoughts or comments?’ Information provided from these three aspects of reader-text interaction compliment one another and provide further insights into how children read and support the triangulation of data.

Despite some reservations about young children’s ability to engage with such complex high level cognitive processes, a number of studies have shown Chinese children’s capacity to express metacognitive knowledge (Ruan, 2004; Yau, 2005; Lau, 2006; Law, 2008). It was important that the questions listed above were conducted in a manner of natural adult child interaction around the reading event to avoid making the reading artificial with continuous interruptions. In other words, it taps into the phenomenological tradition and centrality of children’s ‘thought processes’ whilst situated in the learning environment where the promotion of the learners’ awareness of their own thinking and learning about literacy is encouraged in today’s primary classrooms (Medwell *et al.* 2007). In fact, the new Curriculum for Excellence (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2009) in Scotland includes the following statement within the outcomes and experiences, ‘I learn to reflect on and explain my thinking’.

All the Chinese reading sessions were conducted with the bilingual research facilitator to allow for a more authentic one-to-one teaching situation. It may be argued that the mainstream school is not the cultural environment that children would normally read Chinese texts and this may inadvertently affect their reading performance. However, it was felt the location was valid given the bilingual assistant’s role in school for support purposes.

4.5 Qualitative interviewing and the communicative process

Interviews also form a significant part of the phenomenologist’s repertoire of investigative research tools. One of the purposes of the present study is to gain insights into the Chinese participants’ thinking including their attitudes and values surrounding their experiences with biliteracy learning. Alvesson (2002: 64) describes interviews as participants’ ‘communicating their feelings, thoughts, values,

experiences and observations in a way that renders their 'inner worlds' accessible to the researcher'. Therefore, semi-structured interviews seemed to represent the most appropriate primary tool suitable for gathering qualitative data of this type as it, yields rich information and guarantees good coverage (Drever, 1995). Furthermore, open-ended questions allows participants space to express their beliefs and opinions in their own words and freedom to answer if they wish whilst giving the researcher some latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies (Bryman, 2004: 113).

Questionnaires were also considered for gathering qualitative data of this type. It was thought questionnaires would widen the scope of responses and gain more reliability through the use of set questions. However, previous research has highlighted the poor return rate of questionnaires from the Chinese community (Wong, 1992) and opens up the additional challenges of translating documents. A further criticism of questionnaires is the answers are frequently defined within the boundaries set by the researcher's questions. Whereas, interviews offer a more in-depth participant response giving the interviewer a chance to elaborate on the attitudes and views obtained and thus gain a more illuminating understanding of personal experiences. As Brown and Dowling (1998) state:

Interviews enable the researcher to explore complex issues in detail...
they allow the researcher to provide clarification, to probe and to prompt.
(Brown and Dowling, 1998: 72)

The semi-structured interviews were not a casual affair but were carefully planned in advance and framed from a loose collection of main topics to be covered (whilst allowing a free-flowing conversation). The sequencing of the questions remained flexible to cover these themes and a branching structure was created in which questions are asked in the light of previous answers. Verma and Mallick (1999) feel that these guidelines or aide-mémoire of questions gives a balance between allowing a variety of responses from one interviewee to another but at the same time it provides guidance and reasonable consistency across a range of interviews. In addition, interview schedules makes analysis more simplified and thus supports reliability (Drever, 1995).

For this research fieldwork two sets of semi-structured interview schedules were designed: an interview schedule for the Chinese parents (appendix 1) and a reading conference for the children (appendix 2). For the Chinese complementary school, responsive questions were used for the teachers in the light of lessons observed. To help formulate the interview schedules some ready-made instruments were adapted. For instance, the parents' questions drew on a combination of a questionnaire devised by Wong (1992) and an interview schedule used by Hirst (1998). Furthermore, the children's reading conference was based on a format devised by Flippo (2003).

The parents themselves decided on the location of the interviews, with most of them deciding that the home was the most appropriate setting. This had the additional benefit of allowing the bilingual teacher and researcher to gain an impression of the home literacy environment. Also the parents would feel more comfortable, relaxed and have a sense of control over the situation.

The original intention was for all the interviews with parents, children and Chinese teachers to be recorded, transcribed and translated into English. However, during initial interviews permission to use a dictaphone was refused by the parents. This is consistent with Wong's (1992) experience of interviewing Chinese parents in her study in London. She observes 'since pilot studies of the research indicated that the use of a 'walkman' to record interviewing data had created tension and proved a distraction to interviewees' (Wong 1992: 7). To avoid future embarrassment it was decided to adopt a less intrusive approach.

Sham (1997) believes that the procedure of transcribing tape recordings is time consuming and its effectiveness is questionable as tape recording lends itself to a recessive process where the research becomes buried in the editing and selection of extracts from transcripts. On the other hand, note taking draws the researcher into the interpretation early in the fieldwork and in that sense makes the researcher more of a person in the eyes of the participants.

I am not a native speaker of Chinese and therefore, the cross-cultural communication at the centre of this study can be open to misunderstandings. To address potential criticisms about the unreliable nature of this methodological approach it is perhaps pertinent to outline in detail different types of interpretation and make transparent how the communicative process was conducted with all the Chinese participants in the research. All the participants were consulted on their preferred language of communication. The interviews were carried out in Cantonese, Hakka, English or bilingually, depending on the participant's preferences (although English was only used when the participants felt confident enough to express their opinions).

Formal interpreting is usually either 'simultaneous' or 'consecutive'. The former, is very cognitively challenging and stressful, as the interpreter listens and speaks concurrently. This complex skill is almost like a voiceover and requires the interpreter to translate just a few words behind the speaker (Gerver, 1976). This type of professional interpreting is used in international political negotiations or in political assemblies such as the United Nations. On the other hand, consecutive interpreting, involves the interpreter making written notes and when the speaker pauses after a while, the interpreter translates verbatim what has been said. This technique may be used in medical or legal situations.

In this present study, interpretation frequently occurred in social situations, such as in the home or common room at the Chinese school, involving interaction among at least three people. In these circumstances 'liaison interpreting' was considered the most appropriate form of communication. This process involves the interpreter acting as facilitator within a dialogue taking place between people speaking two different languages. The interviews were not conducted in a conventional way where the interviewer asks the required question and the interviewee replies with the desired information. Rather, these occasions were active encounters in which knowledge is socially constructed between all those involved in the conversation (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). For example, the Chinese teachers, during the interview, asked questions about the teaching and learning episodes I had participated in and observed. While the verbal interaction took place in Cantonese or

Hakka it allowed time for mental notes and information to be jotted down by the researcher. This communicative approach was effective as it added an element of informality to the process, creating an atmosphere acceptable to the participants. In addition, it may be argued from a phenomenological perspective, that all the data obtained from interviews is valid as it is as a result of socially situated interpersonal transactions where curiosity is a natural phenomena.

Interpreters should act as a ‘faithful echo’ of the conversation between two or more people but they can adopt two approaches to the style of the original language: they either imitate it through extended formal equivalence, or they use a target-language style deemed functionally equivalent. The later attempts to convey thoughts expressed by the interviewee at the expense of literalness if required. Within the context of this study, functional or dynamic equivalence is sufficient, not least because formal equivalence just may not exist or could lead to misunderstanding (Kelly, 1979).

A number of criticisms, regarding the reliability of interviews have been put forward. It is argued that what people articulate in interviews is not necessarily a true reflection of what they do in practice, especially if recollections span a significant period of time. An illustration of this is the parents and Chinese teachers reminiscing about own experiences of learning literacy at school. Also participants may create barriers by withholding information or elaborating on the truth or communicating what they think the interviewer may expect to hear.

The interviews described above are open to potential misunderstandings and multiple layers of interpretation. To limit distortion a number of checks and balances were employed, such as the use of experienced and competent interpreters and interpreter validation. Corsellis (2008) lists some of the characteristics of a competent interpreter. These include effective listening skills, mastery of the spoken forms to a high degree and the ability to convey the meaning accurately from one language to another verbally. Of interest, the Chinese character for “listening” [聽] is made up of the components [耳] “ear”, [目] “eye”, and [心] “heart” to signify listening as

an active process drawing on the senses. Consequently, a degree of validation occurred within the interview process by employing respectful listening techniques such as feeding back to participants using statements such as ‘if I understand you correctly’.

As already mentioned the research assistants were highly experienced interpreters working within educational settings and they were prepared in advance of topic areas to be covered by taking part in pilot interviews. Through this exercise the interpreters became familiar with any specialized vocabulary that might be used during the interview so they could concentrate on the shades and nuances of meaning when they performed the task of interpretation. The interpreters had experience of both education systems and lived in both Scotland and Hong Kong. This is crucial as Yang (1996) notes an interpreter is not only someone with bilingual competence, but also bicultural consciousness.

There are a number of precedents for the researcher not being linguistically proficient in the language for the observed community and participants. Thompson (2000) who conducted an ethnolinguistic study on the Mirpuri community in northeast of England, reflects on the ways a researcher can compensate for a lack of linguistic competence in the following way:

These require the adoption of different techniques, liaison and consultation with more proficient speakers of the language, and the involvement of native speakers in describing and analysing the language. This can actually be a distinct advantage to the researcher because it allows for a wider group of people to become involved in the interpretation of the data. It also helps to overcome bias in the analyses and possible over-interpretation of the data.

(Thompson, 2000: 65)

All interviews are also prone to subjectivity and bias from the researcher and interpreter. However, interpreter validation is a principle used through the fieldwork. That is, after each interview the interpreters were presented with the researcher’s notes and preliminary findings to check the accuracy of the conversation and opportunities were allowed to comment and amend if necessary. In fact, this

secondary validity-checking device brought the researcher closer to the data in itself and provided avenues for further discussion and collaborative analysis.

Throughout the fieldwork, informal conversations were also conducted with the main participants and head teachers and mainstream teachers. These interviews were not pre planned, but occurred spontaneously during visits and participant observation in schools. These significant people were engaged in conversations and relevant questions pertinent to study were asked. These day-to-day interactions were not formally recorded but incorporated into the researcher's field notes.

4.6 Children's records and documents

Records and documents constituted the final source of field data. Individual children's Personal Profile Records (PPRs) were consulted and included evidence such as annual reports (class teacher, EAL support etc), written correspondence, summative assessments and national test results. This evidence was considered as an important means to supplement other types of data gathered from the fieldwork in mainstream schools. Whilst it was recognised that the profiles may contain official and confidential material and some documents may be designed only for other teachers to see, permission was gained from both the head teacher and parents before profiles were accessed.

4.7 Continua of Biliteracy: an analytical framework

The following section justifies the choice of an analytical framework to illustrate the situation of biliteracy development among Chinese children before discussing the model proposed by Hornberger (2003). As stated earlier in the chapter the purpose of this study is to describe and pose understandings rather than predict or test hypotheses. I therefore felt that there was a need to introduce an analytical framework to facilitate organising the research findings and to ease the explanation and interpretation of the complex situation present in children's experiences with biliteracy learning.

A number of potential descriptive analytical models have been adopted or developed within multilingual literacy studies. Durgunoğlu and Verhoeven's (1998) work on

literacy development in multilingual contexts looked at the anthropological, psychological and educational perspectives. Meanwhile Cope and Kalantzis (2000) devised the Multiliteracies framework first introduced by The New London Group. This conceptual framework considers the rapidly changing and complex nature of literacy pedagogy brought about by increasing pluralistic societies and new forms of literacy mediated through information and communication technologies. This new literacy design draws on case studies from both the ‘developed’ (Australia) and ‘developing world’ (South Africa).

On the other hand, McBride-Chang (2004) has customised Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model of child development to describe literacy development, paying particular attention to a comparison of children learning to read in Hong Kong and the United States. Bronfenbrenner’s seminal and frequently replicated model (also see Thompson’s (2000) adaptation for bilingual children in the early years) envisages the child at the centre of four systems, signifying the influential facets of their life. These hierarchical levels are frequently represented topologically through ever increasing concentric circles nested within each other whilst others have considered the analogy of the three dimensional Russian doll. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979: 27) the nested arrangement of structures is because ‘development never takes place in a vacuum; it is always embedded and expressed through behaviour in a particular environmental context’.

McBride-Chang’s (2004) interpretations of the four related systems that constitute the socio- ecological framework of literacy development are:

- The *microsystem* describes the individual relationships experienced by the child (such as parents, siblings and teachers) which has an impact on early literacy acquisition.
- The *mesosystem* comprises the complex pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations which collectively complement or conflict with one another. For example, the parent may review with his/her child the Chinese characters taught in class earlier in the day by the teacher.

- The *exosystem* represents the educational system where policies decide when and how children start formal reading instruction.
- The overarching or outermost *macrosystem* refers to the influential culture, language(s) and orthography(ies) dictated by society.

Although this ecological model is depicted as separate circles, Bronfenbrenner stresses the importance of the interconnections and reciprocal nature between the different facets of a child's experiences. Thus any change or conflict occurring throughout the layers creates a ripple effect on other layers, impinging on the child's subsequent development. However, some post modern authors within childhood studies have criticised this ecological model as being too static and inadequately dealing with context (Prout, 2005; Underwood, 2007).

There are a number of reasons why Hornberger's (2003) Continua of Biliteracy provides a more sophisticated analytical framework for this present study. First, it offers a helpful language for descriptive purposes in which to situate educational research, policy and practice in linguistically and culturally diverse settings. Secondly, the framework is very comprehensive allowing it to encapsulate all aspects of biliteracy development. According to Hélot (2005), who has adopted the model for the French language policy context, the originality of the model is that it takes into account the sheer number and complexity of factors which are required if one wants to understand the multiple relationships between the different aspects of biliteracy development.

The Continua of Biliteracy framework describes biliteracy in terms of four nested sets of intersecting continua characterising the contexts, media, content and development of biliteracy. Hornberger's summary of the model is as follows:

It depicts the development of biliteracy along intersecting first language-second language, receptive-productive, and oral-written language skills continua; through the medium of two (or more) languages and literacies whose linguistic structures vary from similar to dissimilar, whose scripts range from convergent to divergent, and to which the developing biliterate individual's exposure varies from simultaneous to successive; in contexts that encompass micro to macro levels and are characterised by

varying mixes along the monolingual-bilingual and oral-literate continua; and with content that ranges from majority to minority perspectives and experiences, literary to vernacular styles and genres, and decontextualised to contextualised language texts.

(Hornberger, 2003: 324)

Hornberger believes that in order to understand any particular instance of biliteracy, researchers need to take into account of all the dimensions represented by the continua. It is possible to focus on one continua but the importance of the others cannot be ignored. This detail allows for a more refined analysis and it provides a multi-dimensional system into which each individual child's experience with biliteracy can be located.

A third advantage of the framework is that it is dynamic and visible. Points on continua are not finite, static or discrete but need to be understood from a variety of perspectives. It allows for possible changes and in which relations of power differentials play a vital part. The focus on power echoes Bronfenbrenner's four levels of influence, but Hornberger's model is expressed through many different continua rather than a strict hierarchy of nested systems. As such one end of the continua is associated with more power and the other with less power, but power differentials remain fluid, rather than just two dichotomous poles.

The power relationships inherent within the framework, which are organised along a set of twelve continua, are illustrated in figure 4.1 below.

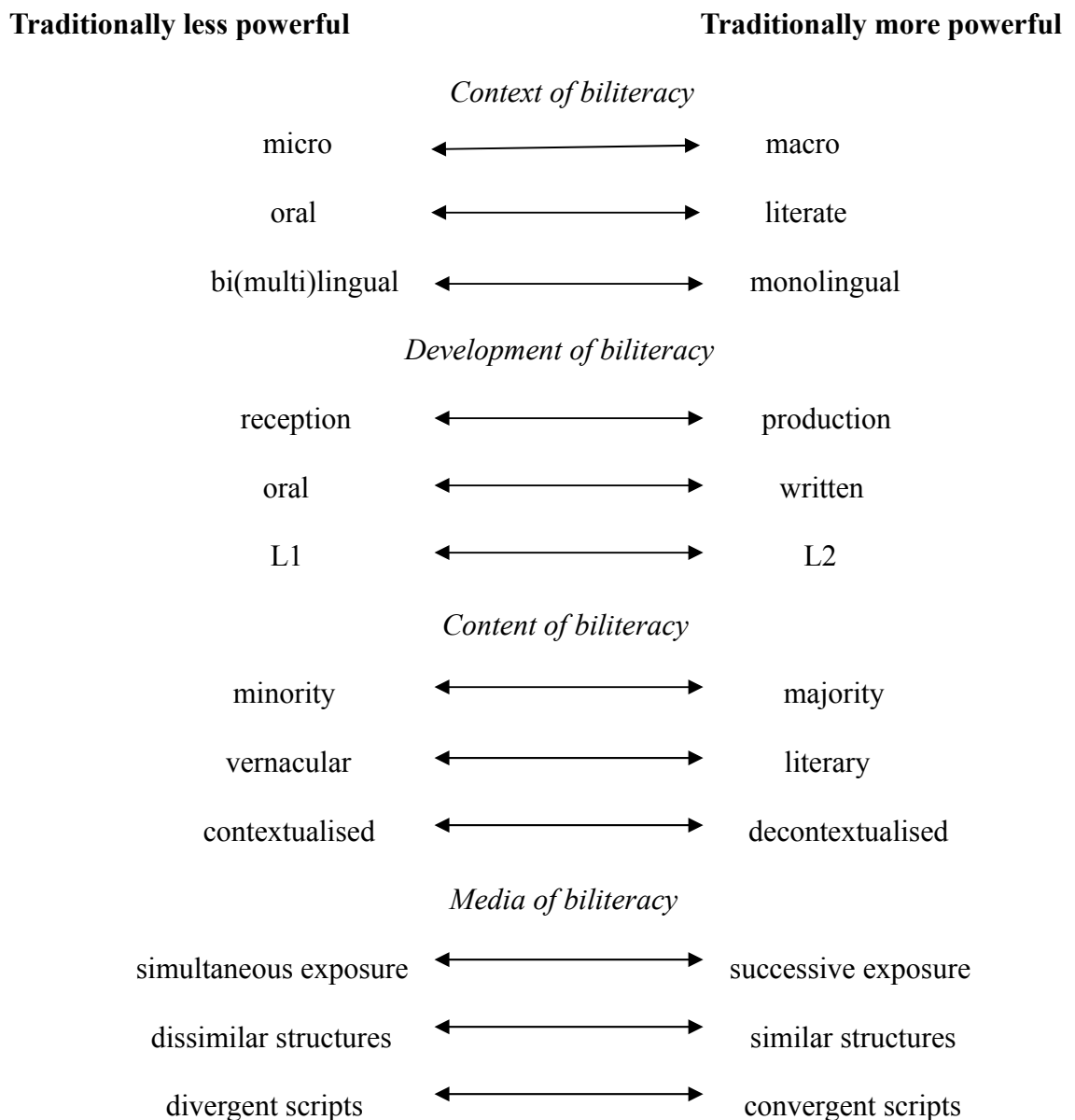


Figure 4.1 Power relations in the continua model
 Source: Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester (2003: 39)

Furthermore, the framework makes it possible to examine and analyse in detail instances of biliteracy in relation to policies and practices in multilingual Scotland. Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester (2003) argue that within education policy and practice there tends to be an implicit privileging of one end of the continuum over the other which has implications for children’s biliteracy development. This is a strength of the framework as it allows reflective practitioners to evaluate their daily practice. For example, how can educators move from the traditionally more powerful

monolingual context of biliteracy to the traditionally less powerful bi(multi)lingual context? They can make choices and exercise power by encouraging children to write and publish dual-language books within the classroom or invite parents to read stories in their home language or celebrate success gained at complementary schools. These actions, as Hornberger argues, challenge the dominant educational discourse that claims that developing a children's first language hinders the learning of English language. The implications for policy, practice and research in Scotland, which emerge from the present study, will be outlined in the final chapter.

A critique of the framework is offered by Street (2003) who claims that the relationship between the different components in the model and the ways in which factors interplay are over-elaborated, confusing and too difficult to grasp at first reading. A further complaint may be that those who are not visual learners may find the three-dimensional and intersecting nested continua too abstract. Hornberger takes on board the former point arguing that the complexity of the framework is perhaps its greatest virtue, in that the phenomena it intends to represent are complex and should not be subjected to over-simplification.

4.8 Data analysis

Husserl (1931/1964) believed that we can't escape the social world in order to study it and that any intervention (or recollection) changes one's experience. Mott (1992) draws on Husserl's writings and states:

The description of any experience, even the one related as it occurs, is already different than the experience itself. The limits of language, the nature of our subjective memories, the mere passage of time, and the inevitable layers of interpretation add to this entangling philosophical dilemma. Finally, the creative insight and synthesis of clusters of relevant data are particularly individualistic. Hence, the structural recreation of one's understanding of phenomena is especially subject to unexamined assumptions and personal bias.

(Mott, 1992: 5)

As already stated one of the challenges of a multi-method qualitative inquiry of this type is the categorisation and analysis of data gathered from a variety of sources,

participants, situations, and perspectives. A dilemma for the researcher using a phenomenological inquiry is the transfer of data occurring in real time to research data without investigator distortion. Furthermore, most qualitative analysis involves reducing people and their actions to words on the page and these written interpretations become the researcher's own chosen words about the meaning of the participant's words and actions (Bernard, 2000).

There is the dual responsibility of maintaining authenticity at point of data collection so that the interpretation of social reality remains recognisable to the participants in terms of their perspectives (Schutz, 1972). On the other hand, there is the responsibility to provide rigorous data set in an analytical framework that is acceptable and comprehensible to the research community and educationalists. Whilst, effective analysis relies on different kinds of data from numerous sources, all of which support one's conclusions, there is a need to avoid 'massive over-determination of pattern' (Agar, 1996: 37) or 'fuzzy generalizations as sound bites' (Bassey 1999: 51). Silverman (2000) questions the soundness of the researcher's explanations and the potential danger of cherry-picking sound bites during the transformation process:

This is the problem of 'anecdotalism' revealed in the way in which research reports sometimes appeal to a few, telling 'examples' of some apparent phenomenon, without any attempt to analyse less clear (or even contradictory) data.

(Silverman, 2000: 10)

To avoid these potential criticisms, data analysis consisted of several iterative phases. In the first phase, a list of categories of analysis was created and based on the predefined continua found within Hornberger's template. While the data gained from each of the families and children detailed in the subsequent chapters represents a unique experience of biliteracy development there are within them some overarching themes and patterns which can be considered in more general terms. In the second phase, using raw data such as field notes, semi-structured interviews, reading conferences and miscue analysis of reading, emergent coding categories and concept

maps were established to help reduce the multitude of data amassed. During this phase the findings underwent close examination by the primary researcher and the research assistants both on an independent and collaborative basis for consistency in analysis. However, one limitation of the study reported here was participant verification or follow-up interviews were not included, as the parents expressed willingness to attend only one interview.

As per van Manen's (1997) guidelines, the data was read repeatedly, an overall sense of each account was articulated and the relationship of themes were compared for commonalities and discrepancies. Questions were then asked about the different phenomena enabling new orders of classification to be assembled as new insights and understandings to be gained. The final phase consisted of a cross-case analysis examining the concept maps and coding systems, data within a particular domain across participants, and the themes found across cases. These descriptions were summarized in written form and mapped onto the twelve continua to help encapsulate and explain the experiences of biliteracy that the participants portrayed. That is to say, interpretive understanding was achieved through thematic and coding analysis which emerged both inductively from the data itself and deductively from Hornberger's framework (Boyatzis, 1998).

Chapter 5

Attitudes and Approaches to Literacy in Scottish Chinese Families

A book tightly shut is but a block of paper
Chinese proverb

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on Chinese parents' influence on their children's literacy experiences. It begins with an account of the parents' migration history, educational background and their expertise in specific literacies. The focus then turns to an examination of the parents' attitudes towards learning literacy. Thirdly, it describes the different approaches parents use to support their children's Chinese literacy learning within the socio-cultural context of the home.

The literature review noted that recent years have witnessed a growing scholarly interest in the nature of family contexts and their role in influencing the development of children's literacy skills. Weinberger (1996) has shown that children gain both knowledge, and awareness, of literacy through a number of experiences in the home. These include interacting socially with adults and siblings in reading and writing situations, observing adults modelling literate behaviours, and exploring print independently. As such, the parents' role involves the attitudes and values that they attach to specific literacies. This provides the socio-cultural context for the child's acquisition of different literacies as children tune into what they observe in their surroundings and assimilate activities and practices of those around them (Bruner, 1978). In addition, it creates a foundation for the potential linguistic resources bilingual children bring to school. Purcell-Gates (1996) believes that the quality of these literacy experiences within the home varies considerably from one family to another. This, she claims, is due to different levels of functional literacy in the home and, by association, to the educational attainment of significant adults in the child's life.

As outlined in chapter 4 the data in this chapter draws heavily on semi-structured

interviews in fourteen Chinese households. A sample of the interview schedule used can be found in appendix 1. Table 5.1 provides details of the sample of parents and indicates (asterisk beside name) which parent in the household was interviewed and which child (in bold) is the focus for more in depth study in chapter six. The majority of interviewees were mothers, whilst eight out of the fourteen fathers expressed their views. In two of the families the father was the sole participant and in seven cases both parents were present. It will be important to bear in mind this relative gender weighting when interpreting some of the subsequent qualitative data as it determines which parent is the key opinion-broker on the attitudes and approaches to literacy learning in each family.

Part I

5.2 Educational background of parents

The migration history and educational background of minority ethnic parents is considered a significant influence on their ability to support their children's literacy development (Cummins, 1980). This information is also summarized in table 5.1. Almost all the parents described their occupation as a 'chef' or 'working in' a take-away or restaurant and it proved difficult to distinguish if the parents actually owned their own business. Similarly, mothers referred to themselves as 'housewives' yet they frequently were involved in the business as kitchen staff, cooks or serving customers at the counter. Class is therefore not considered a significant variable in the present study as previous research has highlighted the limitations of using this type of categorization. Francis and Archer (2005a) claim the nature of the Chinese communities' association with the food catering business challenge traditional British understandings and applications of social class.

Table 5.1 Profile of participating parents

Name/Age	Place of Birth	Age arrived in Scotland	Stay in Scotland	Education	Employment	Age of Children	Language Spoken at Home
*Mr Cheung (43)	Hong Kong	16	27	6 yrs Hong Kong	Chef (Take-away)	7, 11, 13	Cantonese
*Mrs Cheung (38)	China	25	13	10 yrs China	Chef (Take-away)		
Mr Yang (48)	Hong Kong	25	23	10 yrs Hong Kong University: Scotland	Factory Owner	12, 14	Cantonese
*Mrs Yang (41)	Hong Kong	16	25	10 yrs Hong Kong	Part-Time Factory		
*Mr Chung (43)	Hong Kong	22	21	7 yrs Hong Kong	Chef (Take-away)	9 Alan, 11	Hakka
*Mrs Chung (40)	Hong Kong	10	30	9 yrs Hong Kong and Scotland	Chef (Take-away)		
Mr Tse (39)	Hong Kong	10	29	9 yrs Hong Kong and Scotland	Chef (Take-away)	8, 10	Hakka
*Mrs Tse (38)	Hong Kong	22	16	10 yrs Hong Kong College Scotland	Chef (Take-away)		
*Mr Leung (40)	Hong Kong	10	30	10 yrs Hong Kong and Scotland	Chef (Take-away)	4, 6, 8	Hakka
*Mrs Leung (36)	Hong Kong	26	10	6 yrs Hong Kong	Chef (Take-away)		
Mr So (38)	Hong Kong	21	17	8 yrs Hong Kong	Chef (Hotel)	1, 5, 7, 12	Hakka/ English
*Mrs So (33)	Scotland	n.a.	33	11 yrs Scotland	Housewife		
*Mr Lai (33)	China	32	1	10 yrs China	Chef (Restaurant)	10	Cantonese
*Mrs Lai (33)	China	32	1	10 yrs China	Housewife		
Mr Tsang (43)	Hong Kong	20	23	8 yrs Hong Kong	Chef (Take-away)	6, 7	Hakka
*Mrs Tsang (31)	China	21	10	6 yrs China	Part-time (Take-away)		
*Mr Shek (48)	Hong Kong	24	24	6 yrs Hong Kong	Chef (Take-away)	8 Ying Yan, 14, 16	Cantonese
*Mrs Shek (40)	China	22	18	7 yrs China	Part-time		
*Mr Tang (45)	Hong Kong	20	25	10 yrs Hong Kong College	Owner (Restaurant)	4, 8 Ka Shing, 10	Hakka
Mrs Tang (38)	Hong Kong	26	12	6 yrs Hong Kong	Chef (Restaurant)		
Mr Lee (38)	Hong Kong	35	3	12 yrs Hong Kong University	College Lecturer	8 Kit Wai	Cantonese
*Mrs Lee (36)	Hong Kong	33	3	12 yrs Hong Kong University	Housewife/ Student		
*Mr Wong (40)	Hong Kong	35	4	6 yrs Hong Kong	Chef (Take-away)	8, Chun Wah, 5, 1	Cantonese
*Mrs Wong (35)	Hong Kong	33	2	6 yrs Hong Kong	Housewife		
*Mr Lau (36)	Hong Kong	22	14	10yrs Hong Kong College Hong Kong	Chef (Take-away)	Anthony 9, 7, 2	Cantonese
*Mrs Lau (33)	Hong Kong	25	8	10 yrs Hong Kong College	Housewife		
Mr Chan (35)	Malaysia	21	14	6 yrs Hong Kong	Chef (Take-away)	8, 2	Hakka/ Cantonese
*Mrs Chan (34)	Hong Kong	6	28	11 yrs Scotland	Chef (Take-away)		

The vast majority of the parents in the sample originate from Hong Kong, where Cantonese is spoken and not surprisingly this was the predominant language used in the homes. However, a large number of these parents also come from the New Territories in Hong Kong, and consequently Hakka is also spoken in a significant proportion of the families. Only one parent was born in Scotland.

The migration picture is complex with many partners arriving independently of each other although it closely reflects the larger migration trends of Chinese communities in Britain. The first pattern evident in the families in the sample is in response to the economic recession and political instability in the 1960s in Hong Kong causing people from rural areas to look for opportunities abroad. In consequence many agricultural workers (predominantly male) from the rural New Territories of Hong Kong migrated to Britain seeking new business opportunities. This also included migration, through Hong Kong, from the surrounding Guangdong (Cantonese speaking) province in China. The majority of these Chinese men were employed in the then growing Chinese catering industry. Chinese restaurants and Take-aways were opened and their success led to their dependents to join them. This coincided with more families arriving from the urban areas of Hong Kong. Further Chinese migration to Scotland occurred in the 1990s as Hong Kong reverted to Chinese control in 1997. The most significant migration from mainland China commenced mainly from the mid-1990s onward as a result of the Chinese government's relaxed restrictions on emigration.

This diverse migration pattern means the educational backgrounds of the parents in the sample are also varied. An added factor in the parents' education is that Hong Kong has historically consisted of a patchwork of schools with very different aims, methods and values (Bottery, 2007). This is as a result of the British government distancing itself from education in the independent territory by encouraging charitable and religious bodies to set up their own schools.

Most of the parents had their entire education outside Scotland where the language of

instruction was either Cantonese in Hong Kong or Putonghua in mainland China. There is an assumption that many Chinese in Britain, especially women, have a limited schooling as they come from agricultural and fishing backgrounds in the New Territories where education provision was inadequate prior to the implementation of a system of nine-year universal education from 1978 (Taylor, 1987). However, this does not equate with the present sample as only seven of the parents had an education restricted to primary school. These parents state that they could not proceed to secondary school because transport to schools from rural areas and the school fees were beyond the means of their families as the following explanations from parents indicate:

We didn't go to Nursery because it was rural where we lived and there were no Nurseries and it was too far to travel. Only those with money started early.
(Mrs. Cheung)

I needed to work and make money. We had to pay school fees. Why waste money. When you get good results you go to a government school or subsidized school. If you don't get good results you have to pay.
(Mr. Cheung)

We had to leave at the end of primary school because we had to help support our family. (Mr. Shek).

Seven parents progressed to further or higher education whilst three parents had a split education between Hong Kong and Scotland. Only two parents received the whole of their education in Scotland. The medium of education for the parents was dependant on where they attended school. In Hong Kong the predominant language of instruction is Cantonese. In China, pupils are taught through Putonghua and in Scotland pupils are educated in English. Thus for many of the parents this meant the language of instruction in school was not their home language. As such, for a number of the parents they were familiar with the experience of being educated through an additional language. As some of the parents explain:

It was difficult at first when I went to school because my language was Hakka and the teacher spoke Cantonese so I had to learn a new language.
(Mrs. Chung)

When I went to school I had to learn Cantonese as a second language, Hakka is more colloquial, it is more difficult to put characters into sentences than Putonghua. You have to write a long way to express yourself in Cantonese and Hakka (Mr. Leung)

In order to determine the parents' expertise in Chinese and English literacy, an indicator of their potential to support their children's biliteracy development at home, they were asked how they rated their skills in speaking English and ability to read and write Chinese and read and write English. As the results in table 5.2 show all the parents professed some knowledge of Chinese literacy but this varied from 'not very good' to 'very good'. Six parents claimed that they could not read or write English and a further ten stated that they were 'not very good'.

Although the individual parents responses varied in their self-reported expertise in the reading and writing of Chinese and English there appears to be a strong correlation between literacy levels and opportunities to learn literacy through formal education (table 5.2). There was a natural shift in expertise towards English literacy for those parents who received all or some of their education in Scotland. Those who had completed secondary schooling in Hong Kong or China were more likely to be literate in Chinese and to some extent had gained literacy in English when English was taught as a subject at school. However, this picture may be more complex than reported by the parents because of the changing nature of the language policy in education operating in Hong Kong pre 1997. For instance, the economic boom of the 1970s and 1980s in Hong Kong saw a general shift towards English as the language of instruction in schools as a result of the aspirations of parents who perceived this type of language education to confer stronger benefits in the labour market (Bray and Koo, 1999). On the other hand, the majority of the parents professed limited knowledge of English literacy when they migrated to Scotland. This may reflect the fact that they did not attend the schools for the 'more able' students where English as the language of instruction was more likely or it could be as a result of the discrepancy between language policy and practice in Hong Kong schools at the time. That is, teachers continued to use Cantonese in classrooms even when schools claimed English was the language of instruction (Poon, 1999).

Table 5.2 Individual parents' self-reported Chinese and English literacy

proficiency

Parent	Read Chinese	Write Chinese	Read English	Write English	Speak English
Cheung	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>
Mrs Cheung	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not very good</i>
Mr Yang	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>
Mrs Yang	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>
Mr Chung	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Good</i>
Mrs Chung	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>
Mr Tse	<i>Good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Good</i>
Mrs Tse	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very good</i>
Mr Leung	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very good</i>
Mrs Leung	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Mr So	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Mrs So	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>
Mr Lai	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Mrs Lai	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Mr Tsang	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Good</i>
Mrs Tsang	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>
Mr Shek	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not very good</i>
Mrs Shek	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>
Mr Tang	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>
Mrs Tang	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Good</i>
Mr Lee	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>
Mrs Lee	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>
Mr Wong	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>
Mrs Wong	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>
Mr Lau	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>
Mrs Lau	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>
Mr Chan	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Good</i>
Mrs Chan	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Not very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>

It is acknowledged that this type of sociolinguistic survey should be interpreted with

caution. Asking the parents for their own views on their communicative competence can result in researchers being given unreliable or idealized information (Kalantzis *et al.* 1989). However, the Bilingual Teacher who frequently communicated with the parents both orally and in writing during the course of her work were able to substantiate the parent's subjective views about language use and proficiency.

Formal education was not the sole influence on literacy proficiency. There were also opportunities for parents to develop literacy skills through their own personal and recreational interests. Unlike other parents, who claimed to have forgotten some Chinese characters since finishing formal schooling, Mr. Cheung, who was educated only to primary level more than thirty years ago, stated his Chinese literacy skills were 'good' because he regularly reads a Chinese newspaper. Similarly, Mrs. Tsang reported that her English literacy skills were 'not very good' but were developing because she was learning to use a computer at a community education-run ICT course for Chinese women.

All but five of the parents with knowledge of Chinese literacy had learnt traditional Chinese characters at school in Hong Kong and continue to use this preferred style. The parents, who were educated in mainland China, used simplified characters, and were also taught *pinyin*, (a phonetic romanised system based on the sounds of Putonghua), as a means of early reading instruction. Further details of these scripts are found in chapter 2.

To obtain additional information on the issues of language inheritance and affiliation (Leung *et al.* 1997) the parents were asked what language they spoke, and to whom, and in what contexts. All the parents profess knowledge of several spoken Chinese varieties, which are mutually unintelligible, as well as English. This is influenced by a number of factors such as communicative purposes (place of birth, language of schooling, partner's preferred spoken variety and friendships); pragmatic (extended travel opportunities and work experiences) and affective (emotional attachment). For some parents their spoken language defined their sense of ethnic identity within a diverse socio-linguistic landscape. As Mrs. Tse states with conviction: 'I am a Hakka person'. At the same time another mother describes her language background as

follows:

Mandarin is my language. Some parents at the Chinese school say ‘how do you know Cantonese when you do not come from Hong Kong or Canton? I say ‘because I have learnt it from the living in this community here.’ At school in China I also learnt English and Japanese. (Mrs. Cheung)

This multilingual world that the families live in was also described in the following way by two parents:

Hakka is our first language, English because of the children, Cantonese is used at the Chinese school and we speak Putonghua to the kitchen staff. My daughter is going to dance classes and the teacher only speaks Putonghua so I have to teach her that language. (Mrs. Tsang)

We speak Cantonese at home but the children are looked after by their grandmother who comes from Tung Ping Chau, (*a remote island off Hong Kong*), and she speaks Ping Chau Wa to the children. (Mr. Tang)

When asked about their language use at home, most of the parents reported an element of code switching and shift towards English especially amongst siblings. Work has been done on this intergenerational language use amongst the Chinese community in Britain (Li Wei, 1994). It is not, however, the intention of this research to focus on this area in any detail.

PART II

5.3 Parental attitudes

The majority of the parents had a strong orientation towards maintaining Chinese literacy skills with their children. The most common reasons given for this were future employment prospects and enhanced life-chances available to them through developing literacy in both Chinese and English. The following quotes from two parents are typical of their responses:

The growing trade with China means one day Stephen might get a job in

China. It is better for his career. He has an advantage because he is Chinese. You need to learn to read and write both languages. (Mrs. Yang)

They can go to Hong Kong, America or stay here. It is important to balance both languages. (Mrs. So)

As explained in chapter 1 literacy practices in China were historically restricted to a small scholarly elite of males who studied and memorised the Confucian classics in preparation for civil service examinations. As a consequence the spread of functional literacy amongst majority of the population was prevented. Lee (1996) believes this literacy knowledge as an access to employment opportunities still resonates with parents regardless of social class and gender.

All the parents in the sample saw advantages in the ability to read and write in more than one language and felt it was their responsibility to give their children these opportunities. As two parents state:

It will take a long time to do that but it will be more beneficial when they are adults. They can look back and appreciate both sides of the coin. (Mr. So)

It helps them better equip themselves to compete in the vigorous world. (Mrs. Yang)

For the Chinese parents, learning Chinese literacy was also closely bound to the maintenance and transmission of their culture. One parent expresses this view as:

It is important to learn Chinese. When they have their own family, they need to teach their children the language, they need to pass it on to the next generation. It is important for our heritage. (Mr. Chang)

Literacy and cultural identity were profoundly interwoven for many of the parents and there was a perceptible resistance to what was regarded as cultural impoverishment. When asked what her attitude was towards her children learning Chinese literacy, Mrs. Leung replies:

Poor Chinese, poor Chinese person⁴.

⁴ In this context the first use of the phrase 'Poor Chinese' refers to a person having inadequate Chinese literacy skills and the second use of the phrase 'Poor Chinese' refers to their cultural identity.

In addition, several families mentioned the functional benefits of having biliteracy skills whilst on heritage visits. As Mr. Cheung explains:

When we go to Hong Kong for a visit the children will be able to read all the instructions in Chinese and English.

A further indication of the positive attitude towards learning Chinese was their children's attendance at a complementary Chinese school. Out of the sample, the majority of the parents sent their children to one of the three weekend schools available to them in their geographical vicinity (more details of this is provided in the next chapter). The two families (Lai, Chan) who did not send their children to a Chinese school at the time of the interview spoke of a variety of reasons such as transport difficulties, conflicts with work schedules, the inadequate amount of time available for learning Chinese and the language of instruction in the school being Cantonese when the home language is Hakka. The latter appears to reflect the parents' own educational experiences of learning Chinese literacy through a variety of spoken Chinese other than their own.

Interviews with the parents highlighted a number of reasons why they encouraged their children to attend Chinese complementary schools. The principal explanation was opportunities to learn to read and write Chinese and having access to the traditional values and culture associated with the language. Gaining a qualification and the value of this for their children's future career options were also mentioned a lot by parents. Other motives included opportunities to develop oral skills and social participation with other children from Chinese heritage backgrounds.

Interestingly, these parental views reflect the Chinese school's stated functions (outlined in the next chapter) and echo McPake's (2005) research findings, albeit in her study qualifications and employment opportunities were considered less important by the sample of parents. This may be due to the fact that opinions were sought from parents across all minority groups in Scotland. Whereas, parents in the present study regularly discussed their children's potential social and economic advancement gained through developing literacy skills. As already stated, this motive could be perceived as a more prevalent opinion within the Chinese community and

consistent with a historical legacy, where only the highly literate could gain employment in the prestigious professions.

The value some parents placed on learning Chinese was illustrated by the suggestion that Chinese should be taught at the mainstream school. Mrs. Cheung explained this position:

I was watching the Chinese channel news and it said that the Shanghai Bank had sponsored a Chinese teacher in a secondary school in London to encourage the children to learn Chinese. If there is a possibility to have a Chinese teacher it will also be good for everybody not just the Chinese children.

Although many of the parents sent their children to the weekend Chinese complementary school they also expressed their dilemma of wanting their children to gain Chinese literacy skills whilst recognizing the importance of acquiring the literacy of the dominant society as a route to qualifications and higher education opportunities. These views are consistent with previous studies conducted amongst Chinese parents in both Britain (Tsow, 1984, Wong, 1991) and internationally (Siu, 1996).

Of particular interest, is the case of Mrs. So who, initially rejected her linguistic inheritance and culture because of her own experience of racism when starting school. She recalls:

We only spoke Chinese in the home but I was born here. When I went to school the only English I knew was 'yes' 'no' and 'Hong Kong.' The whole class ganged up on me and banged my head against the railings, it is so vivid, I can see the girl's face now grabbing my hair. I'm now thirty- three and it happened when I was five. There was racism constantly at school. I was paranoid because of my own experience so I said learn English to [my son]. I'm very concerned that my children don't suffer like me.

This parent's initial insistence that her children should not learn Chinese, because it represents an obstacle to assimilation, is at variance to her husband's wishes. On later reflection, the mother felt it was important for her children to reclaim their cultural and linguistic heritage and agreed that the children would attend the Chinese school

and she now supports her children in developing their Chinese literacy skills at home. These stages of 'ethnic evasion', 'ambivalence' and 'emergence' are reported in more depth by Tse (1998).

Many of the parents indicated that their children questioned why they had to attend the Chinese school at the weekend when their English-speaking peers enjoyed a break from school. The children did not like the additional work involved in attending a Chinese school and the extra homework it entailed. There was also the fact that learning Chinese literacy for younger children was hard work. However some parents stated that once the older children had mastered the basics they appreciated the additional literacy skill and felt proud of their achievements. Despite some of the children's resistance to attending Chinese school, the majority of the parents felt it was their responsibility to give them opportunities to be biliterate as they would appreciate the skills when they were older.

All of the parents interviewed had a deep interest in their children's education. This concurs with previous research conducted by Francis and Archer (2005a) where Chinese parents' tend to articulate to their children both the value of education and high educational expectations for them. The following attitudes are typical of the parents:

Learning is important in Chinese culture because it is considered imperative to do one's best and better one's knowledge. (Mrs. Lee)

It is the practice of Chinese parents to tell their children to do the best they can. It is part of our culture. (Mrs. Leung)

However, the parents in the present sample voiced varied opinions about what they considered to be the most effective type of educational system for their children to learn literacy. These opinions were strongly influenced by their own educational experiences. For example, some parents were worried by what they perceived to be low standards of literacy and a lack of discipline in Scottish schools as these comments from parents indicate:

The children need to work hard like in Hong Kong where they have to pass

tests and examinations in order to progress. By Primary three I could write a lot unlike the children in Scottish schools. (Mr. Cheung)

Children seem to be walking about a lot in the classroom and learning nothing. (Mrs. Lai)

Conversely, some families articulate a preference for the Scottish education system as it was considered less stressful for both parents and children. As two parents put it:

In Hong Kong children have to repeat the year if they fail tests. The pressure is very great on the child. (Mrs. Chung)

There is a lot of pressure in Hong Kong with homework and examinations. Even the parents are under pressure. (Mrs. Tse)

Some parents' reflected on their own schooling and responded to a learning environment which they considered to be particularly harsh:

If you couldn't write the character on the blackboard you got the belt. (Mr. Leung)

If you don't know a word in dictation the teacher punished you. (Mrs. Lai)

PART III Parents' approaches to literacy learning in the home

All the families in the sample had a strong desire to maintain their Chinese literacy skills, and the parents considered it their responsibility to provide support to their children in developing these skills at home. In these families the mother appeared to be the primary 'teacher' even in the families where the father was more accomplished in Chinese literacy. However the strategies employed by the parents and the time and energy involved in these learning activities varied from family to family. Possible influences include the parents' talents in Chinese and their recollections of learning Chinese literacy in school.

In the majority of the families, literacy tasks are conducted in conjunction with homework assignments from the Chinese schools. Textbooks and accompanying workbooks were used as a stimulus and as a result acted as a bridge between the home and Chinese school. In other words this type of work not only provides a

valuable opportunity for parents' to keep in touch with what their children are learning at the Chinese school in terms of the curriculum and specific texts but it is also acts as a means for keeping the parents informed of their child's progress in learning Chinese literacy. These resources provided by the United Kingdom Federation of Chinese Schools (UKFCS) in are described in more detail in the next chapter.

Of particular interest is the approach used by Mrs. Tse who uses oral mediation and explanation when teaching her ten year-old daughter at home. First, the mother breaks down the Chinese characters into their component parts 'like a jigsaw'. She went on to name and explain the character. Here 雪 "snow" is described as 'rain 雨 picked up by the hand ' or the compound character [冬天] "winter" is articulated as a combination of the characters [冬] "cold" and [天] "sky". The mother then went on to define the semantic relationship to other characters asking the child to recognize the learnt radical (component part offering a clue to meaning or pronunciation). The child is then taught the compound characters [雨衣] "raincoat" and [雨傘] "umbrella" which all share the character [雨] "rain". An example of the daughter's Chinese writing with the mother's explanation of how Chinese characters are broken down can be found in figure 5.1 below.

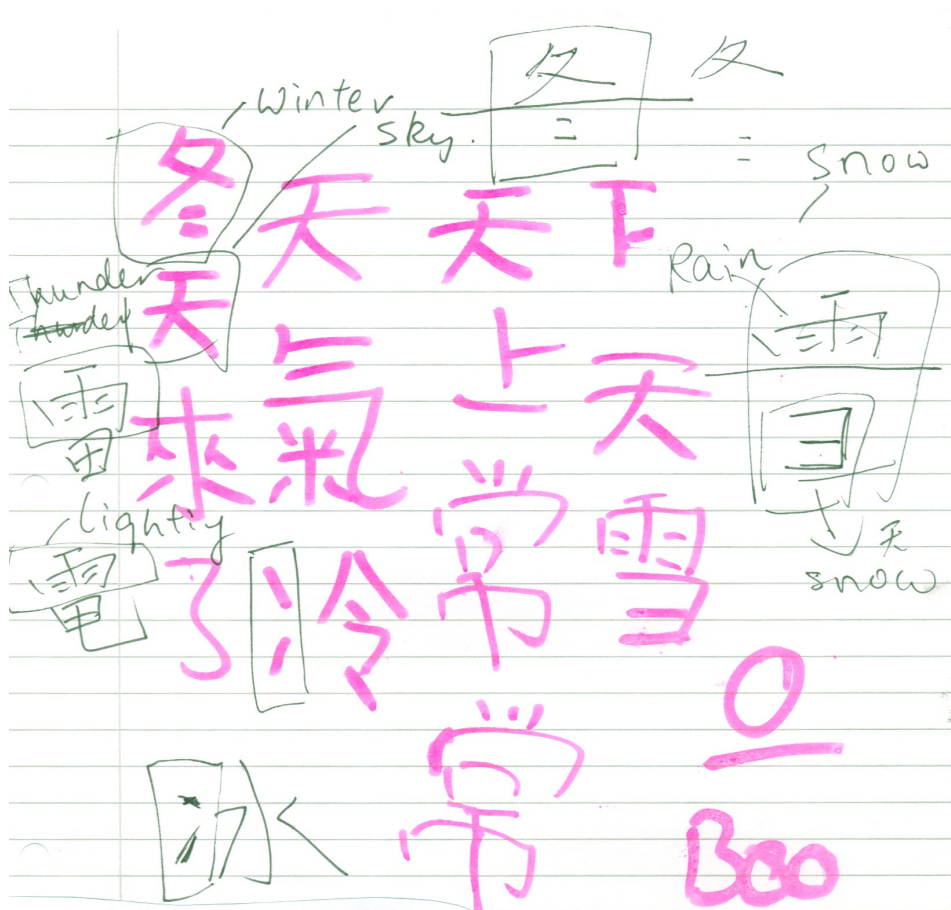


Figure 5.1 Mary Tse's (aged 8) Chinese homework with her mother's explanation of the composition of Chinese characters

A similar approach is employed by Mrs. Chan who also explains the origins of Chinese characters to her daughter:

I have to teach her the characters so that she understands. I say these are people and they sit on the soil. In the olden days they don't have chairs and they have to sit on the planet earth.

Figure 5.2 below shows the composition of the character described by Mrs. Chan. It shows the radical "ground" and upon the ground two people sit, facing each other. The character is not only pictographic but a meaning compound. From the character's deconstruction it becomes clear that the ancient Chinese had no chairs or tables to sit at (Lee, 2008).

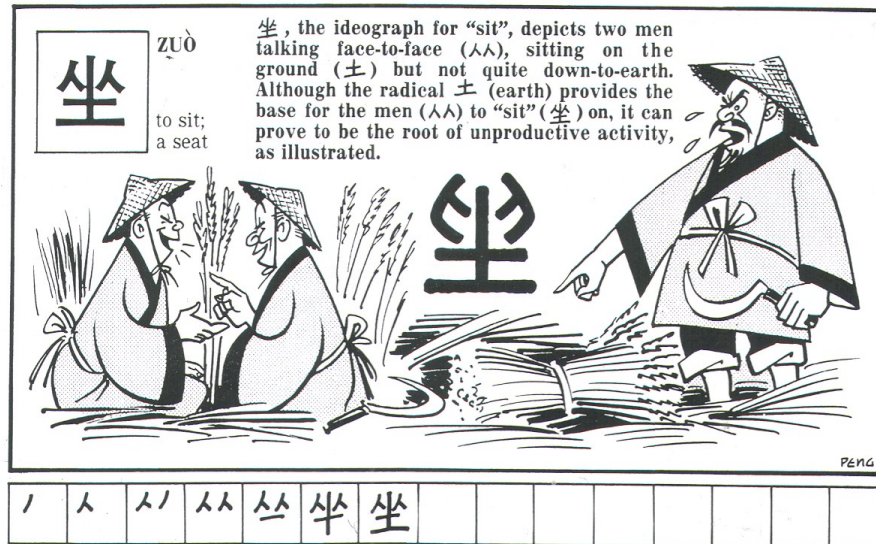


Figure 5.2 Fun with Chinese characters
Source: The Straits Times (1980: 82)

This supports the concept that children do not acquire Chinese characters wholly by memorisation, learning each one as an unanalysed whole, but rather that the children are taught morphological awareness strategies by some of their parents.

Similar approaches to learning characters are also adopted by other parents as the following suggest:

You have to explain the character first. I was given no explanation. I was not taught the meaning or how to remember. That is why I lost the skills. Teaching is much better today. It was boring when I went to school. (Mrs. Chung)

It is important to learn the radicals, left hand side or top, you have to remember the radicals. (Mrs. Lay)

I try to help by explaining that a Chinese character is made up of three or four parts which you can take apart. (Mr. Leung)

A number of parents describe how they have broken with tradition and describe their approach to teaching her children Chinese characters in the home compared to their own schooling as the following suggest:

When I went to school it was just here is the character, this is how you say it, learn it and write it out twenty times for homework and tomorrow there will be a test. (Mrs. Chan)

I was taught the traditional way. Read page one and copy from the book. I find another way to make it more interesting. If they are not interested they will not learn. (Mrs. Tse)

However, these views differ a great deal from the approach adopted by Mrs. So who was educated only in Scotland and claims to have limited Chinese literacy skills. Out of all the parents in the sample, she spent the most time monitoring her children's Chinese homework, making them memorise the Chinese characters through daily repeated mechanical copying. Occasionally her husband corrects the stroke configurations.

Everyday I give them homework. I use the Chinese school books as they get a test every week. Every week they get two pages to learn from the teacher. But I make them repeat ten pages. It is the only way to remember.

Figure 5.3 shows an example of Angela So's homework consisting of repeated copying of key vocabulary. It indicates her conscientious nature as she is not satisfied with her initial three attempts at writing the character [草] (cou2) "grass" (indicated by the crossings out on line seven).

Another parent also emphasises memorisation because of her limited knowledge of Chinese characters:

I had to learn all the characters by memory. I know that you can attempt pronunciation when you have learnt a certain number of characters but I was never at that stage.
(Mrs. Wong)

On the other hand Mrs. Chung introduces another teaching strategy to distract her son from reading texts purely from memory. She emphasises the pronunciation of individual characters as she explains:

I get [my son] to point to and read each individual character and I cover the pictures because sometimes he just reads from memory because a lot of the stories end the same.

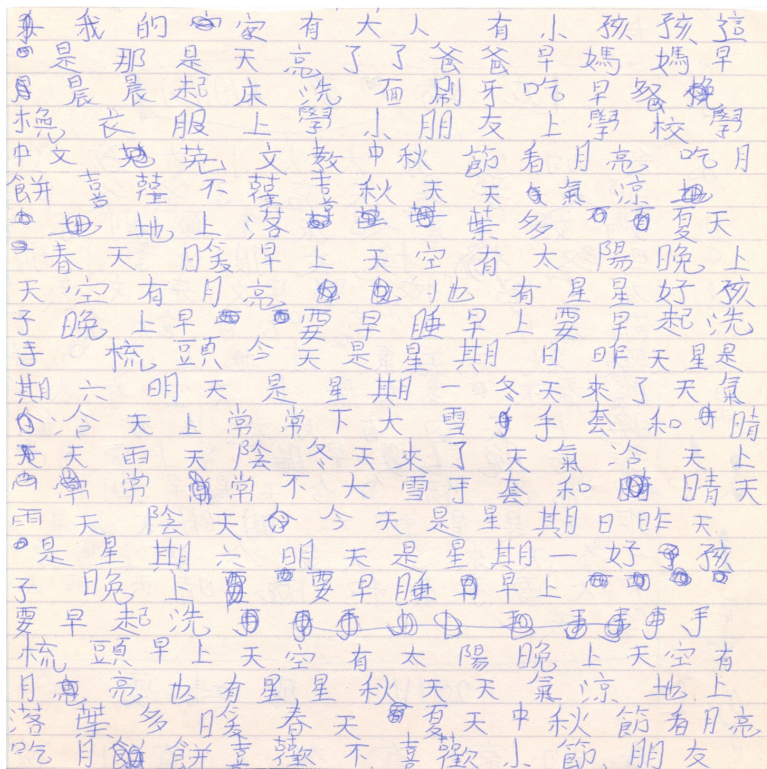


Figure 5.3 Angela So's (aged 7) homework

Whilst Mrs. Yang devises an extension activity to help her son with his reading development:

Sometimes I ask him to look at a paragraph in the newspaper. He recognizes the characters but not the meaning in the context of a newspaper. It is a different function but he needs to transfer his knowledge to a different text.

There was a consensus of opinion amongst the parents regarding how large numbers of Chinese characters are learned. They emphasised frequent practice, drills, dictation and tests. These teaching styles are encompassed in the following responses from parents:

Alternative weeks they get dictation so we sit with them and make sure they know it before they go back to school. (Mrs. Chung)

You need to memorise and practice writing characters. There is no alphabet in Chinese so you have to do a lot of dictation. (Mrs. Yang)

It is mainly memorizing. It is totally different to English where you can sound

it out. But for Chinese you have to write it out many times to put it in your head. (Mrs. Chan)

You need to practice everyday. Copy the same character. It is very time consuming. But it is like money. You have to save up bit by bit. (Mrs. Tse).

We follow the textbook. I revise the new phrases he studied at the school with him and help him put it in a sentence. Every night fifteen minutes. It is a short time but it has to be regular to grasp the concept. (Mr. Cheung)

A number of parents spoke of the cultural significance of the aesthetics of ‘beautiful writing’ and stressed the importance of teaching the proper sequence and directionality of strokes when writing Chinese. In *Kai Shu*, traditional Chinese calligraphy distinguishes eight basic stroke types (see figure 5.4).

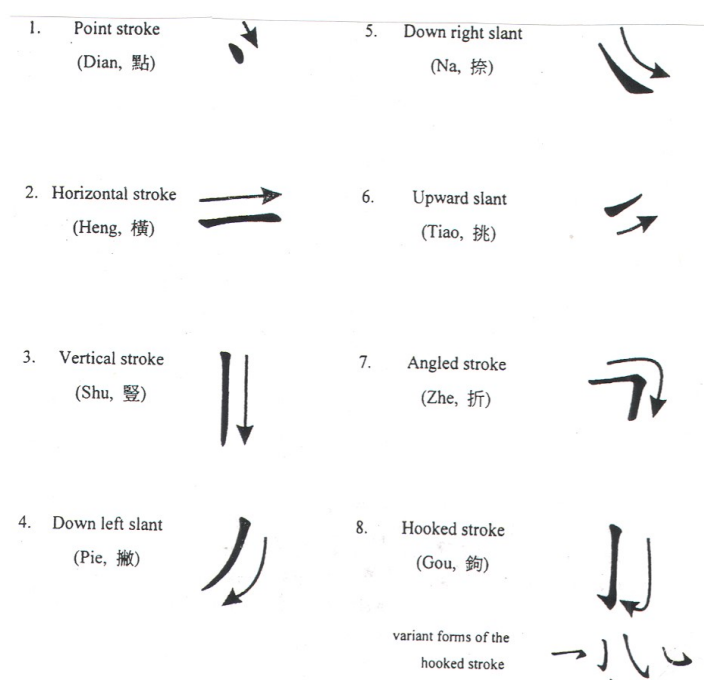


Figure 5.4 The eight basic stroke types

Source: Law *et al.* (1998: 115)

According to Law *et al.* (1998) even the slightest variation in how strokes intercept each other in a character may result in the transformation of a character into a totally different one. Therefore when the parents check their children’s work they pay

particular attention to detail in order to minimise such character formation errors.

This view is encompassed by one of the parents:

After they come back from the Chinese school my wife teaches the children how to approach writing characters the proper way. Her handwriting is better than mine and better than the teacher. She draws squares on plain paper for writing each character. In Chinese one stroke missing or strokes not joining up makes a different word. (Mr. Leung)

This knowledge of stroke sequencing rules, the need for accuracy and regular handwriting practice is drawn from the parents' own experiences from childhood as the following suggest:

As a child my parents bought a book from the supermarket and made me practice writing characters almost everyday using transparent paper over the page so you could trace the characters. Using a grid system inside a square helps the children to order the strokes correctly. This is the best way of learning to write Chinese characters. (Mrs. Lai)

The teacher would look at the character. If it was not good enough you were asked to write it many times to practice. In China you have to practice the writing or it is easily forgotten. (Mrs. Lai)

My son knows the way to write Chinese. Top to bottom. Outside before the inside. You can't close the box until the last stroke. That is what my mother taught me. I remember the last stroke at the bottom. (Mrs. So)

You have to practice stroke by stroke. Dash by dash. The children have to learn the characters given by the teacher. It is important to recognise each character. (Mr Cheung)

In the So family the children are asked to write the whole character on worksheets that have gridlines (figure 5.5) so that they can create balanced, well-proportioned characters.

In common with An Ran (2001) a number of the parents pay attention to perfect scores in their children's work and offer incentives as one parent explains:

They make minor mistakes putting the stroke to the left rather than the right. They are very conscientious. But if they make a mistake they are not very

happy because each time they get 100% we give them a prize. It is necessary to set high targets for them so they can achieve.

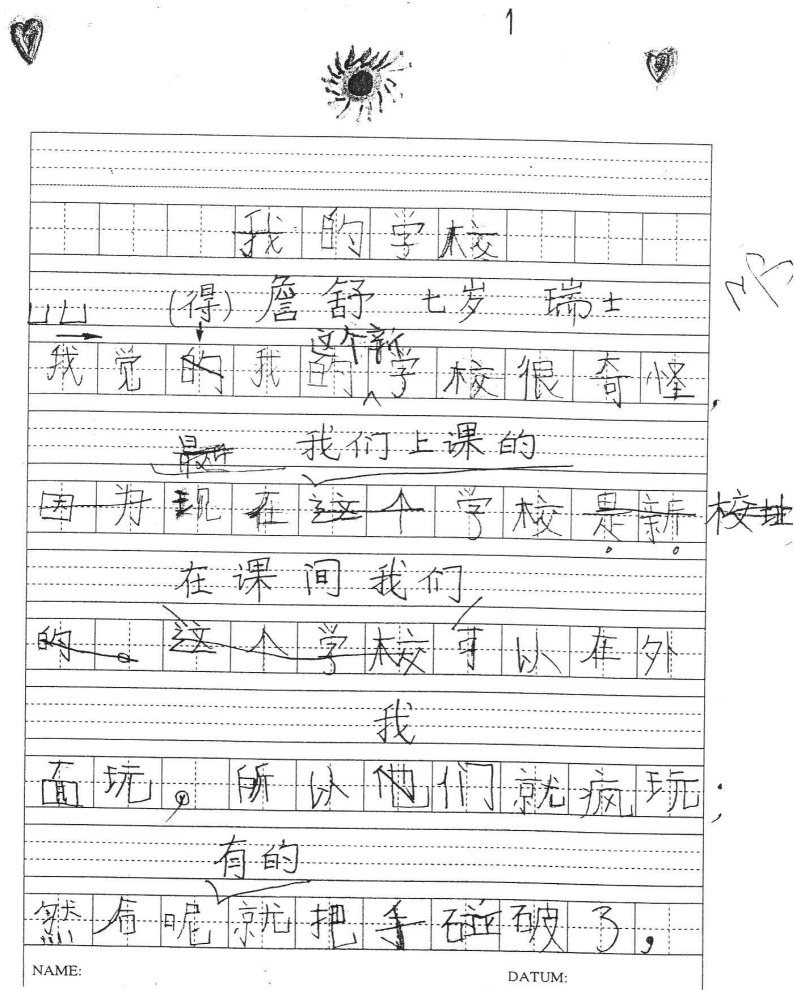


Figure 5.5 Exercise book with grid lines to support the writing of Chinese characters

Of interest, Mrs. Tse uses 'pictorial instructions' with her children:

You have to make them use their imagination. I take the textbooks away from the children and say 'follow me, draw a square and don't close the mouth. Add a moustache.' They can't just copy from a book, they get it wrong and you need to teach them the correct sequence and talk it through with them in an interesting way like 'draw a smile' or 'draw two eyes'. For more complicated characters you get them to draw a square and divide it into three parts.

There were instances when home and school literacy practices blended. A number of

children annotated the characters in their workbooks with their own phonetic English transliteration based on the pronunciation of the characters provided by their parents and teachers (more detail of this is provided in chapter 6). On the other hand, two mothers disapproved of this approach claiming that it undermined the importance of hard work associated with learning through memorization.

All this shows the widespread and varied experiences of children in the home setting as parents support the learning of Chinese literacy. Some of these literacy practices act as a way of consolidating and confirming the parents' own childhood experiences with literacy learning. Whilst at the same time, some of these traditional approaches are altered as the parents attempt new ways to engage their children with literacy learning. These approaches are frequently done on the parents' own initiative sometimes without the aid of a textbook.

The use of parent self-report data outlined above can be criticized with respect to validity. Ideally, this type of qualitative data should be supported by observation of parent-child interactions around literacy in the home but this was not the aim of the research. That said, the children did corroborate some of the evidence provided in this chapter about teaching Chinese literacy in the home during their reading conferences. For an insight into the former approach to data collection refer to An Ran (2000b) who discusses the way Chinese parents approach the teaching of characters and the question of memorization.

Many of the parents describe a number of additional learning activities in around reading and writing. For example the use of the convenient hand-held electronic bilingual dictionary had a different purpose in two of the families. Mrs. Lai and her ten year-old daughter used the electronic dictionary together to translate English homework into Chinese for better understanding, whilst in the Tsang household, the dictionary was used for family literacy development. The mother and two children 'listened to the machine' to support their pronunciation in English whilst reading storybooks brought home from school.

Some of the literacy practices in the homes of this study extended beyond the

traditional boundaries of reading and writing. Exposure to Chinese writing came through visual media such as computer gaming, DVD and television subtitles. Many of the families had Chinese computer games, some of which were bought in Hong Kong and gave instructions in Chinese. Two families had a PC with a Chinese word processing programme. The vast majority of the children were involved in electronic social networking sites communicating to both Chinese and Scottish friends. Watching satellite television channels from China and Hong Kong, with a choice of subtitles (traditional or simplified Chinese characters), was a popular recreational interest in almost all the families. (For further information on the symbiosis between children's reading development, popular culture and multimedia texts see Marsh and Thompson, 2001). Although the families also engaged in mainstream school-based literacy activities as well as literacy practices associated with recreational interests space does not allow for the present investigation to make detailed reports of this type. However, insights of this type should be considered for future research.

In all the families it was predominantly the mother who supervised the children's Chinese and English homework. They monitored the work tightly, made up extension exercises and urged their children to work hard and to achieve academically. Consequently, the mother took the lead role in nurturing, discipline and in acting as a 'cultural conduit'. Even the one parent who was born in Scotland discussed this in terms of Confucian philosophy and the importance of 'family education' (*ka gao*). It is worth pointing out that many Confucius teachings are based on a strong moral code for human relations with an emphasis on the importance of tradition and values. Consequently this thinking influenced parental discourses and the way children were socialized in the home around literacy events. At a family level this translates as the children being taught to respect one another as well as accepting the guidance of their parents. There was also a strict division between work and play. The typical view expressed by the majority of parents is encapsulated in the following quotes:

When my children say their friends don't do homework I reply 'but you are Chinese'. I was brought up to guide children from very young for their future. They have daily homework and I supervise a great deal. [My son] has to do his homework, chores and keyboard practice before he goes out to play.
(Mrs. So)

It is important to teach loyalty and taking care of parents and children. If you put that into practice you have a good peaceful society with good relationships. I teach the same things about respect to my children. You should finish your homework before tea then shower and then go to bed. (Mrs. Chan)

You need to obey and respect your elders. In Chinese culture that is very important. (Mrs. Chan)

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter shows how children's experiences of literacy learning are constructed in the socio-cultural context of fourteen Chinese families settled in a region of central Scotland. The data gained from the semi-structured interviews with parents reveal both commonalities and differences amongst the families. First, responses to interviews highlight that the Chinese parents have complex and varied migration patterns, educational backgrounds and linguistic proficiencies. Consequently they have expertise in different literacies which they can draw upon. Second, what emerged from the interviews is that all the parents have a strong commitment to perpetuate their literacy in Chinese and are clear about why they wished to do so. As a result they support their children at home in developing these skills. Clearly, the Chinese complementary school is not the only space where the children acquire knowledge of Chinese literacy. The strategies the parents use at home, and the investment of time spent to support Chinese literacy learning, varies from family to family. These diverse family circumstances need to be viewed in the light of previous research that has portrayed Chinese parents as 'uneducated' and families lacking in educational resources (Tsow, 1984, Taylor, 1987). Furthermore, Chinese parents' long and unsocial working hours in the food catering business is frequently perceived as restricting their engagement with their children's learning (Sham and Woodrow, 1998). This present research, albeit a small sample, questions these previously held assumptions.

Third, what emerged from the interviews is the teaching styles used by the parents were partly influenced by their expertise in reading and writing Chinese as well as by their own experience of formal education. Although the Chinese school textbooks

acted as a common resource in the home to consolidate the children's learning, the parents also searched for innovative and informal approaches to extend their children's literacy learning. In the majority of homes it was the mother who took this lead role in 'teaching' the children. Last, what is evident from the participants is that the learning of Chinese literacy in the families was inextricably linked with the transmission of traditional Chinese cultural beliefs, values and norms. That is the communication of the value of education coupled with the need for regular study and hard work. Furthermore, literacy learning in the home also serves the function of family bonding and discipline. All these factors, Francis and Archer (2005a) believe, contribute to a particular form of Chinese cultural capital.

Chapter 6

Children's Experiences of Learning Literacy at a Chinese Complementary School

Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.

Confucius (551 BC-479 BC), The Confucian Analects

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the attention moves from the home to wider community influences. First, it sets the scene and describes the context of the Chinese complementary school at the centre of this study. Second, it analyses pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning Chinese literacy through a series of teaching episodes. These observations are supported by interviews with teachers and conversations with children. The responses from teachers remain anonymous since concerns were expressed about confidentiality.

PART I

6.2 Complementary schooling

The most recent and comprehensive mapping exercise of complementary school provision in Scotland, provided by McPake (2006), has shown that the extent and nature of such provision in Scotland is very variable. According to the report there are over 100 complementary classes, schools and centres in Scotland making provision for at least twenty-one languages. Questionnaires identified that the main languages taught in complementary schools and centres are Urdu (40%), Arabic (37%), Cantonese (20%), Punjabi (17%) and Mandarin (13%). McPake (2006) noted that while there are some excellent initiatives, and the level of commitment among volunteers is high, many complementary schools are severely hampered by lack of funds, shortage of teaching and learning materials and the absence of professional development opportunities for their teachers.

There are a number of qualitative studies of Chinese complementary schools (Wong, 1992; Li Wei, 2000; Wu, 2006; Creese *et al.* 2008b; Francis *et al.* 2008) but all are conducted in England rather than Scotland and their focus is generally on language

choice, children's changing identities and the culture of learning rather than literacy practices.

The UK Federation of Chinese Schools (UKFCS), founded in 1994 aims to promote, through its member schools, Chinese language education and Chinese culture. Since its inception, its membership has continued to increase and it has about one hundred member schools, representing over 13,000 pupils. Presently there are fourteen Chinese schools, located throughout Scotland, mainly in the bigger towns and cities. These schools are all members of The Scottish Federation of Chinese Schools (SFCS).

Although most of Chinese schools are managed and organised differently, they have a number of functions in common whether located in Scotland (McPake, 2006) England (Hancock, 1995; Francis *et al.* 2008b) or internationally (Wang, 1996). These functions include:

- to teach children the language and literacy of their families
- make children familiar with history and culture associated with language and literacy
- to gain qualifications in Chinese

The families at the centre of this study send their children to four different weekend Chinese schools across the central belt of Scotland. The reasons behind these parental choices include geographical proximity, the reputation of the school and the school's religious orientation. Although it is assumed that each school stresses the importance of perpetuating the Chinese language, literacy and culture to the younger generation, each school differs to some degree in ideology and pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning.

The intention of this study is to concentrate on just one of the complementary Chinese schools available to the families in the central belt of Scotland as it represents the school where the majority of the participating children attend. One member of the Chinese community stated 'all Chinese schools are different as they

cater for the different needs of the Chinese community, Cantonese schools, Mandarin schools and Christian schools'. Thus, it must be acknowledged here that the findings from this one complementary school may not be transferable to all Chinese schools in Scotland. However, it will still be possible to provide rich data and draw some conclusions from the study in order to provide a detailed insight into children's experiences of learning Chinese literacy outside the home. Detailed observations were drawn from grade three, four, and five classes although the views of teachers were sought from across the school, including the head teacher.

6.3 Central Scotland Chinese School

The Central Scotland Chinese School was founded in 1985 and is a registered charity. It has a history of twenty-two years and for over thirteen years it has been situated at the same high school. In 1994 the school was forced to move premises from a neighbouring secondary school as a result of a number of racist incidents perpetrated against members of the Chinese community.

A management committee consisting entirely of volunteers administers the school. The scale of financial support varies from year to year and depends on the campaigning strength of various members of the school management committee who pursue limited grants subjected to the vagaries of budgetary cuts. Currently the school receives a grant from the Local Authority which meets 75% of costs with donations and fund raising activities from the Chinese community meeting the remainder of the expenditure. The school also receives support in kind, such as rent-free premises in the high school from the local Council and volunteer teachers. According to the explanation given by the head teacher, the tuition fees charged are kept to a minimum and only used to help meet costs of photocopying and the purchase of exercise books.

6.4 Relationship with mainstream schools

Chinese language schools in the United States have made great efforts to develop vital links with mainstream schools and a number of school districts in the US grant credits to students who study at heritage language schools at the weekend or during the summer recess (Chao, 1997; Zhou & Kim, 2006). In the UK, on the other hand,

CILT (2005) claims that complementary schools are not widely known outside their communities and have generally had little contact with, or impact on, the mainstream sector. This is also the case for the central Scotland Chinese School. An annual open day is held to strengthen the Chinese School's links with the wider community mainstream schools. The head teacher was delighted to note that two mainstream colleagues attended the social and cultural event but no formal links have been established even though local secondary schools act as examination centres for the A level and GCSE Chinese examination.

6.5 School population

The School provides classes for over sixty children and young people of school age from a wide geographical area. Cantonese or Hakka is usually the first language of these students but for most of them English has become their primary language of literacy after starting formal education in Scotland. There are some children from mixed race families with one Chinese parent and a growing number of non-Chinese students who wish to learn Putonghua. Although second generation Chinese-Scots make up the majority of the school population the heterogeneous nature of the learners (in terms of attitudes and motivation) means the children bring with them varied dispositions to learning literacies (Breen, 2001). These individual learner attributes are explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Although the majority of parents were keen to send their children to the Chinese School, their children approached with mixed motives and varying levels of enthusiasm. According to a number of parents some children did complain about 'additional work', 'going to school at the weekend', 'it being tiring', 'boring' and difficulties 'adjusting to a different learning situation'. Nonetheless, the vast majority of parents interviewed considered it their responsibility to provide their children with opportunities to gain the most from their education. Similar to other studies (Wong, 1992; Francis *et al.* 2008) the social aspect of the Chinese school was considered important to the children. As a teacher explained:

They enjoy speaking to children who are in the same boat. They can talk about television and pop stars from Hong Kong.

Additionally, as will become apparent later, children's enjoyment in some lessons was evident; they took great pride in their achievements and accomplishments at the Chinese School and they were keen to communicate and display their Chinese literacy knowledge and skills to the researcher.

6.6 Curriculum

The majority of Chinese schools across the UK use the same standardized textbook (Wu, 2006) and the school has structured its classes around this. As many of the parents also rely on these texts to support their children at home (as detailed in chapter 4) it is worth analysing this publication in detail.

These core textbooks are developed and supplied by the United Kingdom Federation of Chinese Schools (UKFCS). These were written and first published in 1993 in response to difficulties encountered in using textbooks from Hong Kong which were targeted at pupils living in Hong Kong and learning Chinese literacy in kindergartens and mainstream primary schools. The Association felt it was necessary to develop materials which could, culturally and linguistically, meet the needs of Chinese pupils living in Britain and learning Chinese part-time at complementary schools. According to Wu (2006) these are texts used 'to negotiate new, emerging cultural and social understandings'.

Ten years after the first edition, the books were reviewed and revised according to the UK National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages specifications. The new edition (published in 2003) has combined both traditional and simplified characters in one single volume; the traditional scripts open from the right; while simplified scripts open from the left but learners have a choice of using either or both scripts. The visual layout of text is different to English storybooks, with Chinese characters written from top-to-bottom and successive columns ordered from right-to-left.

The curriculum covers eleven proficiency levels each comprising of a colour-coded textbook and a workbook for the children and young people with an accompanying handbook for the teacher. Book One contains elementary vocabulary in a picture-

dictionary layout introducing eight to ten basic associated characters per lesson. For example, the characters are grouped into meaningful sets such as numbers, animals, clothes, transport, fruit, body parts, days of the week etc., covering twenty-five different lessons. Although the first characters are predominantly pictographs and ideograms, compound characters are also introduced. From book two onwards, there are short sentences and the amount of text progresses through to the more advanced books. According to UKFCS website 'the contents and language used are compatible with the intellectual and language developments of the pupils'. The contents cover a variety of genres and examples of these will be given later in the chapter. There is an expectation that the pupils will complete one textbook per year and level 11 is equivalent to GCSE. However, according to the headteacher:

When children have finished level seven they can jump to the O level examination course because parents teach them a lot at home.

In recent years the school has built up a resource bank of teaching materials and audio-visual aids such as DVDs and cassette players. However, at present there is no access to computers and the internet to support literacy learning. The head teacher was keen to see improvements to the range of resources at their disposal and declares:

The school is a very important way of mastering literacy. We are working on curriculum development each year. We want to provide more audio-visual resources and develop worksheets rather than just using textbooks. Buying dual language books will also support the children's literacy development.

In common with other Chinese schools there is a strong tradition of providing extra-curricular activities after classes to support the socialising needs of Chinese children and the transmission of Chinese cultural knowledge. Some of these cultural activities have a strong association with traditional literacy skills such as learning and reciting Chinese poetry, calligraphy and reading competitions. These different forms of Chinese art and literature are meant to instill a sense of pride and confidence in the children's identity. As one teacher put it:

We need to keep in mind that we Chinese should be proud of being the descendants of the Dragon, we try our best to keep Chinese language and culture so that our future generations can go on appreciating it.

6.7 Putonghua class

As a consequence of changing Language Policies in Hong Kong (Bray and Koo, 2004) and China's increasingly important economic position in the commercial world there is a growing number of Cantonese-speaking children learning Putonghua at the Chinese school. The increasing demand for Putonghua classes is frequently conceptualised in terms of supporting future employment opportunities for the children as the following explanations from teachers at the school indicate:

Each year more and more children are transferring to the Putonghua classes. The main reason for this is to find a job in the future. Even in Hong Kong companies expect people to know Putonghua and Cantonese now. Government schools have to teach Putonghua as a compulsory subject and even the international schools in Hong Kong are recruiting Putonghua teachers.

It is important to learn the national language of China. All schools in Hong Kong now teach Putonghua. In the future many children may work in mainland China and there is a potential growing market.

With this move to Putonghua comes a change in approach to reading Chinese. Simplified characters are taught and *pinyin* used in early stages of reading. One of the older students states:

Mandarin's much easier to learn as there are only four tones, compared to nine in Cantonese and it's easier to write Chinese using Putonghua.

However, most of children in class are not native speakers of Putonghua and they therefore acquire literacy in it through the medium of an additional language. In this situation the teachers' and children's bilingual skills are used to support comprehension as the following explanations from children in the class illustrate:

I find it difficult because the teacher talks in Putonghua, however she sometimes uses English when we don't understand.

Sometimes I ask my friend 'what does she mean?' and my friend tells me in

English.

Furthermore, there are challenges with continuity and progression as there is only one Putonghua teacher at present who teaches the Grade 1 class. Therefore some of the children start in the Putonghua class in their first year at the school and then have to transfer to the Cantonese class the following year.

Despite the increasing number of parents opting for their children to attend the Putonghua class, Cantonese still remains more popular among the parents at the Chinese school because most parents, now settled in central Scotland, originate from Hong Kong or the Cantonese speaking southern provinces of mainland China (such as Guangdong). For this reason the lesson observations detailed in this chapter focus only on the Cantonese classes.

6.8 Teachers

Eight teachers and the head teacher participated in the research. While all the teachers' commitment to the school and children's literacy development is evident, they vary a great deal in terms of age, employment, linguistic histories, qualifications and teaching experience.

Consequently, this had an effect on their attitudes towards the children attending the school and approaches to teaching and learning Chinese literacy, as discussed later in this chapter. The head teacher sums up the situation:

The teachers are not given professional training. They are just interested. In this school there are six Chinese teachers using six different ways of teaching. Some use the traditional way, others a different method. Some teachers may not be qualified but they are enthusiastic. Our results are very good.

Only one of the teachers is male. Two of the teachers have taught in Hong Kong but only the head teacher teaches in mainstream education. One of the teachers has experience of teaching both Putonghua and Cantonese whilst all the other teachers teach through the medium of Cantonese. None of the teachers has a community language qualification. As noted by Tsow as far back as 1984, and more recently by

Wu (2006) one of the main challenges of part-time Chinese schools is finding suitably experienced and trained teachers. The Central Scotland Chinese School is no exception, and relies heavily on parents (especially mothers) and university students to fill the posts. On a number of occasions during the fieldwork it was noted that parent-helpers were asked to 'cover' classes. The university students, who have already completed a major part of their professional training in Hong Kong, are in Scotland for only a year, which causes difficulties for continuity and progression at the school. As the head teacher explains:

Some of the students may not be studying education but other subjects like business studies. At the beginning of each teaching year two three-hour sessions are devoted to induction training to familiarise the teachers with the working arrangements of the classes and the standards expected of them. But they have other commitments especially to their studies and they want to travel. At end of University semester they return home and we have to start the recruitment process all over again.

Most of the teachers at the Chinese school were modest about their contribution to the children's literacy development and expressed a wish for further professional development and opportunities to learn more about approaches to teaching and learning in mainstream schools. This is encapsulated in the following quote:

We don't know what happens in the children's schools. I know they have more active learning in the primary school which means some of the children find it boring here as it is all from the text book.

Part II

6.9 Chinese literacy lessons and pedagogical perspectives

In this section elements of literacy lessons are illustrated drawing on data from semi-participant observational field notes at the Chinese school. Each classroom visit was paired with the bilingual research assistant and observations were shared and verified after each lesson. This debriefing process acted as a means for exploring further insights into children's experiences with literacy learning. The subsequent discussion following each set of field notes is supported by post lesson response conversations with both teachers and children.

The first lesson deals with a grade five class reading 'The Story of Li Bo' [李白的故事] from the text book. The following field notes illustrate the sequence of events during a reading activity.

T explains the new characters written on the blackboard and leads the children to read the characters in chorus. T asks children to repeat characters again making sure pronunciation and intonation are correct. Some children write English transliterations next to these characters.

T asks children to memorise the characters and pay close attention to their strokes and structure. She gives some oral examples of how the characters can be used in phrases and sentences

T reads the text aloud sentence by sentence and the whole class repeats in unison after her.

T asks questions (in Cantonese) and checks the children's comprehension of the story. Children put up their hands and respond appropriately.

One at a time individual children are asked to read a sentence aloud. T carefully monitors the children's reading and supplies unknown characters when the children hesitate. At times T cups her hand over her ear and says [再講一次] "repeat" and walks closer to the child to check pronunciation.

Some children read along with their peers also helping out when there is hesitation. One boy at the front plays with a toy car on the desk and recites the text from memory without looking at his book.

T intersperses the reading with positive feedback and praise Ho (good) very

good, excellent (hou2 hou2) [好好]. T makes sure every child contributes a sentence.

Reading proficiency varies a great deal from youngest children sitting at the front who read fluently from memory whilst some of the older children at the rear of class lack confidence and are hesitant in their reading.

T has friendly rapport with children. Classroom climate is relaxed yet the reading lesson remains productive and purposeful.

This extract illustrates the common literacy practice, evident at all stages in the Chinese school, of children reading aloud. According to Lau (2007) this traditional text-based approach is generally embedded in the belief that children will develop their reading ability indirectly through intensive recitation of the texts. Although some mainstream educators may frown upon the practice of reading aloud in chorus, Perera (1987) believes this literacy-enhancing activity helps children develop an ear for the language. Furthermore trying out different forms of writing (for example, poetry recitation) and exposure to different literacy structures increases the power and flexibility of the child's oral repertoire.

Moreover, a common explanation is that reading aloud in Chinese classrooms is a practice that emanates from the nature of the writing system. That is because characters have different meanings in different contexts and different usages in different sentence structures (as explained in chapter 2). Also Chinese words do not change their form when used for different grammatical functions. Therefore reading aloud helps children gain a more holistic understanding of the material, because the readers have to judge where the sense group stops in order to pause appropriately.

When questioned about this approach to reading the teacher compares it to reading instruction in English:

In English words come out by the way you sound it. In Chinese we have to start from characters first and we learn characters from first grade right through secondary school. We give passages for the children to learn. This approach may interfere with an interest in reading but because of the way characters are structured reading aloud helps you get the meaning. This is from our ancestors.

This practice of recitation (alongside memorisation which will be dealt with later in this section) as a means of literacy growth still resonates among the teachers. As a result, this facet of literacy enshrined in cultural traditions, manifests itself in children's participation in the reading competitions organised not only within the school but also nationally.

The lesson above also shows that the habit of reading aloud allows the teacher to check pronunciation. As stated earlier, of the nine basic tones of Cantonese, six are commonly used and changing the pitch level can alter the meaning of the character. Thus one of the challenges for the children (and the teacher) is tone differentiation when reading. The interwoven nature of oral proficiency, knowledge of Cantonese tones and how these language elements are encoded in the writing system is important here. When asked if tonal errors were common when the children read the class teacher replied:

It depends on how much they speak Cantonese to their parents. It is difficult for them when they don't practice it regularly.

This is consistent with Wong's findings which state that 'since Chinese children in Britain do not speak Cantonese as frequently as their Hong Kong counterparts, many of them fail to get the tones correct' (Wong: 1992: 197). The class teacher felt it was sometimes difficult to pick children out in class to correct their pronunciation. When asked why she cupped her hand to her ear (and asked children to repeat their pronunciations) she replied:

It is like listening to an orchestra but you need to hear the drum and the trumpet. The tones make words have different meanings. You need to get the right tone.

As might be expected other teachers' comments regarding children's tonal errors when reading were clearly linked to their own perceptions of the children's exposure to spoken Chinese varieties at home as the following responses indicate:

Some children speak Hakka, some Cantonese and they also use English.

Some children speak Cantonese with a Scottish accent. It is important to get the tones right when you are mixing languages every day.

The children can hear it, but they have difficulty speaking it.

They learn Cantonese from a very young age but they just speak it without reading or writing and they speak English to their brothers and sisters.

One teacher expressed an alternative view and dismissed the notion of tonal differentiation as a weakness for the children:

It isn't a problem for me. They are quite good at getting the tones right.

Observations at the school show that at times teachers divert attention away from the study of characters to guide children to an appreciation and comprehension of the text. Using Louie and Louie's (2002) criteria, the content of the textbook studied by this class covers a wide range of genre and serves several purposes. These purposes (with examples from the grade five textbook) include: transmitting and renewing aspects of cultural heritage (stories about cultural celebrations such as the mid-autumn or moon cake festival); establishing moral values (the traditional tale of 'reducing an iron rod to a sewing needle'); expanding knowledge (environmental studies: sight-seeing in Hong Kong); sharpening thinking skills (guessing objects from clues in the text), and enhancing language development (how to write a Chinese letter and poetry⁵).

A common view held among teachers at the Chinese school was that literature, especially traditional tales, offered opportunities to 'read beyond the lines' and this acts as a stimulus to discuss cultural and moral values. The class teacher encapsulates this outlook:

Establishing moral values is part of the Chinese children's character development. It is part of our culture. Some of the stories are written with this in mind. It is up to the teacher how to explore this and some say it is very important. *Dà tóng* is the Confucian concept of an ideal society of great equality and harmony. It is a philosophy of how we treat people in life. That equals a good heart. One has to think of others before your self and show respect to one another. There is no room for selfishness. These are some of

⁵ Most of the textbooks end with a poem composed of lines of five-character (五言) or seven-character (七言) poems. These two forms dominate traditional Chinese poetry.

the qualities you need to be a good person.

The class teacher went on to say that the communication of cultural values was particularly important in the Scottish context because the Chinese community remained scattered and children were primarily exposed to the dominant culture through mainstream schooling:

Texts act as a bridge between cultures. In this area the children are not in touch with Chinese culture. So many teachers are keen to introduce Chinese cultural beliefs and habits into lessons when opportunities to tap into that area are made available.

The traditional Han Chinese tale, studied by the children, ‘*Reducing an iron rod to a sewing needle*’ is a fitting example. It tells the story of Li Bo, who disliked the books of classics and history that his teacher made him read. He thought they were difficult and boring. He slipped out of class one day and encountered an elderly woman who was honing a rod of iron into a needle. Li Bo learnt from her that if you persist and work hard you will always get the required result (for a summary of the story refer to appendix 3).

As the class teacher explains:

I use the story of Li Bo to encourage the children to persevere at their studies. Children can learn from this. The story tells them that so long as you do not give up, you can complete what seems to be an impossible task. But it needs hard work. Philosophy comes from language.

As the first lesson extract illustrates, many children in the class annotate the new characters introduced in the lesson using English transliterations to support the pronunciation and memorisation of Chinese characters. This echoes Wong’s (1992) study, which discovered that this literacy-learning technique was employed by the vast majority of students in the Chinese schools in England. Similarly, Kenner et al. (2007) observed young children using this strategy as a bridge to the Bengali script.

It is clear from this lesson that the children drew on their knowledge of English phonic skills learnt in the mainstream primary school to map onto the sound of

Chinese characters. Consequently, this experience enhances the children's language awareness skills as they gain an appreciation of the relationship between the two writing systems. An example of Ca Mei's transliterations can be found in figure 6.1. Here the annotation "sick" and "wa" have been written next to the characters [蛙] (waa1) "frog", [式] (sik1) "style". When asked about using this transliteration device, the children in the class stressed the importance of listening skills and phonological knowledge as shown in the following answers:

I have to think carefully how it is pronounced in English.

I just listen to the teacher and write it as it sounds in English. It helps me remember how to say it. (Ca Mei, aged 9, class 5)

Close examination of the children's textbooks (see figure 6.1 below) show that these English transliterations are highly individual. As Ca Mei explained:

There is no right or wrong way to do it, it is how you say it.

This response is a result of the widespread homophony in Chinese and the acute phonological sensitivity required when recording the different Cantonese tones. In addition, irregular sound-symbol correspondence in English means the exercise of writing syllables to match character pronunciation is left to the discretion of the individual child. Meanwhile, Yin Yang uses a mixture of English transliterations and Chinese characters (refer to figure 6.2 below) using characters with the same pronunciation but visually distinct. For example, he writes [𠵹] (zung1) next to the character [終] (zung1). The two are 1st tone, both of which are pronounced the same. However, the match is not always tonally accurate as in the case of [樣] with the sound (joeng6) and [羊] (joeng4).

QuickTime[®] and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Figure 6.1 Ca Mai's transliterations

QuickTime® and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Figure 6.2 Ying Yan's annotations

Many of the teachers believe that these child-invented transliterations are not a perfect guide to learn the pronunciation of the characters, but tolerate the practice in the early stages as the following responses suggest:

It is a useful learning tool for remembering correct pronunciation at the beginning but later we have to correct it because of the tones.

It helps them try to remember the character's sound. Once they have remembered it they don't use it (*transliteration*) again.

Not surprisingly, many of the teachers did not actively promote the use of transliterations as a tool for learning as all but one of the teachers in the school were educated in Hong Kong where calls from some linguists to adopt a romanised script to support early reading have always been rejected. One teacher believes that the process of learning Chinese literacy goes hand in hand with cognitive effort and transliterations should therefore be discouraged:

When I was at school we had to learn the characters the hard way. Always memorization and repeat. It is part of our language.

The age span in the grade five class varies from nine to 12 years and similar age ranges are found in the other classes. My observations of children reading in the class (and miscue analysis of reading in the next chapter) lead me to believe that the actual level of reading proficiency varies from child to child far more than the language demands of the text would indicate. In theory the children are allocated classes according to comparable levels of literacy but decisions to place children together in mixed ability groups are based on more pragmatic reasons. As the head teacher explains:

We do not have enough teachers to justify smaller classes and numbers are not always sufficient to group by age. Often brothers and sisters are in the same class.

There is a historical tradition within Confucian heritage societies that all children in schools should acquire knowledge at the same time in the same order. This view of a

uniform and standardised curriculum results in individual interests being subordinated to those of the wider school population (Chen, 1999). When asked about differentiation and catering for individual needs there was a mixed response from teachers as the following replies indicate:

It is important to treat everyone the same so we teach children to the same standard. In Hong Kong the system means that children have to repeat the year if they are not up to the same standard.

I have tried to make up different activities and tasks suitable for children of different abilities but the resources are very limited.

The way we teach is to try to pull everyone up to the same standard so as to make them equal.

Lesson observations at the school reveal that a significant proportion of the teaching is orientated around the core textbook and preparation for tests. Furthermore, the lessons are dominated by teacher-talk in an expository and explanatory format employing traditional question and answer formats. There were very few instances recorded of dialogic talk (Alexander, 2005). When interviewed many of the teachers report that they rely solely on the textbook and appreciate the prescriptive nature of the curriculum. The following responses sum up the attitude of the majority of the teachers:

Most of us are not professional teachers so the textbooks give us the structure and guidelines.

Nobody is really supervising or supporting us so we just use the textbook,

According to the head teacher there is an expectation that teachers will produce their own supplementary materials but resource limitation, pressure of time, and lack of confidence and expertise means teacher-produced materials is a rare occurrence. As one teacher states:

The teaching is very Chinese because the teachers don't get paid so they don't prepare lessons.

However, as the following fieldnotes, from the grade four class, show there are some

instances when the teachers deviate from the textbook and incorporate literacy-related group activities into lessons to stimulate the children's interest and promote learning.

Can we do the dictionary game Ma Lo Sze (Teacher Ma)?⁶ Y calls out. T replies 'ok' and divides the class into three groups. Children congregate around three desks. T writes the character 'temple' [寺] on chalkboard. (How do you say this character?) The children with heads down excitedly trace their fingers down pages of the Chinese dictionary rapidly turning pages. One child calls out 'yur wrang' another jumps up and down 'hurry hurry'. 'page twothreefive'. The T observes the class smiling and goes to support one group who are experiencing difficulty locating the character in the dictionary. The children's involvement and enjoyment is evident.

This vignette shows how the teacher provides opportunities for peer group interaction and creates an environment which values talking and listening. The role of the teacher here is to scaffold learning by encouraging collaboration between more and less expert partners in dialogue as envisioned by Bruner (1978).

The notion of traditional 'Chinese' teaching cropped up in many discussions with the teachers and observations indicate that teachers' orientation to literacy instructional practices is explicitly related to their belief systems and pedagogical knowledge (Lau, 2007). That is, teachers' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, gained from their own lived experiences, shape the decisions they make about their own teaching behaviour, approaches to learning literacy and perceptions of the children in the classroom. These different conceptions are expressed in the following teachers' views:

Western education is for speech and expression. Ours is another angle. I had taught only English in Hong Kong and I adapted some interesting activities and approaches used in the English lessons to teach Chinese. I think the children liked the lessons as more and more children joined in. Some of the other teachers were also interested.

However, a note of caution is required here about creating false dichotomies between instructional behaviours and cultural approaches to teaching and learning in Chinese societies and western societies, especially when cross-cultural comparisons can be

⁶ In keeping with the way children in the school address their teachers in Chinese.

deemed confounding and biased when using criteria drawn from a foundation of ‘western’ research. In fact, my own observations conducted in primary schools in Hong Kong did not indicate a single version of a classroom methodology. That said, the Chinese teachers’ perceptions do, nevertheless provide some basis for comparison with approaches to learning literacy outlined in chapter 6.

Returning to the aforementioned fieldnotes, Alice and two of her classmates (aged 9) are keen to share their knowledge of the organisation of a Chinese dictionary and its radical index after the lesson. The method involves finding the section in the dictionary for the character’s radical and then searching for the character by counting the number of strokes left when the radical is taken from it. As Alice explains:

you have to find that bit (*covers the phonetic element with her finger leaving the radical exposed*) now count how many strokes... one two three **four**... so you then look in the four stroke section (*turns pages*) ...then how many strokes that half (*points to the remaining strokes*) ...six...now find the six stroke section...look down (*scans the list and locates the character*) and ...VOILA!

(Alice, aged 9, class 6)

Not only are the children in the class capable of articulating the process involved in locating and identifying characters in a Chinese dictionary, they also show knowledge of learning strategies such as skimming and scanning an index. Other strategies deployed by the children include the ability to analyse the component parts within Chinese characters and their relationship with radical clusters as well as distinguishing between character visual configurations and the number of strokes. One of the challenges of this is illustrated by the character [口] (hau2) “*mouth*” which consists of only three strokes. Alice’s response to this character is to make an initial error but then she immediately rectifies it by tracing the character strokes in the palm of her hand:

This has four strokes. No! Three strokes.

In brief, the children’s proficiency in manipulating a Chinese dictionary, not only supports the pronunciation and the meaning of the new characters they come across

whilst reading but it also points to important literacy-related strategies and skills, which have the potential to be transferred to other learning contexts.

Opinions among the teachers is varied regarding the age at which children are capable of using their knowledge of the composition of characters and the classification skills required in handling a Chinese dictionary as the following responses suggest:

We start dictionary work in grade three not one or two. You need the knowledge of radicals to use a dictionary. The dictionary is complicated for young children.

They start at grade four because before they get confused as characters are complex and you need to know the formula. The radical can be at the top, bottom, left or right.

The next teaching episode, from the grade four class, not only illustrates another example of collaborative group work but also shows how the teacher supports the construction of written sentences. From the fieldnotes the following entry is recorded.

T divides class into groups. T writes character on the board ‘sun’ [太陽] and ‘women’ [女人]. Children work together to make a sentence giving instructions to each other. One child in the group acts as a scribe writing the sentence. Children call out ‘copy it quickly’ ‘rub it out’ ‘no it’s this’ ‘put it there’. When ready the team shouts out ‘finished’ and teacher checks the sentence [那女人在晒太陽], meaning ‘the woman is sunbathing’. T often replies corrects children’s syntax using the correct model and asks the children to repeat the sentence using the appropriate structure. When each team wins T adds a character stroke on the board until it eventually forms the character [正] ‘correct’⁷. T reiterates ‘If you make a sentence keep it simple’

One of the challenges for the children is that Cantonese is essentially a spoken language and when they use Cantonese expressions in writing these often differ from standard written Chinese, which is based on Putonghua. Also many colloquial morphemes in Cantonese do not have a corresponding character in the written form.

⁷ illustration of the stroke sequence to make up a character “correct” *dui*, with a written form [正].

An example of the former used in the lesson above is ‘we go swimming’ where the children say [我地去游水] (ngo5 dei6 heoi2 jau4 seoi2) but they write [我們去游泳] whereas Putonghua speakers write and speak the same [我們去游泳] (wǒ men qù yóu yǒng).

As the class teacher explains:

Written Chinese is different from the daily spoken language the children use. We always have to specify the difference between expressing in writing and speaking. Putonghua spoken and written are close but Cantonese is an other version so the written style is different. It is like comparing the Herald to the Mirror.

A further difficulty experienced by the children is the choice of appropriate classifier to describe a noun. This is because in Chinese all nouns, regardless of the number, must be preceded by a classifier such as [架] (gaa3) denotes vehicles; [條] (tiu4) denotes dogs and [本] (bun2) denotes books, ‘an orange’ is written as [一隻橙]. Three cars mean [三架車] in Cantonese. There are over sixty classifiers in Cantonese although young children usually use about a dozen as part of their vocabulary. Errors include the over use of the very common classifiers [個] (go3) when children are unsure of the more specific classifier such as [條] or [隻]. Again the impact of this lexical feature on the child’s written Chinese will depend on the child’s exposure to Cantonese and the growing influence of English (where the noun classifier is absent). The use of classifiers and quantifiers by British-born Chinese children in Tyneside is covered in much more detail by Li Wei and Lee (2002).

Code switching as part of the children’s naturally occurring discourse is a widely observed phenomenon, not only in this lesson, but also throughout the Chinese school. Although some traditional commentators have viewed mixing languages in negative terms, that is, as reflecting a lack of language ability, most contemporary contributors consider it a natural product of social interaction and patterns of language behaviour amongst bilingual children in multilingual settings, whether in the U.K. (Dhatta, 2000) or in Hong Kong (Yip & Matthews, 2007). Fieldnotes indicate that these Cantonese and English utterances appear to be an automatic and

unconscious experience for the children and when asked about this phenomenon, the teacher relied 'I don't think they realize it themselves'. However, on closer inspection, it is clear that code switching also performs an important function in literacy learning. First, the teacher taps into the children's prior knowledge and bilingual skills to support the learning of new characters. For example, in the lesson above the teacher writes the Chinese character [海] on the board she asks 'what is this in English?' By using equivalence, the teacher reinforces the meaning of new characters and vocabulary is extended in both languages. As the teacher explains:

If I can teach them how to say it both ways it leads to a better understanding. They can translate from Chinese to English and English to Chinese. I may say 'What does that mean in English?' For some children it may be more practical to remember in English.

The teacher's explanation here suggests that for many of the children English has become the dominant language of education and literacy learning. However the use of English may also be a necessary requirement for those children in the class who speak Hakka at home. According to Eldridge (1996) the use of code-switching acts as a device for the transference of meaning and builds a bridge from the known to unknown. As such, this merging and synthesizing of children's bilingual resources is used to promote both the teaching and learning of literacy (Martin *et al.* 2006).

Second, code-switching is used by teachers and children to avoid misunderstandings. Clarification is often sought for explanations and instructions during the lesson. For example, the following children's queries, in English, were drawn from the field notes: 'Shall we write in a full sentence?' 'Are we doing dictionary work?' 'Do we have to write it out?' 'How long have we got to finish this?'

An additional function of children's use of code-switching is for self-expression and building interpersonal relationships among bilingual peers. An illustration of this, from the field notes, is a child singing 'jingle bells' in class. Holmes (1992) believes that code-switching here is used as a tool for creating linguistic solidarity, especially between individuals who share the same bilingual/bicultural identity. The

incorporation of Scots in their speech (in italics) – overheard in the lesson above - ‘*dinnae* do it like that’ ‘its *wrang*’ ‘rub it *oot*’ adds a further dimension to their Chinese- Scots bicultural identities. Of interest is Alice’s use of ‘voila’, in her explanation of the Chinese dictionary above, stemming from learning French at primary school.

Observations throughout fieldwork reveal that the distribution of English and Cantonese varied a great deal in lessons. This wide-ranging practice was dependent on teachers’ attitudes to the concept of code-switching and varied understandings of the phenomenon in the Chinese school. These different teacher perceptions are illustrated in the following responses:

We are strongly advised by the head teacher to use Cantonese in conversations in class but sometimes we have to use English to explain new things especially for the Hakka speakers. But the children speak whatever language they feel comfortable with.

The reason for using English in addition to Cantonese is to meet needs of children and for comprehension. Chinese is not their first language or their second language but in between.

Most of the children prefer to speak English. After class it is all English. Some children are reluctant to speak Cantonese. When I ask a question I know they understand but they answer in English sometimes. The parent influence is important. Most parents just speak Cantonese or Hakka to their children.

One teacher considered code-switching as a negative experience and compared it to the speech community in Hong Kong:

This is similar to *Chinglish*⁸ in Hong Kong where some English words are easier to express yourself. But it is not good as it does not help learning the language itself.

Whilst it is acknowledged that bilingual talk can be a valuable tool for thinking, literacy learning and identity formation, detailed sociolinguistic discourse analysis of the phenomenon would be beyond the scope of this study. Further intriguing

⁸ *Chinglish* is a combination of the words Chinese and English and in Hong Kong refers to spoken English influenced by Cantonese. In certain contexts it can have pejorative connotations and the term ‘Chinese English’ is preferred by linguists.

evidence of children's use of conversational code-switching, as a linguistic resource in Chinese schools, is provided by Creese *et al.* (2007).

Observations indicate that dictation is a common literacy practice in the Chinese school. This is not surprising, as this activity has traditionally been treated as an isolated and independent lesson, for both Chinese and English, in schools in Hong Kong (Chiang, 2004). The teachers' approaches to dictation within the school varied according to the age and stage of the learners. For the younger children the teacher writes a series of the characters (phrases or short sentences) on the board and a short time is given for the children to study them. Then the teacher wipes the characters off, repeats the characters and children have to write the characters out in their exercise books from memory remembering the correct stroke sequences. Another form of dictation is to write down something that the teacher says or reads out as it is being said or immediately after it is said. Some teachers may take a sentence at a time. Finally, the teachers read the text the third time for pupils to check through their work. If the children are old enough they learn a whole passage or poem, which they write out from memory. The following fieldnotes, again from the grade five class, demonstrate the central role of memorization in Chinese literacy learning.

Class is noisy with children running around. A short period of time is given for revision of the passage given for homework the previous week and practiced at home. T said 'close books' [合埋書]. Children silently write out passage from memory. At the end of the task time allowed for children to read over work and correct any errors. Much sharing of rubbers and corrections made to character stroke configurations. T collects books in. She later makes corrections in red pen and records marks.

The above vignette shows that this memorization activity not only develops the children's handwriting skills but also acts as an assessment tool. In this context, Watkins and Biggs (2001: 6) argue that a distinction needs to be made between rote learning and repetitive learning. That is, children who are making good use of memorization are not necessarily rote-learning (as many western educators assume) where the passage is memorized without any understanding. In fact, their view is that many Chinese children develop an understanding of the text through the process of drill and memorization and this teaches them to produce such texts themselves.

Consequently, Erbaugh (1990) suggests that literate Chinese have well-developed strategies for appreciation and memorization and that these can be transferred to the purposes of learning English.

When the children are writing Chinese characters they must pay attention to two aspects: type of stroke and stroke order (refer back to the figure 5.4 for types of strokes). In this class the exercise books are checked and marked by the teacher and the errors have to be corrected. The teacher reiterates the importance of repetitive practice when writing characters and recalls her own schooling:

If you got a stroke wrong you had to write the character ten or twenty times. It was the same for English. If you spelt a word wrong you had to write it out ten times. It is our way of learning.

The teacher goes on to say that the attention to detail required to write Chinese characters and the intensive handwriting practice benefits the children:

When I look at children's writing in English, I can tell whether a Chinese child has written it or not.

The teachers at the school stress the need for children to develop fine listening skills during dictation exercises as they not only need to differentiate between tonal variations but also have to distinguish between different characters with the same pronunciation to avoid making written errors. Thus, one of the difficulties the children encounter during dictation exercises is the preponderance of homophones in Chinese. For example, in one of the lessons a child used an incorrect character which has a same pronunciation 'in the park/school' [再] (zoi3) (again) and [載] (zoi3) (to carry, to take in).

Western mainstream primary school teachers may condemn traditional teaching methods, such as dictation and the memorization of whole passages, but the Chinese teacher expressed a different view when questioned about this strategy:

This is a very common practice in Hong Kong schools. It is very useful. It helps the children remember the characters and the story or a poem. I still

remember the poems I learnt at school. Students in Hong Kong use the same approach when they learn English. They use textbooks and memorise new vocabulary and whole passages.

The previous vignette also draws attention to the children's learning at home and the vital partnership between the Chinese school and the parents. According to the head teacher:

Children write new characters introduced on Sunday in their jotters and take them home to memorise for a dictation test the following week. Or they have a passage to learn. The children are asked to memorise the poem or passage and write it out by themselves. The emphasis is on memorisation. The children should do five to ten minutes homework everyday using the exercise book to recap on what they have learnt. That is the ideal way to keep them fresh.

The head teacher went on to suggest that the parents' relationship with the Chinese school was closer than that of the mainstream school because of the parents' role and involvement in Chinese literacy homework tasks conducted in the home which gives parents a window on Chinese school practices.

All of teachers interviewed regularly gave their students literacy homework to do and reported that most of the children finished it at home. Evidence provided by parents in chapter 4 shows that almost all the children were involved in some sort of literacy learning in the home associated with the Chinese school, although time spent on these activities and input from parents varied a great deal. Furthermore, when the children in this study were asked to reflect on what they did at home to help them improve their Chinese literacy skills, it seemed for many of them the formal learning of Chinese literacy did not stop when they left the Chinese school.

However, mixed views were obtained from teachers at the school regarding the children's commitment to homework. One teacher spoke positively about their dedication:

The children are very willing to learn and the parents are very encouraging.

Conversely, one teacher spoke of a lack of motivation:

A lot of the Chinese children don't want to learn Chinese because most are born here and they don't want to memorise all the characters. It is too much hard work.

In some cases, the teacher had a more balanced view and suggested one of the difficulties for the parents was their busy working lives in the food catering business:

Some parents sit with their children and support them. Other parents do not do it because they are working. That is why there is such a difference in ability in class.

The next lesson not only shows how some teachers engage with the children to support their knowledge of the underlying structures of characters but also demonstrates the teacher's questioning style and use of explanations anchored in literacy learning. The following fieldnotes, from the grade three class, illustrate the direction and flow of events.

Teacher writes three characters on the chalkboard [耳] “ear” [雨] “rain” [手] “hand”. Teacher chooses a child and asks them to write a compound character under a character using the same semantic radical. Child writes [扌] “push” whilst another writes [扌] “hit”. More children are picked at random to come up to the board adding further characters to each column. The child says the character and teacher repeats sometimes using the correct model if the pronunciation is not clear. She also adds explanations “Most of these characters are to do with the weather” or “All things to do with the hand”. After each column has three characters the teachers opens the exercise up the whole class. “Do you know any other characters that have the same radical?” Children put hands up and are keen to show their knowledge and add to the character columns. Teacher offers advice “You need to learn more characters so that you can write longer sentences”.

The above extract shows that although the teacher remains at her desk at the front of class throughout this lesson and dominates most of the talk, she effectively orchestrates a variety of literacy exercises encouraging the children's involvement. As well as having opportunities to practice pronunciation, write characters using correct stroke configurations on the board and extend their vocabulary, the children are also encouraged to think about the writing system and the various principles underlying the construction of characters. Typical exercises at this stage include pointing out the radical of a given character, suggesting characters that are formed

from a given radical, thinking of a word that includes a given character and sentence construction. Interestingly in this class, the children volunteer their own suggestions for character building without fear of embarrassment or retribution. Furthermore, teacher talk mediates not just instructions and explanations but also a wider culture of learning is embedded in the lesson as the teacher communicates high expectations and the need for extended study at home. As the teacher explains:

Learning is important in Chinese culture because it is considered imperative to do one's best and better one's knowledge.

After the lesson the teacher clarifies her approach to learning characters:

At the first stage you have to learn character by character but when the children have learnt a certain number of characters you can then look at how the characters are formed. It is important to study the radical and the phonetic as they are the building blocks for many characters.

On the other hand some teachers advocated a more traditional approach especially when discussing the explicit teaching of the phonetic element. As one teacher explains:

Chinese characters do not help with pronunciation. Children need to learn characters individually by memorizing them. It is part of the language. That is why it is special. We have to learn it the hard way.

Meanwhile, another teacher advocates drawing on the varied experiences of children and aims for a synthesis of approaches when teaching Chinese characters:

The way I teach has changed since being in Hong Kong. Because the children are educated in Scottish schools the teachers explain a lot to the children about how to read English. But I am still thinking you can't teach all those characters you still have to memorise them also. It is sometimes difficult to explain the characters to the children because the characters have changed a lot over time. Usually the children find out in their own way and find the connections between the characters themselves. The most efficient way is to combine both methods.

The teachers' views expressed above show that the explicit instruction of morphological knowledge varies from teacher to teacher. That is where the teacher

draws the children's attention to the essential principles of the script relating shape to meaning and shape to pronunciation (Shu and Anderson, 1999). As a consequence this has an impact on children's experiences of analyzing the internal structures of Chinese characters and subsequent reading strategies as will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Many lessons at the Chinese school consisted of revision and the teacher explaining and exemplifying a series of exercises in preparation for a test. An example from the grade 5 class is provided in appendix 4 (with English translation). The teacher goes through each exercise asking for suitable answers and providing support. At this stage exercises usually require children to explain word meanings; to provide synonyms (same meaning baby [嬰兒] / infant [嬰兒, 幼兒]; and /or antonyms (opposites hot [熱]/cold [冷]) for given words; to distinguish characters that are similar in writing (visual discrimination); to recognize different pronunciations of a character, or to make up sentences from given character or phrase.

Although lessons of this type may be criticized as 'teaching to the test', the teacher felt the consolidation and preparation of exam techniques was beneficial:

When I learnt English in Hong Kong we did similar exercises. We learnt through a lot of exercises and I knew if it was correct.

In addition, parallels can be drawn with similar exercises found in mainstream schools such as cloze procedure and matching sentence halves.

Whilst classroom management issues were not a central concern of classroom observations, it is acknowledged that the nature of the learning environment does have an impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. In addition, western perceptions of school discipline in Confucian-heritage societies are frequently laden with stereotypical understandings and much is made of the deep-seated cultural roots of the authoritarian Chinese teacher imposing punitive discipline on non-compliant children (Ho, 2001). In fact, '*Disobedience*' in Chinese is composed of two characters meaning 'mouth back' reflecting the need to be quiet and show respect. This impression sometimes stems from the view that discipline may in fact be a

function of the writing system itself where children have to learn in excess of two thousand characters for basic literacy (Parry, 1998). In reality, classroom management at the Chinese school varies a great deal. Many teachers were quite 'relaxed' and 'informal' regarding discipline, especially some parent teachers who developed maternal relationship with the children and recognized the need to make learning enjoyable and fun.

Although the different teaching episodes outlined in this chapter have been considered in isolation for convenience sake, in reality all of these activities may well be incorporated into a single lesson. A common pattern in the observed lessons is first, to start with a dictation exercise to check that the children have learnt their homework. This consists of writing passages from memory and correcting characters stroke errors. Secondly, the teacher introduces a new text and reads aloud the whole text before discussing the text paragraph by paragraph with frequent explanations on the literal and implied meanings of text. In addition, the teacher introduces new vocabulary possibly including a brief explanation of the derivation of modern characters from the ancient forms. Thirdly, the children read aloud after the teacher followed by various types of exercises from the board such as making sentences with new characters. Finally, a description of the homework is given and an indication of the passage to be memorised for the following week. This cyclical pattern to the order of events moving from whole to part to whole may well have cultural resonances. Furthermore, it is important to stress the interwoven nature of the four modes of language existing within the different literacy-enhancing tasks such as *listening* to teacher; *reading* to clarify pronunciation; *writing* Chinese characters and English transliterations and *talking* bilingually to support the understanding of new vocabulary.

6.10 Conclusion

In summary, the key practice of the Chinese school remains the teaching of Chinese literacy, with opportunities for children to experience additional literacy-related activities outside lessons such as calligraphy, reciting poetry and reading competitions. Literacy practices vary across the complementary school and often depend on individual teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning. These attitudes

and beliefs about learning are drawn from their own knowledge and varied experiences of education in different cultural contexts. Although the culture of learning is influenced by a textbook orientated curriculum and preparation for assessments, instructional methods such as group work and literacy-related games are also incorporated into lessons to promote children's participation and stimulate their interest in learning. The talismanic nature of the Chinese script influences the learning regime and inculcates cultural values of hard work. However, during literacy lessons children experienced a number of challenges. These included differentiating between tones (and homophones) when reading and listening to the teacher during dictation exercises and constructing sentences in standard Chinese. Finally, the wide range of literacy practices observed within the Chinese school enhances the children's experiences with learning. These literacy learning experiences include expansion of knowledge through reading a variety of genres; reading aloud and teacher-child interactions around texts; developing listening, memorization and visual perception skills; revision exercises and handwriting practice. The children also drew on complementary experiences to support their developing metalinguistic knowledge. These skills included code-switching acting as a bridge to comprehension and literacy learning and English transliterations, based on individual children's knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences learnt in mainstream school, used to support the pronunciation and memorisation of new Chinese characters.

Chapter 7

Reading in Mainstream Primary Schools

The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.

Dr Seuss 1904-1991

In this chapter the shift in emphasis moves to mainstream primary schools and their role in shaping the literacy experiences of Chinese children. First, it looks at approaches to teaching reading in Scottish schools and their relevance to children with English as an additional language. Second, it analyses the reading strategies used by six Chinese boys when reading both Chinese and English texts using miscue analysis and think-aloud protocols. This is supported by reading conferences with children, conversations with a range of school staff and documentary evidence.

7.1 Approaches to teaching reading in the mainstream schools

Although the children at the centre of this study are no longer beginner readers it is worth giving a synoptic view of the methods currently in use in the schools to teach reading as this can influence not only how the children learnt to read in English when they started school in Scotland but also the type of intervention programmes typically employed by schools to support bilingual learners who enter the school system at a later date. Furthermore, the different teaching approaches give an insight into the strategies the children draw on when faced with text difficulties and also how they attempt to repair these difficulties (Wallace, 1988). Unlike observations in the Chinese school, close observation of literacy lessons in mainstream schools is not the focus of the present study but my role as an ITE tutor in schools and the nature of the present fieldwork, where establishing working relationships with the Chinese children were paramount, meant I have access to classrooms as both an observer and a participant. As a result these insights are used to inform the subsequent discussion.

Approaches to reading in English have been characterised by dichotomists views among academics and educationalists and continues to be fiercely debated

throughout the English-speaking world, including the US (Krashen, 2003) and in Australia (Geekie *et al.* 1999). These disagreements or ‘reading wars’ hinge on different teaching methodologies and philosophies around whether instruction should consist of a bottom-up discrete phonic skills instruction to allow readers to ‘crack the alphabetic code’ (Adams, 1990) or immersing children in a culture of literacy where children make use of their experiences of life and their knowledge of the way stories work to help them read (Smith, 1986; Meek and Mills, 1988). These ‘top-down’ or ‘language experience’ teaching practices include a strong emphasis on authentic language (teacher scribing the child’s speech as reading material) and ‘real books’. More recently, the shift in emphasis perceives reading as an interactive model where both bottom-up and top-down processes occur simultaneously for successful reading (Stanovich, 1980). Both Redfern and Edwards (1992) and Harrison (1996) provide clear guides to the pros and cons of these aforementioned ways of teaching reading. Unfortunately, what is frequently absent from the debate is what pedagogical practice best meets the needs of the increasing number of bilingual learners in Scottish schools who are learning to read through an additional language.

The Chinese families at the centre of the research sent their children to schools in three different local authorities across the central belt of Scotland. In 1997, all local education authorities were given Scottish Office funding and considerable autonomy to develop early intervention projects in the early stages of primary schooling to raise literacy attainment. The Early Intervention projects emphasised broadly similar themes in terms of staff development, home-school links, increased support staff and individual support (such as Marie Clay’s (1985) reading recovery programme). Although the initiative considerably raised the consciousness of literacy learning throughout the primary teaching profession, the result was eclectic approaches across education authorities in Scotland in terms of pedagogical perspectives on teaching and learning reading (Fraser *et al.* 2001), the legacy of which still reverberates in the different schools in which the research fieldwork took place.

Authority ‘A’ spearheaded the synthetic phonics approach, which teaches children to pronounce in isolation the forty-four phonemes associated with particular graphemes

(twenty of these are vowel sounds and twenty four are consonant sounds). Observations show teaching to be whole class, highly structured, sequential and brisk paced. A related commercial programme *Jolly Phonics*, popular in schools across Scotland, uses a multisensory method by teaching children actions associated with forty-two sounds. For example, for *ck* children raise hands and snap fingers as if playing castanets and say *ck, ck, ck*. Simplified vocabulary based on ‘regular’ consonant-vowel-consonant words means that early reading material within phonic based reading schemes may be dull, repetitive and contrived (‘the vet went on a jet’). Also, phonemes and words are frequently presented in a decontextualised manner rather than in a wider framework of language learning.

The synthetic phonics programme piloted in authority ‘A’ has gained increasing attention not only in Scotland (Ellis, 2005) but also in England (Rose, 2006). A seven-year research study claims children taught synthetic phonics first and fast outperformed their peers who had been subjected to analytical phonics teaching. (Johnston and Watson, 2005). Bilingual learners are not factored into this research but there are claims that additional language readers in England have benefited from this type of phonic-based teaching as they score well on reading accuracy tasks (Stuart, 1999). The assumption here being that by breaking reading instruction down into manageable parts it is easier for additional language learners.

However, the research has been questioned by a number of academics who believe that the children may be good at decoding lists of words presented in isolation but these skills often mask difficulties with reading comprehension (Sen and Blatchford, 2001). In other words the children only show improvement in the skills they are trained in. Further criticism of the synthetic approach is there is no evidence that children became more engaged in reading. Exposure to texts is crucial for bilingual learners as the amount children read is the biggest influence on attainment after social class according to Ellis (2005).

Synthetic phonics differs from analytic phonics, an approach adopted by authority ‘B’, where phonemes are not initially pronounced in isolation. The emphasis starts

with whole words, then segmenting these into onsets (the part of the syllable which preceded the vowel) and rimes (the rest) (e.g. *m-ouse*, *h-ouse*). Onsets and rimes are then used these to generate analogies. For example, the target word *mouse* must begin with the sound /m/ because its first letter is the same as known words *my* and *mum*. It ends the same way as *house* so it must rhyme with this word. Because many onsets consist of single phonemes, (*mum*, *my*, *mouse*) phoneme awareness develops alongside familiarity with onset and rime. All of these decoding strategies are often learned in the course of shared reading. This approach draws on the influential work of Goswami and Bryant (1990) and their claim that children's grasp of phonological awareness (recognizing, segmenting and manipulating sounds) is a strong predictor of early success with reading.

The strengths of the analytic approach for bilingual learners are threefold. First, it involves early experience of whole language reading material, including familiar forms like nursery rhymes. Second, it engages with children's playful interest in rhyme and alliteration (hence the growing popularity of Dr Seuss books) and last, it provides strategies for reading words that cannot be sounded out on a letter-by-letter basis. On the other hand limitations of the approach include the lack of systematic and incremental instruction (as what is taught may be based on incidental reading) and an early emphasis on whole words may delay children's segmenting and synthesising skills.

A more hybrid approach to reading instruction has been implemented in Local Authority ('C'). In these schools phonemic awareness training is incorporated into a total reading programme including onsets and rimes and independent word recognition strategies to facilitate fluent reading in conjunction with understanding. For example *Jolly Phonics* is used along side *Oxford Reading Tree* and *Storyworld* reading schemes. The *Oxford Reading Tree* includes 'look and say' methods where key vocabulary (using word walls and flashcards) is recognised by sight. Meanwhile, *Storyworld* is a guided reader where the parent/teacher reads the full story and encourages children to read the sentence in a speech bubble. This enables the child to enjoy a complete story while reading initial sight words. The less able readers use

Soundstart a reading scheme with a phonic structure. According to discussions with teachers this combination of methods is to cast the teaching and learning net wide to capture all types of learning styles. Although the aim in this local authority is to be inclusive, it should not be assumed that this ‘potpourri’ of teaching methods works more effectively for bilingual learners than one stressing the mechanics of reading without careful observation and robust assessment. That is, responsive teachers noticing and tuning into what learners say and do as they learn.

The role of the reader’s pre-existing knowledge framework or ‘schema’ provides the main guiding context through which information gained from the page is re-constructed and interpreted. This significant factor not only includes extracting literal information from the text but also the ability to read between and beyond the lines. (For a description of schema theory in second language reading comprehension see Nassaji, 2007). These knowledge-based processes in additional language reading cannot be cultivated by just studying the language itself, it has to be supported by increasing familiarity with culturally established ways of seeing, knowing and understanding the world (Leung, 2004). This aspect of reading may remain invisible to mainstream teachers who misinterpret bilingual learners lack of understanding of texts from the dominant culture with poor academic ability (Gravelle, 2000).

Cline and Cozen’s (1999) research project investigating reading skills of nine-year-old bilingual children found that children with limited English vocabulary, who are given culturally unfamiliar texts, may develop compensatory habits and become over reliant on surface (grapho-phonetic) and syntactic cues and fail to construct meaning from the text. Similarly, Frederickson and Frith (1998) found that EAL children’s reading comprehension was lower than their reading accuracy due to difficulties with accessing semantic knowledge. Unfortunately, this type of empirical research conducted in primary schools in England remains absent from the Scottish educational scene (Landon, 1999).

PART II

7.2 Individual learners reading Chinese and English

With this brief description of pedagogical approaches to reading instruction in Scottish schools, we come to the detailed observation of six learners. As part of a further exploration of the children's engagement with literacy, Miscue Analysis of reading (Goodman, 1969) and think-aloud protocols (Afflerbach, 2000) in both Chinese and English were conducted with the children within authentic instructional settings. Details of these data collection methods have been provided in chapter 4.

Name	Age	Birth/Education	Local Authority	Texts
Ka Shing	8	<i>Born Scotland Attended nursery and started P1 in Scotland</i>	C	<i>Emily's Legs by Dick King Smith</i>
				<i>Chinese Mid Autumn Festival Level 5</i>
Alan	9	<i>Born Scotland Attended nursery and started P1 in Scotland</i>	C	<i>The Followers Collins Pathways</i>
				<i>Li Bo Level 5</i>
Stephen	9	<i>Born Hong Kong Attended kindergarten Hong Kong Started P2 in Scotland</i>	A	<i>We are the Detectives Read On Stanley Thornes</i>
				<i>The Guest Comes Level 3</i>
Ying Yan	8	<i>Born Hong Kong Attended kindergarten and Grade 1 Hong Kong Started P2 in Scotland</i>	B	<i>Alone in his Teacher's House Louis Sacher Marvin Redpost Readers</i>
				<i>Blind Men and the Elephant Level 7</i>
Chun Wah	8	<i>Born Hong Kong Attended kindergarten and Grade 1 Hong Kong Started P2 in Scotland</i>	B	<i>The Twelfth Floor Kids by Ruth Symes</i>
				<i>Shakespeare Level 6</i>
Kit Wai	8	<i>Born Hong Kong Attended kindergarten Hong Kong Started P2 in Scotland</i>	C	<i>Jirik and the Speaking Animals Langdale Park Readers</i>
				<i>Cho Chong Weighing the Elephant Level 5</i>

Table 7.1 Chinese children participating in MCA of reading

All the reading sessions were tape-recorded and the procedure adopted draws heavily on Wallace's (1988) social constructivist approach which views reading as a shared experience between the adult, the learner and the text. Wallace believes it is the very nature of this one to one interaction that offers a multiple perspective on the reading process. It is not just the nature of miscues but the comments made by the learner themselves as they read aloud with the adult which gives insights into children's thinking. This sheds light on the key features of the texts themselves, both linguistic and cultural, which may be taken for granted by the adult (Wallace, 1989). This approach deviates from the use of miscue analysis as a summative assessment tool

where miscues are quantified and the teacher's role is one of a detached observer (Moon, 1990).

Wallace's method can be summarised into three steps. First, the teacher explains to the child the procedure in advance so they have a picture of the whole activity. Second, the text can be introduced as *I want you to read it to yourself, then tell me about it*. The child then reads the text silently and the child retells or describes the text. Prompts from the data include *Tell me some more about...* and *Did you find out anything else?* Probes to elicit additional information about the children's thinking processes include *What was the first thing you thought of when you read the passage?* and *What did you think of the passage?*. This stage also incorporates questions to evaluate the text difficulty such as *Did you find the story easy or hard to read?*

The third and key stage of the process involves the child reading the text with the teacher. Several types of adult interventions can be identified in the data such as when a child hesitates over a word or makes an error. The focus may be on the graphophonic features of the text and directing the child to sounds and covering part of the word such as *Look at the beginning of the word. How do you say this bit?* or encouraging the child to return to the word such as *Say this word again* and *Look carefully at this word*. On occasions the adult may give the word to keep up the flow of the reading. Learners are also encouraged to reflect on their own strategies when reading. An example of this is the question *If you don't know a word what do you do?* Additionally the focus can be on the comprehension of specific vocabulary. For instance, *What is a magician?* and *Do you know what a detective is?*

The adult may also ask questions to remind the learner of the context. Examples of this from the data include predictions such as *What do you think will happen next?* and directing the child to the illustrations with *Look at the picture. Can you see the fire?* This tool is useful as the learners are frequently concentrating on the words and often lose sight of the whole sentence or text. The shared process also means the learner sometimes initiates the conversation and asks questions such as *What is that*

word?

All the reading passages were taken from the child's current mainstream classroom reader and their current Chinese school textbook (see table 7.1). The original books were used on all occasions so the reader has the opportunity to make full use of the context cues available. This approach is consistent with the phenomenological tradition as it describes the qualitative ways of reading in contexts that most closely resemble the actual situations in which children experience the phenomena of reading.

In summary, the reading event described above can be considered as form of dialogic teaching (Alexander, 2005). This method is perceived as *collective* (the child and adult tackle the reading task together); *reciprocal* (the child and adult listen to each other, share ideas and co-construct meaning from the text); *supportive* (children articulate their thoughts freely, without fear of embarrassment over errors and miscues are accepted as part of the learning process).

MCA has had much impact within the English-speaking world as a diagnostic tool and it has also been successfully adopted for investigating reading strategies in bilinguals such as Spanish-English readers in the U.S.A (Brown *et al.* 1996). However, MCA is a tool rarely used for analysing reading strategies in Chinese (Chang *et al.* 1992). If as Goodman (1967) believes reading is a psycholinguistic process where readers search for meaning through their interaction with print, then it should be assumed that this reading process is universal, regardless of the language or writing system employed. Although different writing systems have different relationships between the script and sounds, reading strategies such as predicting, confirming and correcting will be the same in all forms of reading (Goodman and Goodman, 1978, Cummins, 1991).

However a modification to MCA was required to adjust to the unique Chinese script. As the basic unit of the Chinese writing system is the character, (which maps onto a monosyllabic morpheme) the unit of miscue coding (such as substitutions, insertions, and omissions) is at the individual character level rather than at a word level as in the

English miscues. Although it is acknowledged that these processes cannot be divorced from the fuller picture of reading continuous text, it was felt that given the way texts are taught in the Chinese school, the role of memorisation and the arbitrary nature of ‘words’ in Chinese, the focus should be on how children recognise and decode individual characters.

In the following section the children’s experiences with reading are explored in terms of learner background and analytical comments on their current reading in both Chinese and English. It is important to note that no one learner is presented as a ‘good’ or ‘poor’ reader but as a unique individual with strengths and development needs.

7.3 Ka Shing

During the reading conference Ka Shing describes family visits to the library close to his home ‘we take many books about twelve and share the books’. He chooses books about fairy tales and transport. He also enjoys watching Chinese films from Hong Kong. His latest school report states:

During reading Ka Shing shows some understanding but he has some difficulty expressing himself. He needs support with the meaning of words.

Observations in class show he rarely contributes to small group discussions and he does not initiate conversations with the teacher. The class teacher says ‘I’m not sure if it is a shyness thing or a problem to do with his English’.

Ka Shing reads an abstract from his group reader *Emily’s Legs* (appendix 5a and 5b). He reads slowly and quietly and points to each word on the page with the end of his pencil. This behaviour indicates a reader focusing on the accuracy of each word. For instance, he sometimes ignores some sentence junctions and speech marks. Instead of retelling what he has read silently he begins by drawing on his knowledge of the previous chapter and attempts to pull together the various pieces of information found in the text. For example, when he does the retelling, he tells every detail he can recall but doesn’t always understand or see the relationship between the isolated details as illustrated in his statement ‘I don’t know what that is about’. On the

positive side he obviously enjoys stories and shows appreciation of the text such as the humour shown about the spider being sucked up by the vacuum cleaner. Here there is the potential to do some more analytical work on the text.

Significantly, when questioned he relates his reading to his own experience as he compares the central character in the book (Emily the spider who has ten legs instead of eight) to himself and makes reference to his Chinese identity and how he feels 'different' to his peers because of his skin and hair. Thus, he is able to grasp the central theme of the story and empathise with Emily who is rejected by her parents for being 'different'.

Ka Shing's reading shows he has good sight vocabulary with knowledge of high frequency words (*they, about, thought*) and he does attempt to decode less familiar words (reflecting reader autonomy) rather than pausing or seeking assistance from the teacher. However, he doesn't appear to have the strategies to attempt words that are less common (*relief*) or phonetically irregular (*naughty*). On these occasions he produces nonsense words leading to meaning loss such as *rutie* for *relief*. When asked to look at the beginning of the word (*relief*) he is unable to decode using his phonetic skills but names the letters instead. Despite producing nonsense words Ka Shing continues to read on and an absence of self-corrections indicates a reader who is not monitoring their comprehension.

The text creates some difficulty for Ka Shing because of unknown vocabulary and phrases (*I'll jolly well show them*) and speech forms (*we'll make her wish she'd never been hatched*). Some silences in response to the teacher's questions are an indication of meaning loss. Ka Shing's miscues also show he has difficulty reading some multisyllabic words (albeit he read *chattering* correctly) such as when he pronounced *spiderlings* as *spiding* and *angrily* as *angry*. He is aware of this as in his self-evaluation of his reading he states 'I find it easy but a little bit hard because of the long words'. Further examples of truncating words include 'I' for 'I'll' and 'they say' for 'they're saying'. This may be due to monosyllabic nature of Cantonese discussed later in this section.

Ka Shing enjoys learning Chinese and describes how he learns the characters:

I enjoy writing it and it's just being able to do different things and it's a different thing from my normal school. You just seem to get used to the characters. When the teacher reads them out and you study writing them. So I write them out quite a few times and I get quite used to it.

Ka Shing reads a text about the Chinese Mid Autumn Festival (*Chung Chiu*) from the level five book. It describes the third major festival of the Chinese calendar celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth month. In Hong Kong, it is held in conjunction with the annual Lantern Festival. This festival is also known as the Moon Cake Festival because a special kind of sweet cake (*yueh ping*) prepared in the shape of the moon.

Ka Shing describes the two page text as 'A wee bit easy. We learn this one and next week read it to the teacher'. This learning style is reflected in his request to rehearse his reading before being taped saying 'I want to practice'. Miscues outlined in the analysis table (appendix 5c) indicate Ka Shing reads well and for meaning because he guesses some characters and sometimes inserts or substitutes characters to fit the context. For example, [去] (heoi3) "go" for [過] (gwo3) "pass" are syntactically related. In addition, the reversal of the characters [圓 又 亮] (jyun4 jau6 loeng6) "round and bright" is an indication of reading from memory.

Think-aloud protocols shows Ka Shing relies on frequent practice and memorisation although he is also sensitive to the semantic radical in compound characters:

If the character similar to a family (sic) I think of the family, if the character the same as something I know. I might just think about them but usually I pronounce it. Like if it's a word I dinnae know I ask my Mum and Dad.

On the other hand, Ka Shing claims he does not use any component part of the character to support his pronunciation. He explains this as follows:

You cannae split it up. You have to use your brain. Its not like English a b c. It is Chinese.

There are two related reasons which may explain why Ka Shing claims not to use the phonetic element of the compound character to support the pronunciation of characters. First, as explained in chapter 2, some Chinese teachers are suspicious of explicitly teaching children to encode sounds from characters using the phonetic radical as it does not always provide reliable information to support pronunciation. Second, this strategy may be done automatically as children gain experience of using Chinese compound characters, as suggested by Tan and Perfetti, (1998). This subconscious processing of characters means children are therefore unable to articulate the role of the phonetic radical during their think-aloud protocols.

When Ka Shing's class teacher was shown what he read in Chinese she reacted with surprise:

That is very impressive. I didn't know he could read that.

7.4 Alan

Alan's class teacher describes him as a 'delightful' child although 'he is sometimes unsure about what he has to do in class and needs reassurance'. Further information included in his report includes 'he copes well with the spelling scheme but is often unsure of the meaning of words' and 'he needs more practice in reading so he can tackle more difficult texts'.

Alan thinks reading in English is easier than reading in Chinese because 'in English you can split up the words, in Chinese you cannae'. His favourite books are *Harry Potter* but he only reads occasionally at home. He prefers to watch English cartoons on the television. Alan is reading an extract from 'The Followers' a book from the school reading scheme (appendix 6a and 6b). He reads slowly and is preoccupied with getting it right, as he frequently 'sounds out' unfamiliar words. This is illustrated by his stressing the syllables in words such as *con-cen-trate*. Similar to Ka Shing, the separating out the syllables is also probably due to the influence of his first language. The monosyllabic nature of Cantonese contributes to a staccato-like effect in both learners' reading, a phenomena not uncommon amongst Chinese learners of English (Chang, 2001).

Alan describes the reading as ‘hard because I don’t know some words’. He gives the word ‘*desperately*’ as an example of this. Alan has good sight vocabulary of basic words albeit where decoding appears to succeed he does not always understand. When asked he is unable to offer an appropriate definition for words such as *estate* and *grinned* but sometimes when the teacher models the correct pronunciation he gains understanding such as his response ‘it doesnae move’ for *statue*.

His class teacher states that ‘he is applying his phonic knowledge to reading’ but a number of his miscues are graphophonic. Alan’s think-alouds indicate that he attempts to split up words. He says: ‘I break it up. Just like find words like ‘*Ra-jind-er*’. A number of Alan’s errors are syntactic *keeped* for *kept* and *were* for *was* but both are grammatically plausible and the meaning remains intact. This is not the case for *started* for *stared* but given the graphic similarity this miscue is understandable. In common with many Chinese readers of English he doesn’t explode final consonants as in *started*.

The interaction between the adult and Alan on the content of the story shows a mixture of understanding. The initial discussion shows he is unable to retell the story in a significant way and he requires several prompts from the teacher to draw out any detail. This may be because of a number of interwoven reasons: he does not have the experience of engaging with stories in a reflective and meaningful way; he does not possess the depth and breadth of vocabulary to support this dialogue; the language demands of the text are too challenging and he lacks schema activation (Carrell *et al.* 1991).

Of importance, he takes literally the ironic expression ‘Where’s the fire?’ (possibly a culture-specific comment directed at the girls in the story who are in a hurry) which influences his subsequent prediction and understanding of the storyline. My response is not to correct this interpretation but to wait and see if learner picks up on other context cues which may or may not be helpful to his understanding (for example, pointing out the illustrations to see if he can see a fire). On the other hand, my further

questioning about the fire may have reinforced this misinterpretation. On the credit side Alan demonstrates better understanding when talking about the newsagents shop being up for sale, and after some negotiation of meaning with me, shows knowledge of the concept of renting.

The story is written from perspective of Lisa (one of the central characters in the story) and the narrative is peppered with direct speech and the use of past tense (such as *asked* and *shouted*). These natural speech forms are probably intended by the author to closely reflect what is familiar for eight or nine year old native speakers of English. However, for Alan this ‘authentic’ speech proves too complex as aspects of language which he, in common with many other EAL learners, do not yet use in their speech. For instance, the phrase ‘ignored my pleas’ and the sentence with examples of ellipsis (‘*Lisa...you’ve got to...it’s...*’) causes difficulties for Alan.

Alan reads the story of Li Bo from book 5 (for more detail of this story refer to chapter 5). Miscues indicate a large number of omissions (refer to appendix 6c) including some common characters such as [石] (sek6) “stone” and [要] (jiu3) “will” which the bilingual assistant explains he should know. Alan evaluates the text based on his knowledge of learnt characters:

The ones that are very hard I will skip. I read the other ones. See this one and this one and this one I don’t know (*pointing to characters*) I know this one.

Skipping inessential words is viewed by Hosenfeld (1977) as a strategy used by successful readers. However, when reading a Chinese passage unknown characters may cause readers to fail to segment the disjoined characters into effective constitute units (Wang *et al.* 1999). More analysis is required to investigate the extent to which Alan is processing the text at a sub-lexical level instead of parsing characters into meaningful literary units in the passage. For example, Alan knew the characters for [詩人] (si1 jan4) “poet” even though it is not a word used in daily life. However, the number of refusals and non-attempts disrupts his comprehension as he was unable to make the link between the character in the story and the major idea that the passage

is about a famous Chinese poet when he was a young boy as indicated in the first sentence of the text.

During the reading he also pauses and looks for reassurance from the bilingual assistant who quickly gives the correct pronunciation of the character. He is keen to know ‘how did I read it that time?’ According to Gregory (1996: 145) this is a sign of a convergent learner who prefers to be told ‘*words*’ rather than take risks. When asked about this reading behaviour the bilingual assistant responds:

In Chinese there is great attention to detail and as a result he may feel reluctant to have a go for fear of making mistakes. But I think it may also be because his teacher is just a student and doesn’t talk about the parts of characters or allow the children to make educated guesses about the meaning of the characters.

Therefore, Alan treats characters as unanalysed wholes and doesn’t make systematic use of the components of characters when decoding. That is, he doesn’t have at his disposal the same range of strategies used by more proficient readers of Chinese (Lau, 2006). This is also a result of Alan relying heavily on the use of transliterations to support his pronunciation as shown by his think-aloud during a pause in the reading ‘I am just trying to remember it’. He explains the process:

My Mum or the teacher reads a bit, then I follow and I write next to the character how it is said. Spell it in English. If I don’t know I would go back some pages to see if I had written next to the character.

7.5 Stephen

Stephen’s class teacher describes him as ‘intelligent’. He is very quick at number work and is in the top group for mathematics. His most recent report states:

Stephen is working hard to develop his reading skills but he doesn’t understand some English words. He should continue to be supported with reading and phonics.

During the reading conference Stephen reports that he likes books about history or stories about vampires or but adds cautiously ‘you can’t sleep if you read scary

stories'. He is reading from *We are the Detectives* and shows the strategies he employs operating at both 'word-level' and 'meaning-level' (refer to appendix 7a and 7b). When reading silently Stephen 'mouths' the words and evaluates the reading as 'not difficult but not easy'. But adds cautiously that difficult words give him a sore head. After completing the silent reading Stephen initiates the conversation and spontaneously asks the teacher for an unknown word (*detective*). This may be because he is unfamiliar with the task of retelling or more likely it suggests good socio-effective strategies where learners ask for explanations (O'Malley, 1985). The concept of the detective is central to the story and without this initial understanding the meaning of the passage may be lost. With teacher modelling he uses his background knowledge from a popular children's cartoon programme to make sense ('*his job is when the get the clues...when like Scooby-Do*'). Importantly, he later draws on his memory and reads the word *detective* correctly.

What is also encouraging is that Stephen picks out the main idea from the story (a man and women caught stealing from the supermarket) and is keen to engage with this theme and relate it to his own personal experiences of a boy in his class who exerts money from younger children in the playground. A further example of his ability to react to what is being read is his personal response to the people stealing from the supermarket ('*but I think its very stupid*' '*because they put the camera where watch it*'). Block (1986) describes these as reflexive modes of response where the reader makes connections with personal knowledge and anecdote.

The story is a controlled vocabulary text with an emphasis on repetition of vocabulary into a meaningful story. The predictable text causes Stephen few problems except for the introduction of wider vocabulary (such as *trolley*) and idiomatic expressions such as '*to do a good turn*'. When decoding new words he has a mixture of success and difficulty. Think-alouds indicate that he tries to identify words within words such as covering up the final stem '*-ager*' and leaving the word '*man*' to be identified. This would indicate that Steven has a sight vocabulary that this process can tap into. Not only can such an approach give the learner confidence that he knows something, but it demonstrates a strategy of analysing the word into chunks that will later come to have many uses. However, there can also be potential

difficulties with this approach such as trying to chunk ‘not’ in ‘nothing’. A challenge for Stephen, as with the other learners, is often a result of the orthographic system in which a letter or letter combination can stand for a variety of different sounds, as demonstrated in the possible pronunciations of vowels and his attempt to sound out trolley and detective.

What is absent from the report from teachers is that Stephen enjoys talking about the stories, expresses opinions and relates events in stories to his own life experiences. Stephen is the only child in the class on an individualised programme with the worksheets for Read On scheme focus on developing phonic skills and vocabulary building. He is withdrawn from the class on a daily basis for one to one instruction with a support assistant.

Stephen was born in Hong Kong and attended kindergarten where he began to recognise and pronounce Chinese characters. However, there have been some gaps in his attendance at the Chinese complementary school. Once a prolonged period of absence occurred when his mother returned to Hong Kong to give birth to Stephen’s sister leaving Stephen in the care of his father and grandparents. In his first year at the Chinese school Stephen learnt Chinese literacy through Putonghua (Mandarin) and completed book one but claims ‘it was a bit hard because I don’t know Mandarin’. He now attends the Cantonese classes and is currently reading book three. He reads *The Guest Comes* (appendix 7c) and a translation of the simple text is as follows:

The guest comes to visit grandma

Mother invites her to sit down

I offer (her) a cup of tea

And invite her to eat sweets [eat sweet- literal translation]

The text draws on personal experience and according to the bilingual research assistant Stephen reads in the manner of everyday conversation. For example, he uses the more colloquial *mummy* rather than [媽媽] (maa1maa1) “mother” and inserts [了] (liu5) “understand”. He also omits [人] (jan4) “person” but can

correctly read this common character correctly in isolation later. In common, with some of the other learners he pauses when he encounters an unknown character and is prepared to wait for the character to be supplied by the adult. In addition, think-aloud protocols, such as ‘I can’t remember it’ and ‘I don’t know how to read this one’ indicate he doesn’t spontaneously use the morphological features of Chinese to process familiar characters or derive the meaning of new characters (Shu & Anderson, 1999: 13). This could be due to approaches to teaching and learning at the Chinese school as the initial books studied at the Chinese school contain characters that tend to be irregular in many ways and these may be taught in an unsystematic way in terms of pronunciation and meaning. An interesting insight into how Stephen compares the two writing systems is his response to the question if he deconstructs the Chinese characters similar to segmenting words in English:

You can’t point at them (*characters*) with your finger. It gets in the way.

7.6 Ying Yan

Ying Yan began to learn Chinese in Kindergarten and Grade one in Hong Kong. He believes Chinese is easier to read than English as the following explanation shows:

Cos Chinese my first language...cos I can remember like one word in here (*points to Chinese text*)...cos altogether like one word and this one (*indicates English reader*) like all the letters joined together.

His thinking here shows an interesting understanding of how contrasting writing systems work. That is, he addresses the question of whether reading characters is more associated with memorising visual units and their corresponding meaning whereas reading English is more related to decoding letter strings and their different sounds. This type of metalinguistic insight should form the basis for further discussion with Ying Yan on reading diverse scripts. He also compares approaches to literacy in the two schools with the mainstream school concentrating on secretarial skills whereas the Chinese school focuses on character identification:

In this school they just talk about grammars. Like where to put commas and speech marks. In the Chinese school we talk about words. We write new words and the teacher tells us what the meaning is.

Ying Yan has been attending the Chinese school since arriving in Scotland and is a competent reader of Chinese. He is currently studying the level seven text book, the most advanced of all the boys in the sample. His fondness for learning Chinese is captured by his wish to consolidate his Chinese studies ‘on a Friday afternoon during golden time’. Ying Yan is conscientious and always practices his Chinese homework. A page of his textbook “See the doctor” (refer to figure 7.1 below) shows how he has circled the new vocabulary given by the teacher such as [針頭] “needle head”.

He then copies the new characters out at home and methodically learns them. As he explains:

I give it to my Mum to check it. She goes through it and sees if I write it right or wrong. I think it better if you do the Chinese book on the same days on Sunday and Monday and do English the rest of the week. When I’ve got spare times I read the Chinese newspaper.

In the reading session with the bilingual assistant there was a fair amount of negotiation about what reading would be taped. Initially he wanted to read ‘*Looking for the Hermit*’, a famous Tang dynasty poem. Ying Yan quickly read the short poem as he had learnt it by heart. Then he read ‘*Who has a strong will shall succeed*’ which again contained no miscues. Finally with some reassurance from the bilingual assistant that it was not a test he read the fable ‘*Blind Men and the Elephant*’ a story already learnt at the Chinese school. Although this folktale is classified as being of Chinese derivation, both India and Africa have a similar one. However, the philosophical note is typically Chinese even though the basic thought is universal. That is, when a person is opinionated because of insufficient knowledge they are as blind as if they had no eyesight.

QuickTime® and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Figure 7.1 Ying Yan's textbook

Several themes emerge from Ying Yan's miscues and think-aloud protocols (see appendix 8a). First, he produces some orthographic/visual errors where both the target and resulting character have similar visual characteristics. This is a common

phenomena among young Chinese readers (McBride-Chang and Ho, 2000; Smythe and Everatt, 2000). For example, Ying Yan pronounces the character [名] (ming4) “name” instead of the visually similar [各] (gok3) “each”. Ying Yan’s think-aloud refers to the appearance of the character such as ‘it looks like this one’. The bilingual assistant offers the following explanation:

That happens frequently at primary school. They don’t see the difference between the two characters. There may be only one stroke difference but they may not realise it when they are reading fast.

Second, Ying Yan pronounces a different character that contains the same semantic element. An example of this type of miscue is the semantically acceptable substitution of [腳] (goek3) “foot” instead of [腿] (teoi2) “leg”. Both characters contain the same radical [月] (jyut5) “moon” which always appears in characters for body parts such as [肚] (tou5) “belly” and [腰] (jiu1) “waist”. Third, Ying Yan does not remember the character [繩] (sing4) “rope” and has to rely on the adult to supply the pronunciation. It is a visually complex character although a clue exists within the text as it describes one of the blind men touching the elephant’s tail. On the other hand, Ying Yan does draw on his knowledge of the story but mixes up the first blind man’s response to feeling the elephant’s ear [傘] (saan3) “umbrella” with the response of the second blind man [扇] (sin3) “fan”. Again this substitution is semantically acceptable and this strategy suggests Ying Yan is drawing on his memory in an attempt to make sense of the text.

Ying Yan’s think-aloud protocols show he is keen to talk about and dissect the characters structurally as in the comment ‘I’ll remember the upper part first and then the lower part’. As in Pine *et al.*’s (2003) study he also made reference to left/right and top/bottom radical. He also realises that the pronunciation of radicals may not give clues to the pronunciation of the compound character.

This one a word and this one a word flag [期] (kei4) and moon [月] ‘jyut6’ together ‘kei4’. It helps when you write it but not when you say it.

An interesting aspect of Ying Yan's protocols is that he gives imaginative responses. This echoes Pine *et al.*'s (2003) investigation where children make use of narrative and give explanations to remember a character or a character part. His comment on the character [昝] "star" is:

That like in the sky something shining if you put them together its like a star in the sky

Whereas his comment on the character [草] (cou2) "grass" is:

The top bit looks like grass so I am thinking of something like grass...like flower...I might guess the meaning and the sound.

According to Ying Yan's mainstream class teacher 'his language work can be held up sometimes by English being his second language'. She goes on to say:

When reading he shows some understanding but he has difficulty expressing himself.

Ying Yan has an individual reading programme which uses a traditional 'extract and question' approach. He explains as follows:

You read the book then have to do a test on it. It asks you ten questions. I do it on the computer.

Ying Yan reads *Alone in His Teacher's House* from the Marvin Redpost Readers (appendix 8b). The analysis (appendix 8c) shows he understands a range of familiar words and can identify initial and final sounds in unfamiliar words which enables him to read the passage with only limited support from the teacher. He is also able to recap on story so far selecting appropriate detail. Miscues indicate occasional insertions and syntactic errors but meaning remains intact. Chinese has a far simpler syntactic structure than English and verb structures are a common difficulty for Chinese learners of English (Chang, 2001). This is illustrated in Ying Yan's substitutions such as *sneezes* for *sneezed* and *bounces* for *bounced*. In fact he shows his own awareness of this development need in the evaluation of his reading:

I always get mixed up with past tense and present tense because I never get present tense and past tense in Chinese. We don't use that. When I start to

write a story my teacher told me to watch my tenses.

During the interaction I attempt to find out if there is an equivalent expression in Cantonese for when someone sneezes. In fact, like Japanese there is no expression. On reflection the question may have been naïve but Ying Yan's response 'get a tissue' was an opportunity for shared humour.

Several of Ying Yan's miscues are proper nouns such as Patsy, Casy, and Stuart. Similar to other English language learners, who may be unfamiliar with the original name, he tries to apply what he thinks is the correct pronunciation, according to how you pronounce the letter-string in English. However with help from me during the think-alouds ('I split it up') he uses his skills of onsets and syllables to make good attempts at what are sometimes unusual pronunciations. In theory it may be argued that the pronunciation of proper nouns is arbitrary as they can be pronounced in more than one way according to individual preferences or variations in language inflections (such as the pronunciations of *George* in French and English).

Other effective reading strategies employed by Ying Yan include instances of reading ahead and self-correcting. He also pauses and looks for reassurance from teacher if he thinks he has made an error. He reports 'If don't know a word I ask the teacher'. The story is simple and repetitive and does not challenge Ying Yan to any extent except the occasional expression ('*You never know when to quit*').

7.7 Chun Wah

Chun Wah was born in Hong Kong and attended a kindergarten for three years and grade one at a primary school for half a year where he learnt to read and write Chinese characters. He started school in Scotland in primary two. He said he prefers learning Chinese to English and has a large pile of Chinese comics in his bedroom. He enjoys the games at the back of the comics and his favourite comic book is 'The Adventures of Jackie Chan'. He describes his teacher's approach to reading at the Chinese school:

The teacher reads three sentences then tells the class to read it with her. You

have to memorise it without looking at the page. The teacher says ‘close the book and read it out’.

He is currently on book six at the Chinese school and reads a passage entitled *Shakespeare*. Unlike some of the other children in the sample he is confident enough to read a text he has not yet studied in class although he claims the story is ‘very hard’. Through questioning he is able to explain it is about Shakespeare when he was young and how he acted out plays with his friends.

As it is an unfamiliar text he makes a number of errors but these miscues and subsequent think-aloud protocols give an insight into the range of reading strategies and processes at his disposal (for an analysis refer to appendix 9a). Interestingly, a number of these strategies echo those deployed by the last learner, Ying Yan. There are instances when Chun Wah pauses and the teacher supplies the character or he asks for assistance. Examples in the text include the unfamiliar characters [鄉村] (hoeng1) “village” and [戲] (hei3) “drama”. He also pronounces a character he knows because they are very graphically similar [使] (si3) “enable” instead of [便] (bin6) “so” or “convenience” and ‘hard to differentiate’ according to the bilingual assistant. According to (Chang *et al.* 1992) miscues with high graphic similarity tend to show close semantic relationship.

Chun Wah also makes meaningful predictions based on what has been previously read and substitutes [聽] (ting1) “listen” for [講] (gong2) “to explain” supported by this think-aloud ‘I guess from the sentence, characters before’. According to the bilingual assistant ‘making sense in Chinese depends a lot on educated guesses’. Interestingly he does not use the radical [口] (hau2) “mouth” to give a semantic clue to “talk” but instead draws on the radical association of [耳] “ear” for [聽] (ting1) “listen”. Although an error, it is an illustration of Chun Wah drawing on his radical awareness knowledge. Another strategy is drawing on linguistic cues where he pronounces the character [分] (fan1) “divide” instead of [扮] (baan3) “to dress up or act” using his knowledge of the phonetic articulated through the think-aloud ‘I read the right hand side’. The bilingual assistant claims it is a very common mistake to pronounce the character by only looking at part of the character.

Chun Wah likes storybooks and every morning he picks a book from the bookshelves outside his classroom to read. Although Chun Wah prefers learning Chinese he thinks it is harder than reading English because:

I can't remember some characters. In English I can guess because I know the sounds of the words.

This is an interesting insight as he also guesses in Chinese. He recalls the vocabulary building approach to learning English in Hong Kong:

We had English lessons for one hour. An English teacher came in everyday. There was no reading book. The teacher writes a word on the board and we write it in a book ten times. The teacher would tell you until you knew it.

Chun Wah class teacher reports that he is making steady progress with reading and adds:

He reads well taking his learning of English into account. But he needs support with word meaning and comprehension.

He reads *The Twelfth Floor Kids* (appendix 9b and 9c). The text is written to reflect the life experiences of most eight to nine year old children with interests such as keeping pets and wanting to be a magician. For Chun Wah the story has an element of familiarity and he can engage in talk about the different children. Like Stephen he employs the crucial strategy of asking directly for help with a word (*What's this?*). On this occasion he has to rely on his stronger language – Cantonese - to gain full understanding of [盜竊] (dou6 sit3) “*burglar*”. His think-aloud protocols reflect different responses to encountering unknown words such as ‘ask the teacher’ and ‘spell it out like t-wel-fth’. However, his attempts at decoding result in a mixture of success and understanding. On the one hand, he shows understanding of *twin* with the response ‘he out the same time’ but on the other hand he does not know the meaning of *balcony*. In common with Ying Yan, proper nouns are a cause of miscues.

What helps Chun Wah, like Stephen, is he has an understanding of the visual connections within words. According to Wallace (1992) the chaotic nature of the sound symbol correspondences in written English means consistency lies within the visual or graphic system rather than between letters and sounds. This is demonstrated in several of the Chun Wah's think-aloud protocols. For instance, he recognises magic within magician. According to McWilliam (1998) learners with EAL show greater sensitivity to seeing words within words. It would be worthwhile investigating further whether this awareness of patterns at word level in English corresponds to acute visual perception skills required when decoding Chinese characters.

7.8 Kit Wai

Kit Wai's class teacher describes him as 'very intelligent' who 'copes well with the demands of the mainstream curriculum'. He is an only child and his mother carefully manages his days with time set aside for visiting the local library, learning German, playing the violin and judo practice. Kit Wai is a secure and independent reader in both Chinese and English and uses a variety of strategies during purposeful reading.

Some of the other learners in the section focus on strategies related to the surface level of the text. In English this translates into the decoding of individual words and as a consequence the children have difficulty integrating the parts of the text to construct the main theme of the story. Whilst in Chinese some learners rely on memorisation strategies and retell by paraphrasing 'chunks' borrowed from the text. In contrast, Kit Wai manages to employ constructive strategies and uses his reading to integrate text information and use this as a trigger to extend his current knowledge of the world.

Kit Wai started to learn Chinese at kindergarten in Hong Kong and since arriving in Scotland at the age of six has regularly attended the Chinese complementary school. He practices reading and writing Chinese every day according to his mother. Kit Wai reads 'The boy Cho Chong weighing the elephant' from the level five textbook (appendix 10a). This is one of many famous tales from ancient China about the achievements and intelligence of the Emperor's son Cho Chong. The bilingual

assistant reports that the story is intended to be inspirational to children as it is associated with creative problem solving and portrays a sense of pride in the Chinese culture.

It is an unseen text for Kit Wai and he has not heard the story before. Yet he is able to construct a cohesive summary and detailed translation of the text as follows with minimal support from the bilingual assistant:

This is about a Chinese history There is a famous person He is an ... (given officer by teacher) and he is famous and somebody gave him an elephant as a gifts he asks all his...all his...(teacher gives 'junior officers) He said who can have a way to make this elephant's weight some said ah cut a tree down and make a (big weight...a balance) some said carry the elephant and then cut the elephant into pieces and then make sure the weight of it then the famous officer said No and his son is only seven and he said elephant into pieces and make sure the weight of it. Then the famous officer said No and his son is only seven and he said he has a way he said push the elephant onto a very big boat and see the boat (sink) how many then (on the side of the boat) sink how many then put the boat on the sea...on the water and then on the boat draw a line and then put the elephant back to the shore and then bring the boat with rocks and then the rocks is how many weight it is and that means how much weight the elephant is and the officer smiled to the son he command some of the people do what his son said and this way to do it and then they know the weight of the elephant.

Significantly Kit Wai doesn't just assimilate text information but reflects on this new knowledge and draws a comparison to problem solving and his interest in maths.

It makes me think of something I don't know and then I know it. Like a way to know the weight. What is 80 add 90 then I will do a sum and then I will know the answer.

Kit Wai makes very few errors in the four pages of the story but his substitutions tend to be mainly phonological in nature. For example, for both [平] (*ping4*) "flat" instead of [秤] (*cing3*) "scale" and [玄] (*jyun4*) "deep" instead of [舷] (*jin4*) "side of boat", he guessed the pronunciation based on the sound of phonetic part of the character. In both these cases the compound characters are opaque as the phonetic element does not indicate the sound of the whole compound character. This is a common occurrence amongst high frequency characters but this strategy does point

to the significance of the phonetic element when reading aloud as indicated in previous research (Hanley, *et al.* 1999)

According to bilingual assistant this strategy is consistent with active learners who have a good knowledge of Chinese characters and will try the strategy in an attempt to make sense of the passage. But she goes on to explain:

You can learn it from teachers, parents or friends. Sometimes they get it right. Sometimes they get it wrong. In English you can guess the pronunciation. If you haven't learnt a character they may not know how to read it and don't know the meaning. Sometimes the teachers say 'guess it' and they only read part of the character such as pronouncing the right part.

What would be of interest is to discover further the role of phonology in Kit Wai's reading. Such as how many of his 'educational guesses' were successful in pronouncing characters that share the same phonetic component. Also what are adult responses to potential phonological miscues?

Kit Wai also reads 'Jirik and the speaking animals' from the "*Longdale Park*" school reading scheme, designed for seven to eight-year-olds, which aims to provide texts that progressively make greater demands on the reader in terms of response, register and content (appendix 10b and 10c). He reads with expression and a sense of meaning paying particular attention to speech within the text. He identifies the main characters and can summarise the story adequately. Kit Wai is skilled at phonic decoding and his acceptable insertions and substitutions (such as *ate* for *eaten*) indicate that he has assimilated the original text and adapted it slightly to his own language patterns in spoken English (Arnold, 1982). Personal pronoun substitutions reflect an influence from Kit Wai's first language as in Cantonese pronouns do not encode information on gender. For example /ta/ can mean 'he', 'she' or 'it'. (although gender can be distinguished in the written form). Other miscues such as *anger* for *eager* and *cricky* for *creaky* although syntactically unacceptable are understandable given the graphic similarity. He articulates positive strategies such as back-tracking, 'if I don't know this one I will start here again' (*points to beginning of*

the line).

The lack of miscues shows Kit Wai has at his disposal a range of cueing systems (such a phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual) to read new words in English and extract information from the text. Only the occasional culturally embedded reference may still hinder his full comprehension. His think-aloud protocols indicate that word recognition techniques have become intuitive ('I only broke up the words and looked at vowels when I was in primary two'). However, unlike some of the other learners, he displays a certain reluctance to engage fully with the think-aloud procedure. This may be due to a number of reasons such as the unnatural reading environment, process disruption or a learning style that is unaccustomed to accessing and verbalising unconscious thinking (Henk, 1993).

The reading sessions reported in this section centre on the reading strategies employed by six learners in order to process text and comprehend what they read in both English and Chinese. The findings reveal both similarities and differences in reading strategies were found across the children and across the two writing systems.

The analysis of reading in English shows the majority of the children are still relying on bottom-up strategies. This is evident in the number of graphophonic miscues in their reading and the sounding out of unfamiliar words. Ka Shing, and Alan for instance, both read slowly word for word without noticing sentence breaks and speech marks on occasions. The production of nonsense words by Ka Shing, Stephen, Alan and Chung Wah is further evidence of an inability to predict new words using contextual cues. Some of the difficulties with decoding and phonological awareness experienced by these learners is due to their developing English language competence and the irregular nature of the sound-symbol correspondences.

However, it must be remembered that reading strategies are not mutually exclusive as the learners may orchestrate several strategies on any one occasion (Wallace, 1988). Despite some difficulties with reading unfamiliar words the children above

are also developing good sight recognition strategies. This is illustrated in their think-alouds which highlight the deployment of a number of positive phonemic and morphemic decoding strategies such as identifying patterns at word level and syllable segmentation. In addition, a number of the miscues can be viewed as an influence from the children's first language including difficulties with contractions, personal pronouns, plurals and verb structures (Chang, 2001).

What is also insightful is not only the resources the learners draw on when faced with difficulties in the English text but also how they attempt to repair miscues. All the children except Kit Wai left miscues uncorrected at times regardless of whether it was a real word in English or not. This absence of self-correction strategies indicates readers who are not always monitoring their comprehension. More understandable in this respect is Ying Yan's miscues which include several mispronunciations of irregular sounding proper nouns.

Out of the six children only Ying Yan and Kit Wai use effective independent strategies of reflective reading such as stopping when their reading did not make sense and back-tracking if necessary. Their miscues also indicate acceptable substitutions and self-corrections both signs that these two children are deploying self monitoring strategies and reading for meaning. Interestingly, Stephen and Chun Wah are the only learners who adopt the strategy of asking the adult for help with the meaning of an unknown word.

For the children reading in an additional language the relationship between the ideas in the text and their knowledge of the world is crucial (Gregory, 1996). All the learners to some extent or another used their prior knowledge in order to make personal links with the events and characters in the fictional texts. Even Ka Shing grasps the central theme of the story and can empathise with the central character in the story. Whereas for Chung Wah it may be argued that his understanding remains intact mainly because of the unchallenging nature of the text. Where difficulties were experienced was because of the mismatch between the readers own English language proficiency and the semantic structure of the texts. This is revealed in the difficulties

with speech forms and idiomatic expressions experienced by both Ka Shing and Alan.

As a group all the children found reading much easier than retelling the story. As a rule this is because the learners do not have the depth and breadth of vocabulary for this type of extended discourse and their miscues impede meaning at times. Ka Shing and Alan particularly had difficulty in explaining or elaborating on the main ideas in the story. This echoes Gregory's (1996) observations of talk around reading in which native speakers could use much more complex utterances than emergent bilinguals. On reflection what would have been insightful is if the children were also given the opportunity to retell the English stories in Cantonese and compare this to similar skills in English.

Unlike, the retelling of English texts the children were able to successfully summarise the main ideas after reading the Chinese texts. Kit Wai's extensive retelling of the 'Weighing the elephant' story was a particularly good example of this. This in part draws on traditional Chinese reading tasks which mainly emphasise memorisation, the recalling of factual information and questioning that focuses on literal comprehension (Lau, 2006).

However, it must also be accepted that reading strategies may vary according to the nature of the text and the reader's response to this. Only Chun Wah and Kit Wai had the confidence to read unseen texts. Both of these boys started their education in Hong Kong and did not rely on transliterations as a reading strategy. On the other hand the remaining children preferred to read familiar texts. These children explained their reluctance to read 'unseen texts' saying 'we have not learnt this one yet' and 'we have not done this in class'. These responses were insightful in themselves as children's experiences of reading in Chinese is indicative of some of the approaches to teaching and learning experienced by the children in the Chinese school (described in the previous chapter) and partly influenced by the nature of the script. In contrast, none of the children responded to the English texts in this way and all read unseen passages from their current reading book.

When reading Chinese two children used the strategy of memorising unanalysed whole characters. Of these, Alan relied heavily on transliterations and his reading showed frequent omissions whilst Stephen only read a simple text but in the manner of everyday conversation. For the remaining four boys it was discovered that learning characters need not wholly be a matter of sight-sound memorisation but they also used the strategy of dissecting characters when reading and were sensitive to the semantic radical in processing Chinese characters. These children are involved in what Tan and Perfetti (1999) call 'problem solving'. That is, with growing familiarity of characters the learners can use this reading strategy to infer meaning or derive clues to the pronunciation when encountering unknown characters. This is consistent with Shu and Anderson (1999) who claim children require this strategy to progress in their reading.

The analysis of Kit Wai's miscues showed that he was the only child whose substitutions were of a phonological nature. As the phonetic radical in compound characters is inconsistent Kit Wai shows knowledge of many characters (Taylor, 2002) and echoes Ho and Bryant's (1997a) research in Hong Kong that demonstrates that children who make use of the phonetic radical read better than less able readers (who rely less on phonological strategies). As for individual ways of reading a variety of other strategies were found ranging from memorisation, making educated guesses, pausing at unknown characters for teacher help and skipping unknown characters.

7.9 Conclusion

The last section presents the profiles of six Chinese children and their experiences of reading Chinese and English, which from a teacher's stand point, are highly individualistic and variable. This is because these children, as individuals have different levels of competence in Chinese and English, varied learning styles and motivations and different kinds of background knowledge and life experience. Nevertheless, given that reading is primarily a language and text-based activity, it is possible to pinpoint some emerging themes from the data collected during reading

sessions.

An interesting (albeit not surprising) insight to be gleaned from the reading sessions is the children's different approaches to reading English and Chinese texts. For the Chinese texts initial assessments were required as there was a stark contrast between the children reading seen and unseen passages. Some of the texts the children had learnt in class at the Chinese school, practiced at home and could read from memory without any miscues. It was also considered important to allow the children to read what they felt most comfortable with and avoid putting the children under undue pressure or stress. In contrast, none of the children responded to the English texts in this way and all read unseen passages from their current reading book.

The reading sessions involved a complex set of interactions between the text, reader and adult and as such give insights into the nature of reading in the different cultural worlds of the child. On the one hand the adults are supporting the children to develop strategies they need to read but at the same time they are playing an active part in promoting a particular set of social and cultural practices associated with the type of texts used and also influencing how reading events are acted out in different spaces in the child's life. For instance, during pauses in the children's reading the bilingual classroom assistant spontaneously supplied the unknown character. When questioned about this teaching strategy, she responded that it was because of the nature of Chinese texts and importance of maintaining the momentum of the reading. That is, the lack of 'word' boundaries in Chinese means the children must examine the syntactic and semantic relations among neighbouring characters whilst segmenting character strings into meaningful units. Furthermore, she hoped that by giving the character immediately the child would remember and recognise the character the next time as a sight-sound entity. In comparison, during the reading English sessions a 'pause-prompt-praise' interaction was adopted in response to miscues. This teaching strategy, common in English speaking mainstream classrooms, stresses a more independent, problem solving approach to help the child think through an unknown word. Here the questioning style considers initial sounds, segmenting, word length and guesswork (Arnold, 1982).

The nature of the texts and the children's language proficiency played an important role in their depth of understanding of the texts. The function of memorisation of Chinese texts meant children employed strategies of repetition and paraphrasing. In fact, reading sessions with bilingual assistant revealed that children's responses to the open question 'tell me about what you have just read?' were closely tied to the text and the bilingual assistant did not pursue different types of text interrogation further such as asking for personal comment. How children and the participating adult respond to Chinese texts requires further investigation. With the English texts the children sought connections with their own lived experiences but a number of factors, in common with other EAL learners, made retelling a challenge (Cline and Cozens, 1999). These factors included the children's limited verbal ability; the cultural content load of the stories and the language demands of the texts including unfamiliar vocabulary, sentence structures and language style (such as idioms and speech forms).

Through their experiences of learning to read two scripts the children in the study have a great deal of knowledge and understanding about language and literacies. The diverse nature of English and Chinese scripts enables the children to switch scripts with minimal interference and they suggest different reasons for the apparent ease and/or difficulty in learning the different scripts. The children also displayed various levels of metalinguistic awareness skills and could differentiate between the practices and principles governing each writing system. Furthermore they proved to have effective translation skills as they moved from one writing systems to another. All of these elements contributed towards their developing biliterate identities (Kenner *et al.* 2007).

Think-alouds during reading sessions reveal the different reading strategies at the children's disposal as they decode different semiotic signs. It was discovered that learning characters need not wholly be a matter of memorisation and learning each individual character as an unanalysed whole. In fact, most of the children were keen to talk about and decompose compound characters and could systematically use this

rich information to progress in their reading (Shu and Anderson (1999). The degree of success with which children activated this knowledge of semantic and phonetic components requires further investigation. Similar to the study by Pine *et al.* (2003) the children were able to report a type of visual and spatial knowledge and way of reading that includes the ability to notice structural and stroke details within dense character configurations. This compares to the different think-aloud protocols and reading strategies employed when reading English which suggest a focus on sound-symbol correspondences and echo the descriptions supplied by eight year old native English speaking children in research conducted by Clay (1985) in New Zealand. These self-help devices included looking at initial sounds, ‘sounding it out’, saying the word in parts and looking for words within words. Although the children could successfully use this knowledge at times to unlock new words the irregular nature of the grapheme-phoneme relationships sometimes caused difficulties for the children when they attempted to read unfamiliar words.

This investigation into Chinese children reading both Chinese and English texts is a tentative start. Not only does it give an insight into children’s experiences of reading Chinese that generally remain hidden from mainstream teachers but also highlights a number of issues when working in collaboration with bilingual staff and some of the complexities of first language assessment. A number of unanswered questions remain and these should be the foundation of further investigation. These include the need to explore in much more detail how children make use of these strategies when reading texts and of course to see if any of these strategies migrant across literacies and apply to other learning contexts. These issues and further implications for practice will be discussed further in the next two chapters.

Chapter 8

The Continua of Biliteracy: A Framework for Discussion and Analysis

8.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the main themes presented in the preceding chapters drawn from the three domains central to the Chinese children's biliteracy experiences - home, Chinese school and mainstream school. To guide this process Hornberger's Continua of Biliteracy (Hornberger, 1990; Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester, 2003) is used to analyse the data in terms of language planning, teaching and learning and key literature. Although the research findings are mapped onto the four nested continua in turn - contexts, media, content and development - the importance of the interconnections across the framework are also explored. At the same time attention is paid to the weighting of power relationships inherent within each of the dimensions (refer to figure 4.1) to allow for a critical examination of educational policy and practice in multilingual Scotland.

Part I

8.2 Contexts of biliteracy

The context of biliteracy is defined by the intersection of three continua: the micro-macro continuum, the oral-literate continuum and the monolingual-bilingual continuum. As stated at the beginning of this thesis the aim of this research is not to view literacy simply in terms of as a measurable cognitive achievement concerned primarily with educational success but to investigate how children approach reading diverse scripts and more importantly to look at how Chinese children actually experience literacy learning within different socio-cultural contexts.

Biliteracy contexts for Chinese children in Scotland are constructed and controlled by national language policies and in terms of the continua model English has historically and currently holds power (at the macro and monolingual level of context) as the dominant language of education and wider society. This academic emphasis on English literacy is at the expense of Chinese literacy acquisition which finds itself relegated to the less powerful micro contexts of use.

It is therefore left to Chinese communities and concerned parents to organise complementary schools and classes themselves in order to develop their children's heritage languages. According to Creese *et al.* (2006) the creation of these 'separate spaces' for learning are as a direct result of prevailing traditionally more powerful monolingual and assimilationist policies. This language policy environment Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) believes discriminates against minority speakers and contravenes linguistic human rights. The research outlined in chapter 5 indicates that although the level of commitment among the Chinese teachers is high, the complementary school is poorly resourced as community members pursue limited grants subjected to the vagaries of local council budgets. With limited official funding, complementary schools continue to suffer from lack of official recognition and status (McPake, 2006). In addition, the volunteer teachers, consisting of parents and visiting international students, remain largely untrained with limited professional development opportunities.

The Continua helps to investigate current language policy discourses and any potential movement in power relations at the micro-macro and monolingual-multilingual contexts of use. The establishment of the devolved Scottish Parliament in 1999 provided greater opportunities for independent language policy development and has created a forum for debating language policy issues. As a result of this new political entity, an Inquiry was set up into the role of educational and cultural policy in supporting and developing Gaelic, Scots and minority languages in Scotland in 2001 and the subsequent report in 2003 made a commitment to introduce a national language strategy to guide the development and support of Scotland's languages. The aim of the strategy is fourfold: to celebrate and promote the rich diversity of languages spoken in Scotland, to raise the profile of Scotland's languages, to ensure that this rich heritage is recognised as a national resource and to encourage people living in Scotland to learn languages other than their own. The latest draft document circulated for consultation in 2007 'A Strategy for Scotland's Languages' has made a step forward by placing a duty on authorities and public bodies to develop appropriate language plans to take account of language and communication issues

for the communities which they serve. But more significantly it contains a kind of escape clause:

We do not bear the same responsibility for the development of other world languages which are used by communities with their roots now in Scotland.

(Scottish Executive, 2007: 5)

This discourse directly contradicts earlier promises during the inquiry about respecting, promoting and supporting all of Scotland's languages. In short, the consultation procedure is to be welcomed, but the evolution of a synchronised language policy for Scotland has proved to be slow and inconclusive. Furthermore, the potential outcome only reaffirms the existing language hierarchies with minority languages situated at the less powerful ends of the continua. Consequently, the language strategy falls short of a clear commitment to an inclusive and shared policy development to guide the development of Scotland's languages across the different language education fields as advocated by Lo Bianco (2001).

Mainstream teachers are constrained by their lived experience and view of the world. Here, Bourdieu's notion of habitus can be taken as a starting point to include a language habitus' which represents a system of dispositions, and unconscious ways of thinking and behaving, that individuals internalise over time as a result of their location in particular environments and sets of social relationships (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). That is to say, in the Scottish educational context, dominant ideologies and absorption of cultural norms constructs discourses where some languages are deemed superior or inferior to others. Conversations with the sample of mainstream teachers in this study showed that their construction of pedagogical practices was perceived exclusively in terms of English. This monolingual habitus (illustrated by its position on traditionally more powerful end of the continua) is further evidenced as almost all of the primary class teachers in the present study had little understanding of the scope of the Chinese children's involvement with literacy outside of school and were unaware of their Chinese literacy experiences and achievements. Yet this epistemological orientation is clearly at odds with well established empirical research evidence that demonstrates that the learning of two or

more languages increases intellectual and literate abilities and broadens the child's outlook on life, whilst failure to develop children's skills in their first language and literacy can have adverse effects (Cummins, 2000; Bialystok, 2001; Thomas and Collier, 2002).

The nature of interaction and approaches to reading at the micro level of context requires further consideration. Observations at the Chinese school reveal reading instruction in the classroom frequently involves reciting text pieces in chorus after the teacher and memorisation through frequent practice. This was evident in the children's responses to being asked to read 'seen' and 'unseen' texts. Furthermore, the children were immediately given the correct character when they paused or when they made errors in their reading. This was as a result of the writing system where the lack of 'word' boundaries in Chinese means the children must acknowledge the syntactic and semantic relations among neighbouring characters whilst segmenting character strings into meaningful lexical units.

This can be compared to the mainstream school micro level of context where individual children's contributions and 'reading aloud round the group' takes place. Teachers generally engage in a more questioning style involving lexical decoding strategies. Both of these literacy practices are products of 'ritualistic' reading behaviours (Goodman and Goodman, 1984) functioning in separate socio-cultural spaces as children interact with adults, peers, texts and different writing systems.

Bloom and Dail (1997) definitions associated with reader interactions can be helpful here. Although based on English-speaking children, their questions can be extended to incorporate the experiences of children immersed in multilingual worlds. The definitions include: intertextuality (how do readers interpret texts in terms of other texts in their life experiences?); reader stance (how do readers define the reading event and is this different from the teacher(s)?) and reader identity (do children take on different reader identities as they encounter different texts in different situations?). These pertinent questions require further exploration.

Whilst there is a need to recognise potential differences in conceptions of teaching

and learning operating at the micro level of contexts in both complementary and mainstream schools there is a the danger of polarising this mismatch. Although instruction at the Chinese school is mainly text book and test orientated and teaching is expository in nature, methods such as literacy-related group activities are also integrated into lessons to promote children's learning and stimulate interest. At the same time, it may be argued that there has recently been more control and direction of teachers' professional work in Scottish mainstream schools. The result for teachers has been less autonomy a more prescriptive discrete skills-based literacy curriculum and whole class teaching (Hunt, 2001). For example, the push towards teaching programmes such as synthetic phonics (outlined in chapter 7) in Scotland with an emphasis on the rote memorisation of phonemes at the expense of reading for pleasure.

With regard to context along the oral-literate continua it is worth emphasising the symbolic role given to literacy and literary traditions within the Chinese community (Ingulsrud and 1999; Taylor and Taylor, 1995; Li Wei, 2000). China has a well-developed culture of reading and writing and the research reveals that both parents and Chinese teachers alike emphasise the pictographic origins of the script, the precise practice of stroke order in character configurations and the aesthetics of 'beautiful writing'. The historical practice of studying and memorising the Confucian classics in preparation for civil service examinations still resonates with many of the parents in the study, who believe literacy knowledge gives access to employment opportunities. The key aim of the Chinese school remains the teaching of Chinese literacy and the value given to literacy practices is evidenced in the opportunities for children to experience other literacy-related activities outside lessons such as brush calligraphy, reciting poetry and reading competitions.

In terms of the influential oral to literate continuum, there are not just issues of linguistic dominance of English within Scottish society and schools at the more powerful end of the continuum but there are also issues of power associated with the different Chinese scripts (traditional versus simplified) and varieties of spoken Chinese as a consequence of political history and the diverse socio-linguistic

landscape of Hong Kong and mainland China. For example, the children from Hakka speaking homes, learning to read Chinese in Cantonese (or Putonghua) at the Chinese school, represents an additional language-like phenomenon due to the mutually unintelligible nature of the spoken varieties of Chinese. Putonghua is also gaining popularity among the Cantonese speaking community in Scotland as the language gains international prestige in recognition of China's economic realignment and the change in language policies in education in Hong Kong since 1998 (Zhu Hua, 2002). As a result there is a growing number of Cantonese-speaking children learning Putonghua at the Chinese school and at other Chinese schools in the UK with the subsequent demand from parents for additional classes in this language (Francis *et al.* 2008). This is where the Continua framework is valuable as it allows for multi-positioning along the oral-literate continua to encapsulate the particular complex circumstances of the Chinese community in Scotland.

Cantonese remains the predominant spoken variety used within the Chinese school and parents prefer to keep to the teaching of traditional characters. However, as observations at the Chinese school point out, the children face a number of learning challenges due to their submersion into monolingual mainstream school contexts where curricula policies and teaching reflect the dominant language of society (at the traditionally more powerful macro level) and social pressures acts as a threat to their home language (Lei Wei, 1994). These challenges include constructing sentences in standard Chinese; the use of classifiers in writing; and differentiating between tones (and homophones) when reading and listening to the teacher during dictation exercises.

On the other hand, as the children learn to read in mainstream schools they face the dual task of recognising a new written code as well as learning to read in a language in which they may have limited proficiency. Reading in English is capricious in nature with rules governing grapheme-phoneme correspondence frequently irregular and difficult for beginner readers to master. As the readers develop more understanding of the relationship between sounds and letters they can pronounce new and unfamiliar words. However, the reading sessions reveal that they may not have

the depth and breadth of vocabulary or cultural knowledge to access meaning. These findings support previous research (Frederickson and Frith, 1998; Cline and Cozens, 1999). Returning again to the oral-literate continua, the danger is the home language may not continue with growing sophistication to support their Chinese literacy development and once the children enter formal mainstream schooling their initial experience may prepare them for proficiency in English literacy.

Turning attention to the bi (multilingual)-monolingual context of biliteracy there are presently few opportunities available within mainstream schools in Scotland for speakers of minority languages to develop their skills. This limited provision means Scotland is not currently in a favourable position to exploit its linguistic resources as a source of cultural wealth (McPake, 2005). However, an example of shifting power relationships along the bi (multilingual)-monolingual continua context of biliteracy is the recent recruitment of bilingual assistants working in Scottish schools. However their role still remains one of accessing the learner's home language, in the early stages, as a means of speeding up the acquisition of English rather than on continuing their first language skills as a legitimate activity in its own right. As a newly developing area within educational services, bilingual support, is also fraught with difficulties, including staff's lack of status (perceived as poorly paid classroom helpers) and its position outside mainstream curriculum planning (Martin-Jones and Saxena, 1996, Creese, 2005).

In Pak's (2003: 271) discussion of a Korean school in the US she inverts the continua of context arguing that the Church school defines its own macro context where Korean monolingualism and literacy are privileged. However, observations at the Chinese school do not fully support Pak's reversal of power relations but reveal classrooms to be sites for children's evolving identities where their bilingual skills and knowledge of scripts come into contact. That is, the Chinese children drew on complementary experiences to support their developing metalinguistic knowledge. These skills included code-switching acting as a bridge to comprehension and literacy learning and English transliterations, based on individual children's knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences learnt in mainstream school, used to

support the pronunciation and memorisation of new Chinese characters. In comparison the scattered and isolated nature of Chinese families in central belt of Scotland means there are minimal opportunities for code-switching amongst Scottish-Chinese children in mainstream schools. More significantly Pak's inversion of the continua does not pay sufficient attention to the fact that learning and teaching still takes place within a marginalised (less powerful) micro context within U.S. language planning and society at large.

Hornberger (1990: 274-5) makes the point that the notion of continua was 'intended to convey that although one can identify (and name) points on the continuum, these points are not finite, static or discrete'. As such the Chinese children's position along the continua may not be at extreme polar opposites of the traditionally dominant macro, monolingual and literate contexts. In fact, it may be argued that the Chinese children, in comparison to other minority groups, have at their disposal enhanced social and cultural capital as a result of a several factors.

First, the research indicates that most of the parents interviewed have a strong commitment to perpetuate their children's Chinese literacy skills, and they supported their children at home and through the Chinese school in developing these skills. Also the parents place an extremely high value on education and have high ambitions for their children. As stated earlier, the development of their children's biliteracy skills were frequently viewed in terms of prospective employment opportunities and economic mobility. These high aspirations also need to be seen in the light of the dilemma facing the parents who want their children to gain Chinese literacy skills whilst recognising the importance of acquiring the literacy of the dominant society. These views are consistent with previous studies conducted amongst Chinese parents in both Britain (Tsow, 1984, Wong, 1992) and internationally (Siu, 1996). This illustrates the complexity inherent within multilingual communities and the framework proves useful here as it allows for multi-positioning along the continua so that it recognises the need for empowering marginalized minority communities where English literacy development is central to academic success and enhanced life chances.

Second, the parents support of the Chinese school echoes McPake's (2004) survey of school children in Scotland which reveals that Chinese children were more likely to attend complementary schooling than children from any other minority group. Moreover, the isolated nature of the minority population in Scotland is frequently conceptualised in deficit terms but it may be argued that the geographically scattered nature of minority ethnic populations creates strong cohesive ties where the Chinese complementary schools act as focal point in which children can try out new learner identities among like-minded Chinese peers (Francis *et al.* 2008). Third, the unique nature of the Chinese script provides a major means for unifying people of Chinese heritage and their culture in the Chinese diaspora where the writing system has tended to become a symbol of minority community cultural identity and social cohesion

Last, the status of community languages is also frequently determined by shifting ideologies mediated through socio-economic considerations and China's emerging position of strength within world trading systems has produced requests for Chinese to be taught in Scottish schools to support Scotland's economic activity with China (Scottish Executive, 2006). In terms of the macro-micro continua, this means the divide in power is lessened as the status of Chinese continues to grow.

Whilst these supportive factors outlined above may contribute towards Chinese children's educational success as evidenced in recent surveys of academic achievement (The Scotsman, 2004) these simplistic ethnic categorisations may serve to mask structural inequalities, particularly around class (Gillborn, 2009). Francis and Archer (2005a) also warn of the dangers of resorting to ill-conceived stereotypes of Chinese families as deferential, hard working and conforming to Confucian values without exploring the richness of human reality and diversity within minority communities. For instance this research reveals the heterogeneity of Chinese families in terms of the parents' migration history, educational background, expertise in specific literacies and different approaches to teaching Chinese literacy to their children in the home. This study (alongside others such as Martin-Jones and Bhatt (1998) and Rampton, (2006)), also confronts homogenized understandings of how people live out their lives, in terms of children and young peoples' changing

proficiency, allegiances and affiliations to different languages and literacies and how these are inextricably entwined with emerging multiple identities (Leung *et al.* 1997).

Part II

8.3 Media of biliteracy

As the children in the study acquire biliteracy through the media of Chinese and English, the relationship between the two orthographies is defined by the three continua: simultaneous-successive exposure, similar-dissimilar structures, and convergent-divergent scripts.

Simultaneous-successive exposure refers to the timing of the acquisition of the two literacies and as a consequence the impact on when and how literacy skills can be transferred (an example of the interconnection with the L1-L2 transfer continuum described later). Simultaneous bilingualism applies to children who develop both languages within an equal or near equal time frame usually achieved through exposure to and opportunities to use both languages/literacy whilst successive bilingualism applies to children who are learning a second language after the first language is established in the first three years of life (Tabors, 1997). Here the literature generally focuses on bilingual development rather than biliteracy development albeit the interrelationship between oracy and literacy should not be underestimated.

The children's varied experiences and exposure to the different scripts as a result of their educational background requires a more detailed explanation here. All the children were exposed to a Chinese spoken variety in the home from birth (mainly Cantonese) until they started either kindergarten in Hong Kong or nursery in Scotland. Within Scotland the age at which linguistic minority children first come into contact with English literacy in a more formal learning environment has changed fundamentally recently due to the expansion in early years provision in the last decade. This has resulted in more three and four year olds gaining knowledge of print through story telling and opportunities for emergent writing within an English speaking setting. Interviews with the Chinese parents indicate they are taking up

these extended childcare places. Thus, Scottish-born Chinese children typically acquire two spoken languages in a successive manner but often their first language of literacy is English and Chinese literacy follows shortly afterwards.

Interestingly, Kenner (2004) talks of 'simultaneous worlds' to describe how young bilingual children draw on their knowledge of both literacies to participate in and reinvent new forms of *'syncratic'* literacy practices. It may be argued that the children are acquiring both Chinese and English two literacies at the same time due to their attendance at the weekend Chinese complementary school from the age of five but this should not be perceived as equal weighting toward each literacy. That is the balance remains firmly tilted towards more the powerful and prestigious majority language.

Further individual differences manifest themselves in those children born in Hong Kong who potentially acquire both Chinese and English literacy simultaneously in Kindergartens from three years of age before formal schooling begins at the age of six. In fact two of the boys in the sample attended kindergarten in Hong Kong but then started mainstream education in primary two (missing primary one) after moving to Scotland as a consequence of the different school systems.

A fundamental question which has taxed linguists is what is the optimum time when to introduce first language literacy and second language literacy. In other words which end of the simultaneous-successive exposure continuum is more conducive to positive transfer. Thomas and Collier (2002) say there is need for children to acquire a second literacy after the foundation for their first has been established as the learners will already have prior knowledge of a writing system and its functions. Cummins (2000) believes it also depends on the pedagogical approaches and on socio-linguistic context in which the literacies are learnt. Added factors include the linguistic relationship between the first and second languages and the characteristics of the two writing systems. Hence the similar-dissimilar language structures continuum and the convergent-divergent scripts continuum.

Goodman (1967) points to the universal nature of the reading process as children actively pursue meaning by making predictions and inferences and interpreting orthography as representation of sound regardless of the script. However, several arguments have been advanced to support a distinction between the cognitive processes involved in reading different orthographies (Lee *et al.* 1986). In the case of such diverse scripts as Chinese and English the nature of the debate tends to concentrate on the structural-visual principles underlying Chinese orthography where semantic activation and looking for broad meaning cues is believed to be more spontaneous when reading Chinese compared to English (Cheung *et al.* 2007). At the same time, phonological activation is considered more of a by-product when accessing lexical information due to the irregular nature of phonetic radical (Taylor and Taylor, 1995). On the other hand, the principles underlying the alphabetic script view the role of the phonology associated with grapheme-phoneme mapping as more important when reading English compared to Chinese (Huang and Hanley, 1995; Stevenson and Stigler, 1992).

The Continua locates the similar structures and convergent scripts at the traditionally more powerful ends of each continuum. Of interest, the children in the study were able to switch scripts with ease and they could differentiate between the practices and principles governing each writing system. It may be argued here, that this ability to compare and contrast different writing systems and the subsequent metalinguistic awareness is as a result of reading (traditionally less powerful) divergent scripts (Fillmore and Valadez, 1986).

Think-aloud protocols during the reading sessions, described in detail in chapter 7, reveal the different reading strategies at the children's disposal as they access different writing systems. Rather than learning to read Chinese characters as an unanalysed whole through memorisation, as is sometimes mistakenly believed, these children were developing as analytical learners. That is some of children were keen to talk about and dissect the characters structurally and their familiarity with the semantic and phonetic components of compound characters helped them to progress in their reading. Furthermore, some parents used visual strategies, explaining the

pictorial origins of characters to their children to support the memorisation process. This echoes the approaches used by parents in An Ran's study (2000a). This can be compared to the different think-aloud protocols and reading strategies deployed by the children used when reading English texts which suggest a focus on grapheme-phoneme relationships.

Part III

8.4 Content of biliteracy

The previous section (media of biliteracy) focuses on the forms literacy takes, whereas the content of biliteracy concentrates on the meanings these forms express. This aspect of the Continua is defined by the intersection of three continua: the minority-majority continuum, the vernacular-literary continuum and the contextualised-decontextualised continuum.

It goes without saying that reading is a tool that gives access to knowledge and information and there are strong links between reading for pleasure and educational attainment (Krashen, 2004). With reference to minority-majority continua Chinese language literature is in competition with dominant English texts where the children are exposed to majority language print media expressed through popular culture and multimodal texts. For children's Chinese literature to play a more vital role in the children's literacy development a number of obstacles have to be overcome. Access to a range of literature proves difficult for some of the Chinese parents as they have to frequently rely on relatives sending children's books from Hong Kong or buying them whilst on heritage visits. In addition, there are problems with some of these reading materials as the language content may be too demanding for children developing Chinese literacy outside mainstream schools. The child with the most Chinese literature in the home had started schooling in Hong Kong and still enjoys reading his Chinese comics and magazines.

More attention can be paid to less powerful minority aspect of the continuum by incorporating bilingual texts into mainstream classroom pedagogies (such as dual language books and multilingual word processing) (Edwards, 1998; Sneddon, 2009). Not only does this reaffirm Chinese children's intellectual abilities and identities but

also creates spaces where their monolingual peers can gain knowledge and understanding of languages and literacies, a prerequisite for living in an increasingly diverse world.

At the same time the ideological perspectives and social functions of literacy continue to be a major influence in both western society (Street, 1993) and Confucian heritage cultures (Parry, 1998). Consistent with the Chinese ways of teaching and learning, some of the literature incorporated into the textbooks at the Chinese school conveys moral values to the young. This draws on cultural and ideological literary traditions where readers and scholars were expected to act and think according to the content of the texts studied. This is not dissimilar to societies with literacy practices centred on religious texts such as the Bible or the Qur'an. Observations from the Chinese school show teachers using traditional tales as a stimulus to discuss cultural values such as respect for elders and the need for high academic standards.

Attempts have also been made by the UK Federation of Chinese Schools (UKFCS) to design texts used at the complementary schools to reflect the dual identities of children living in the U.K. It is hoped this literature will legitimise their images, their heritage, and their cultural experiences and provide opportunities for building self-esteem (Rogers and Soter, 1997). At the same time the impact of multicultural education in UK has resulted in an expanded repertoire of texts for children that characterises the culturally diverse communities they live in. This was evident in the books read by the children. However, the role of teacher here is vital as they support children with constructing meanings and interpreting texts in order to better understand issues of power and social justice. The application of critical literacy in classrooms and children's responses to a variety of texts and visual literacies requires further investigation (Bomer and Bomer, 2001).

Code-switching in the Chinese classroom highlights the children's use of Scots as part of their emerging bicultural identities. In addition, colloquial Cantonese expressions used by the children, are corrected by the teachers because the children

have to write in standard Chinese (based on the structure of Putonghua). A parallel discussion about the standing of the Scots language within education is helpful at this juncture to illustrate the dichotomous literary-vernacular debate.

The creation of political devolution in Scotland has reinvigorated general interest in the interwoven relationship between language, nationalism and identity formation (Donovan and Niven, 2003). Scots, which was the language of government and education in Scotland until the 18th century has a rich and varied literature. Recently, there has been a growing number of imaginative school based initiatives to encourage the language with accompanying resources but the reality is that the promotion of the language is on a piecemeal basis, restricted to a small number of committed individual teachers and schools with an interest in Scots whilst inclusion of Scots in the curriculum frequently consists of the tokenistic recitation of poetry written in Scots without any analysis of the language. Unfortunately, Scots has suffered from its sister relationship to English with corresponding disagreements among linguists as to whether Scots constitutes a distinct language, or whether it is just a collection of dialects (Angelosanto, 2002). The standing of the language is also subject to fierce debates among teachers, some of who perceive Scots as nothing more than slang or an inferior form of standard English, unfit for educational purposes. As a consequence the use of spoken Scots in the classroom is actively prohibited by some educationalists. Despite these different opinions as to the status of Scots, if incorporated and validated in classrooms, children's knowledge of the language could be used in language awareness activities and a resource for further language learning. The same can be said for giving voice and agency to other minority texts such as Chinese which are largely absent from mainstream school contexts.

Neo-liberal politics within the devolved Scottish government have seen a press for accountability, where close attention is paid to the importance of meeting government literacy targets and where schools are 'marketed' on their attainment levels. The result for schools teachers has been moves towards standardised decontextualised assessment procedures. In this standards-driven context, curriculum statements on literacy strengths and development needs are exclusively about

English. All six children who participated in the reading sessions (outlined in chapter 7) were all assessed at the same Level B strand within the outdated 5-14 English Language curriculum guidelines (SCCC, 1991). Yet results of miscue analysis of reading indicate a wide range of proficiency in their reading. Scotland does not have the same testing regime as England but in common with England the national assessments for reading are still standardised on a monolingual English-speaking population with the inherent danger of reporting an incorrect assessment of the children's actual potential (Hall, 1995). Furthermore, as noted earlier, support for the children is frequently based on a decontextualised skills view of literacy rather than the traditionally less powerful contextualized whole language approach to literacy acquisition.

Part III

8.5 Development of biliteracy

According to the framework, the development of biliteracy is defined by the intersection of three continua: the reception-production continuum, the oral-written continuum and the L1-L2 continuum. The reading profiles of the six children at the centre of this study are highly individualistic and variable. Their uniqueness is based on different levels of expertise in Chinese and English, varied learning styles and motivations and different kinds of background knowledge and life experience. As such Hornberger (2003) makes the crucial point there is no single linear developmental model:

The notion of continuum in development is not intended to suggest that development is necessarily continuous or gradual; it may, in fact occur in spurts and with some back tracking.

(Hornberger, 2003: 15).

This is reminiscent of Rittle-Johnston and Siegler's (1999: 332) overlapping waves model within which 'abundant variability, adaptive choice, and gradual change are

fundamental features of cognition' at all points in (reading) acquisition'. In other words there is not distinct 'stage' but sequential development remains fuzzy as children make use of multiple strategies and begin to make 'informed' choices as they develop their biliteracy skills and allegencies to different literacies.

One of the strengths of the framework of the Continua of Biliteracy is that while the sets of continua are stated independently, it also recognizes the interrelationship between different nested continua. Therefore when closer attention is paid to the L1-L2 transfer continuum and from the perspective of children's biscriptal reading development, not only does the level of the child's L1-L2 oral proficiency (positive/negative transfer) need to be taken into account, but also the content of L1-L2 materials being read (content continua) as well as orthographic differences between two languages (media continua).

Empirical studies demonstrating the concept of L1-L2 transfer is well documented amongst bilingual children learning convergent scripts (Cummins, 1991; Durgunoğlu *et al.* 1993; Verhoeven and Aarts, 1998) and divergent scripts (Bialystok, 1997; Gottardo *et al.* 2001) and space does not allow for a detailed discussion here. That said, the vast majority of the research in this field has taken place outside the U.K. where the linguistic landscape is different and studies of this type in Scotland are scant (Johnstone *et al.* 1999). Furthermore, researching transfer among the Chinese children is a tricky enterprise as the learners' first and second-literacy is still evolving and the writing systems are learnt under different circumstances.

The biliterate development of the individual continua also pays attention to two other continuum where oral language development (listening and speaking) is seen as traditionally less powerful than written language development (reading and writing) and receptive skills (listening and reading), less powerful than productive skills (speaking and writing). The importance of giving equal weight to all four modes of language and recognising their inherent interrelationships is vital for learners English as an additional language. An illustration from the present study is the two boys who were on individual reading programmes and withdrawn from the mainstream class for one to one teacher support. These support sessions focused on discrete phonic

skills training. In order to empower these learners more attention should have been paid to collaborative group activities involving texts where taking and listening before, during and after reading is given more prominence (Gibbons, 1993).

This research has attempted to comprehend the meanings of lived experience from the perspectives of those who experience them. Phenemologically inclined research can be applied to the Continua as the wide-ranging and multidimensional spaces represents the concept of *dasein* or ‘thrown-ness’ (Heidegger, 1927/1962) which envisages individuals tossed into a social environment which moulds them so that they act and react in a certain ways (Johnston, 2006). Here consciousness is not separate from the world but is the formation of one’s background or ‘situatedness’ in the world where children’s lived experiences with biliteracy are culturally produced and socially constructed. The dualistic nature of each continuum with inherent power differentials allows individuals to have shifting positions as they make conscious decisions. That is the notion that nothing is predetermined but individuals can decide themselves what it is going to be. An illustration of this phenomena is individual children’s conscious use of code switching in multilingual settings as a reflection of their changing identities (Creese *et al.* 2006). At the same time there are potential dangers within each continuum of being straitjacketed by our everydayness where a tapestry of events impoverishes our openness to being and children’s horizons are limited by the decisions made by other people. This manifests itself in monolingual classroom pedagogies where the funds of literacy knowledge Chinese children bring to school are undervalued or neglected.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter attempts to draw together the key findings generated during the research process and maps these themes in relation to Hornberger’s Continua of Biliteracy whilst at the same time paying close attention to key literature. The advantages of the Continua of Biliteracy are best summed up by Baker (2003) who states:

The Continua prompt us to ask an extensive and expansive set of questions about literacy evaluation, seeking re-framing and re-analysis and avoiding a standard description or a simplistic conclusion.

(Baker, 2003: 75)

The findings reveal that Chinese parents provide a rich learning environment where children consolidate and in some cases extend the literacy learning experiences gained in the complementary Chinese school. What also emerges from the chapter is that while the individual children in the study have a great deal of metalinguistic and metacognitive knowledge gained from learning diverse scripts, contextual and institutional factors frequently act as a barrier to their potential biliteracy development. According to Hornberger (2003) children should be allowed opportunities to draw on all points of the continua and also argues that policy makers and educators should pay attention to the traditionally less powerful end of the continua. The final chapter, therefore, builds on this recommendation and outlines the implications for educational policy, practice and research in multilingual Scotland.

Chapter 9

Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This final chapter evaluates the study by restating its aims and looking at the key findings of the research project. Further implications for educational policy and practice in multilingual Scotland will be explored and suggestions are put forward for further research action.

The aim of the research was to explore Chinese children's experiences of biliteracy learning in Scotland. A three-dimensional research design was adopted in order to take into account the influential domains where children are exposed to literacy learning- home, Chinese school and mainstream school. The nature of phenomenological research is to generate discussion, rather than reach any firm conclusions because it suggests a finality and surety which can not be defended (Moustakas, 1994). However this section provides an opportunity to acknowledge that the study is not coming to a firm conclusion, but to consider implications or ways forward in policy, practice and research which bears close relationship to the interpretations of the research. The emerging picture from the research can be summarized in the following way.

First, it investigated the attitudes and approaches to literacy learning in fourteen Chinese homes, with evidence gathered from semi-structured interviews with parents. The findings indicate that the Chinese parents have varied educational backgrounds and linguistic profiles. All the families do, however, have a commitment to maintaining Chinese literacy skills and are supporting their children at home in developing these skills. What also emerged from the investigation was that acquiring Chinese literacy was perceived by the parents to be linked with the transmission of traditional Chinese cultural values. Chapter 5 also revealed that some parents searched for innovative approaches in their teaching of Chinese characters to their children, whilst approaches adopted by other parents were more influenced by the process of reading and writing Chinese they had experienced within their own

formal education.

Second, observations of and conversations with children and Chinese teachers in a Chinese complementary school in the central belt of Scotland provided insights into the approaches to teaching and learning Chinese literacy. The key practice of the Chinese school remains the teaching of Chinese literacy, with opportunities for children to experience additional literacy-related activities outside lessons such as calligraphy, reciting poetry and reading competitions. Literacy practices vary across the complementary school and often depend on individual teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning. These attitudes and beliefs about learning are drawn from their own varied experiences of education in different cultural contexts. Although teaching is partially transmissive, due to the nature of learning the Chinese script and limitations with resources and time, methods such as group work and literacy-related games are incorporated into lessons to promote children's participation and stimulate interest. In addition, the culture of learning is also influenced by a textbook orientated curriculum and preparation for assessments. The children drew on metalinguistic knowledge and transferred learning experience from mainstream schools to the complementary school. These experiences comprise code-switching acting as a bridge to comprehension and literacy learning and English transliterations, based on individual children's knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences learnt in mainstream school, used to support the pronunciation and memorization of new Chinese characters.

Third, miscue analysis of reading and thinking aloud protocols were conducted in mainstream schools with six Chinese boys, aged eight to nine years, in order to analyse in depth the reading strategies deployed by children in their attempts to gain meaning from both Chinese and English texts. The children demonstrated a range of competencies in different literacies which play a role in their developing multilingual identities. The diverse nature of English and Chinese scripts enabled the children to switch scripts with apparent ease. Children displayed metalinguistic awareness skills and could differentiate between the practices and principles governing each writing system. Think aloud protocols during reading sessions reveal the different reading strategies at the children's disposal as they decode different writing systems. It was

discovered that learning characters need not wholly be a matter of memorisation and learning each individual character as an unanalyzed whole. In fact, most of the children were keen to talk about and deconstruct compound characters (such as identifying the semantic radical) and could systematically use this rich information to progress in their reading. This compares to the different think-aloud protocols and reading strategies employed when reading English which suggest a focus on sound-symbol correspondences.

The overall findings reveal that Chinese parents provide a rich learning environment where children consolidate and in some cases extend the literacy learning experiences gained in the complementary Chinese school. What also emerges from the research is that while the children in the study have a great deal of metalinguistic and metacognitive knowledge gained from learning diverse writing systems, this knowledge remains largely hidden from mainstream schools. This has echoes of Cummins' concern in Canadian schools in the 1970s and his notion of 'two solitudes' where the teaching and learning of the two writing systems remained rigidly separate (Cummins, 2001 *et al.*).

Last, Hornberger's Continua of Biliteracy were used as a model both in order to analyse the mosaic of qualitative data generated during the research process and to provide a framework for a discussion of educational policy and practice in multilingual Scotland. This final chapter takes this discussion one step further by looking at more detail the implications for policy, practice and research in Scotland.

9.2 Implications for the education of Chinese children

Most educators would prefer to avoid politics...increasingly it is politics, not pedagogy, that determines how children are taught.

(Crawford, 2000: 3)

Ruiz (1984) provides a clear analysis of the different orientations toward language planning. First, *language as a problem* where the measures taken are designed to overcome the educational disadvantages of bilingualism and remedy the difficulties of limited English. Second, *language as a right* where the measures taken are

designed to open up the curriculum to EAL pupils so as to guarantee the right to equality in education and achieve full potential. Third, *language as a resource* where the measures taken in this approach are designed to foster bilingualism. This requires the development of linguistic and cultural resources other than those of the dominant society. It encourages and uses cultural and linguistic diversity to meet national needs and promote social justice. Within the Scottish educational context the language planning orientation has traditionally focus on *language as a problem* as attention and energy continues to be put into providing English language support for bilingual learners where the focus is on the transition to English as quickly as possible rather than providing opportunities for these children and young people to build on the language resources they already possess.

The previous chapter pointed to the kinds of imbalances that exist in the development of policies associated with the different languages in Scotland when comprehensive and co-ordinated language planning is absent. Whilst financial resources have been made available and some success has been achieved in the promotion of Gaelic, Scots and modern foreign languages in mainstream schools, community language development in comparison, continues to suffer from neglect. This language policy context echoes Beacco and Bryman's (2003) assertion that when monolingual state policies are the norm it introduces:

antagonistic relationships between languages in that it leads some languages receiving preferential treatment and a radical distinction being made between the national/official language(s) and all the others.

(Beacco and Bryman, 2003: 10)

Although it is evident that fresh thinking is required to make language learning more inclusive and accessible in schools, there are a number of hopeful signs to suggest that an interest in linguistic diversity and language policy formation has certainly increased since constitutional change in Scotland.

Recent legislation has explicitly raised the profile of bilingual learners in Scottish educational establishments. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act

2004 introduced a new framework to provide for children and young people who require additional support with their learning. This new definition is based on the feeling that there are some pupils who didn't have any particular kind of learning need but who do need some additional support in order to benefit from their educational experience. As a result, the new term also incorporates pupils who have English as an additional language alongside Gypsies and Travellers and those who are able and gifted. The Supporting Children's Learning *Code of Practice* (Scottish Executive, 2005) provides helpful advice for schools on implementing the terms of the Act. It specifies that:

A need for additional support does not imply that a child or young person lacks abilities and skills. For example, bilingual children or young people, whose first language is not English, may already have a fully developed home language and a wide range of achievements, skills and abilities. Any lack of English should be addressed within a learning and teaching programme which takes full account of the individual's abilities and learning needs.

(Scottish Executive, 2005: 35)

In addition the new legislation gives more rights to parents to be involved in decision-making process and the code of practice specifically mentions the importance of including interpreters in this procedure. The impact of this new legislation remains to be seen but what is required is a fundamental shift away from the deficit *language as a problem* orientation towards a more inclusive support model where bilingual children are given appropriate support to access to curriculum (Leung and Franson, 2001).

In 2005, the Scottish Executive published new guidelines for all schools to ensure effective inclusion for bilingual learners. The title of this document, *Learning in 2(+)* Languages (Learning Teaching Scotland, 2005), seeks to represent an increasing commitment to additive bilingualism. Following quickly on from these guidelines, the Educational Inspectorate recognised the growing need for schools to take more responsibility for evaluating the quality of their educational provision for bilingual learners and guidelines have been produced outlining effective ways in which schools can fully effectively support bilingual learners (HMIe, 2006).

All of these Scottish policy initiatives over the last decade are to be welcomed but what is required is a commitment to promoting bilingualism and multilingualism under a synchronised language strategy for Scotland. This harmonious and shared policy development across the different language education fields should provide support and advice on how the teaching of all languages can best be integrated in the life-long learning process from the early years onwards (Lo Bianco, 2001).

A Race Equality Advisory Forum (REAF) was established in 1999 to advise the Scottish Executive on the preparation of a race equality strategy to combat institutional racism in public policy in Scotland. A separate working group was set up for education and the REAF Report (Scottish Executive, 2001) provided comprehensive action plans for the following:

- lack of action to address racial harassment within educational premises;
- lack of acknowledgement by the education sector of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, particularly within the curriculum;
- absence of data on minority ethnic learners, for example in relation to numbers, progress and attainment levels, exclusion rates, entry into further and higher education and staffing profiles at all levels of education;
- lack of effective communication and inclusion of minority ethnic views and perspectives;
- shortage of minority ethnic professionals employed across all levels of education;
- failure of the education system to provide adequate and fair support to bilingual learners;
- ad hoc and inconsistent support for English as an Additional Language across education authorities, particularly within schools.

Some of the above issues relevant to the present study and will be dealt with in turn.

The experiences of one of the Chinese parents (Mrs So) who suffered racism at school and initially rejected her cultural and linguistic inheritance, highlights how the languages children speak, their sense of identity and their self-esteem are all closely bound together.

Policies must be in place in education authorities in order to deal with any forms of racism or discrimination. Schools also need to be proactive in dealing with issues of racism and language awareness within school development planning and through the curriculum. This is particularly important in areas of Scotland where the ethnic minority population is small and isolated and where there is a greater risk of harassment and abuse (de Lima, 2001). In addition schools often fail to recognize incidents as racially motivated because they lack experience or because of an ingrained belief that there is 'no problem here' (Donald *et al.* 1994).

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 now places a general duty on Education authorities to assess and monitor the impact of their policies on pupils of different racial groups, with particular reference to their attainment levels. Data on the achievement of minority ethnic pupils has been gathered annually in England over the last decade (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; DfES, 2004) but comprehensive statistics of this type are not available in Scotland as yet. The present research discovered that the individual schools recorded details of a child's ethnicity and home language at enrolment but collation of this information at local authority level is very patchy. What is not taken into account is an extraordinary level of non-compliance with the requirement to complete details about pupils' ethnic backgrounds (Arshad *et al.* 2003). In additional anecdotal evidence suggests there is reluctance to disclose such information because of the sensitivity surrounding the potential academic underachievement of some minority groups. Without this, any patterns of inequality or shortcomings in provision cannot be identified nor can remedies to tackle under-performance be put in place (Blair *et al.* 1998). The research highlighted the varied and complex linguistic backgrounds of the families.

The research showed that Chinese parents have a deep-seated interest in their

children's education and should be viewed as an important resource. Accordingly parental absence from parental consultation meetings should not automatically be perceived as a lack of concern for their children's education. Reasons for non-attendance may be their inability to communicate in English with schools, shortage of time due to work pressures leading to limited knowledge of the Scottish education system or feeling disempowered to challenge the policy and practices in schools (Blackledge, 2000). It is important for schools to listen to parents and for teachers to appreciate the home background and daily lives of the diverse community they serve. What appears necessary is to focus on involving schools with parents rather than involving parents in school (Caddell, 2001).

An Ran (2001) acknowledges the 'parallel tracks' and potential mismatch between Chinese parents and mainstream teachers' constructions of teaching and learning. However, the varied opinions of the parents in chapter 5 reveal the dangers inherent in making assumptions about parents' educational beliefs based on their cultural background. Teachers need to recognise that cultures are dynamic and they should strive to avoid seeing Chinese parents as a homogeneous group and remain sensitive to the nature of Chinese families. According to Bastiani (1997) parental partnership is a process where both parents and teachers work towards an achievable sharing of power and responsibility. Effective dialogue encourages the interchange of ideas and opinions but this type of communication requires the use of trained and professional interpreters if parents have limited English.

There is a need to build on principles outlined by Whalley (2007) who looked at new ways of working with parents. For example, flexibility is also required in arranging more formal parent consultation meetings to discuss the child's literacy progress. This is because many Chinese parents in Scotland work unsocial hours, and the timing of events sometimes prohibits parents' attendance at school functions. Monday afternoons are the preferred time for many Chinese parents as this is the day when their businesses traditionally close. Also a commitment to home visits is part and parcel of a teachers' role. As Blackledge (2000) states:

Headteachers can ensure that class teachers visit the homes of all children in their class during the first term of the academic year by making this a mandatory part of home-school partnership policy. Schoolscan support such a policy by releasing teachers from the classroom to make home visits. The vast majority of teachers will require the support of a trained interpreter or bilingual home liaison teacher when making visits to minority-language parents, so adopting such a policy has resource implications. However, failure to make such an investment is likely to result in the continued marginalisation of the parents of some of the school students.

(Blackledge, 2000: 135)

According to Taylor (1987: 238)) initial home visits should be social and the majority of Chinese parents would welcome this. These visits would facilitate mutual understanding and establish a trusting and positive relationship between home and school. This preliminary link may encourage and parental participation in their child's schooling to a greater degree and would help build the foundations for future interchange of ideas and opinions between home and school.

The parents in the study recognised the benefits of developing their children's biliteracy skills as an avenue for future career opportunities. There is a demand for skilled bilingual staff, not only within education services, but in other service provision within Scottish society. If the present education system does not foster the potential biliteracy skills within the ethnic minority community then these bilingual professionals will continue to be in short supply.

The research revealed that in the school's eyes assessment in literacy was exclusively in English. One of the challenges of bilingual support in the first years of primary schooling is bilingual staff, in common, with linguistic minority children, feel marginalised and reluctant to use the home languages in the classroom (Bourne, 2001). Bilingual staff need to feel as if they are valued and have a place in classroom pedagogies. The use of first language assessment reported in chapter 7 was for research purposes but there is a need to consider how this type of assessment can be replicated for educational purposes. There is also a need for a change of direction away from attention being paid to skills in community languages to curriculum design to support these languages. The deployment of bilingual staff in Scotland is

complex and there is a need to consider the role of various staff involved in the assessment process including bilingual teachers, bilingual classroom assistants and in the in case of this research – a peripatetic bilingual home school liaison worker. NALDIC (2005b) offer up a number of very important questions highly relevant to this current research study:

- what is the background and training of those involved in the assessment task?
- how do bilingual staff and others make use of the information?
- how is the assessment recorded and communicated to others?
- what assessment tools used are used?

As the REAF Report acknowledged the language policy vacuum has resulted in an ad hoc arrangement across Scotland in terms of support services and resources for bilingual pupils. These autonomous ways of working range from one authority for example, which advocates full inclusion of learners in mainstream classrooms with an accompanying strategic whole school approach to all English language learners working in partnership with class and subject teachers. On the other hand, an authority with a similar size of school pupil population has retained an approach of placing some new arrivals into Language Units despite condemnation from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) who considers such segregated provision as a form of institutionalised racism (CRE, 1986). The argument put forward by the CRE is that withdrawing children and young people from mainstream classrooms results in stigmatization, reinforces the notion of ‘deficit’ and ‘difference’ and restricts learners’ access to the full curriculum available in schools. Additionally, linguists suggest this practice inhibits vital social interactions with native English speaking peers who provide important friendships and appropriate models of the target language.

A third model of additional language support, practiced in the schools reported in chapter 7, involves the deployment of peripatetic specialist teachers who offer specific tuition to individuals or groups of geographically isolated EAL pupils. But

due to the restricted time spent in a number of schools, contact with pupils is frequently conducted on a 'withdrawal' basis, where language support becomes divorced from curriculum content and there is limited professional dialogue with mainstream colleagues. The result is marginalisation of both EAL pupils and EAL support staff. Interestingly, a shift in culture has recently been advocated in Northern Ireland (DENI, 2006). These HMIe recommendations aim at empowering mainstream teachers and building capacity in areas such as additional language learning methodology and collaborative teaching approaches through strategic consultancy services. In the same vein, Franson (2001) cautions against the polarization of EAL support methodologies:

Teachers need to come to terms with the tensions that will persist between the specialist role required to address the individual needs of EAL learners and the wider role that strives to make mainstream pedagogy more inclusive of these learners. The profession needs to understand that it is not an either/or situation but a changing context in which a range of pedagogies are necessary. Movement towards a consultancy role would give a more strategic delivery of service

(Franson, 2001: 157)

The research reveals that four out of the six learners were taken out of class for individual support to focus on their reading. According to McPake and Bourne (1991) where learners are 'withdrawn' from the mainstream classroom, this can be a sign of institutional failure, although within the institution concerned, the 'problem' is likely to be located in the individual learner. On the one hand, the reading sessions shows that adult scaffolding can be effective such as paraphrasing the child's comments and encouraging them to expand on their responses. Teachers should use teaching strategies such as stopping the reading and asking 'Does that make sense?' That is moving beyond the literal to more inferential types of questions. This can also involve the teacher modeling think-aloud protocols such as 'that reminds me of...' and 'that made me think of the time...' (Wilhelm, 2001).

On the other hand, the one to one adult-child situation locates the bilingual learners away from native speaking peers and good models of the target language. Within

mainstream learning environments interactive tasks can be designed to develop strategies to promote interaction with texts. These Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) (Lunzer and Gardner, 1979) include collaborative activities such as sequencing, cloze procedure and marking the text. Furthermore, joint modeling allows for the re-presentation of texts graphically in tables, charts, mind maps and cartoons (Brent Language Service, 1999).

It was discovered that one of the challenges for the learners reading in English was as a result of the orthographic system in which a letter or letter combination can stand for a variety of different sounds. A pedagogical implication of this script irregularity is that the children require more phonemic awareness but this support should be provided in the context of real books not decontextualised worksheets. This can be reinforced through collaborative word games such as those as suggested by McWilliam (1998).

The learners also require texts that stretch them both linguistically and cognitively and their inclusion in mainstream tasks could incorporate reciprocal teaching. This approach involves a dialogue between teachers and children for the purpose of jointly constructing the meaning of text (Palincsar and Brown, 1984; Oczhus, 2003). It is an interactive technique, suitable for all learners, but especially for those who are competent at decoding but who also require support with comprehension. The teacher's role is to model the four strategies which foster comprehension (predicting, clarifying, question generating and summarising) and then release responsibility to the children to become more independent users of the strategies in their collaborative literature circles. This approach has proved successful with children whose first language is Maori (Westera and Moore, 1995) and any benefits to bilingual children require careful monitoring as reciprocal teaching becomes increasingly popular in Scottish primary schools.

This conducive literacy environment not only needs to provide opportunities for shared reading with English speaking peers but also older children in the school can

be involved in shared reading involving talk before, during and after the reading (Topping, 1995). These experiences of collaborative talk can involve different levels of comprehension including opportunities to discuss predictions and questioning techniques to generate inference, deduction and reflection in order to extend the children's languages and encourage deep thinking. This shared reading experience can be extended to the promotion of dual language books which offer a valuable resource for both bilingual and monolingual children in terms of language learning, biliteracy development and awareness of language diversity (Conteh, 2003; Sneddon, 2009).

The research indicates that the Chinese complementary school remains vibrant within the community but the school remains largely 'invisible' to mainstream education. It is important to recognize that these complementary schools have a desire to maintain their independence and have a role in providing safe spaces for children to negotiate their new and evolving identities (Creese, *et al.* 2006; Francis *et al.* 2008). However, there is also a need for closer links to be established with mainstream schools to fit in with the community cohesion agenda. Scotland could learn from projects conducted in England where a number of mainstream secondary and primary schools are now establishing teaching and operational partnerships (Sneddon, 2003; Kenner *et al.* 2007). One interesting initiative consists of ITE students building connections with complementary schools to develop their knowledge and understanding of linguistically diverse mainstream schools and sharing these new understandings with student colleagues (Robertson, 2007).

The study reveals a strong desire of Chinese parents to maintain and develop their children's Chinese literacy skills. However, opportunities to develop these skills were extremely limited, amounting to about two hours teaching at weekend Chinese schools and/or parental support in the home. What is required is innovative and creative thinking to make language learning more inclusive in mainstream schools. The new Curriculum for Excellence (3-18) in Scotland is a chance to critically review pedagogical approaches to language learning. This initiative offers scope for innovative language learning through cross-curricular teaching whilst providing for

modern developments in information technology. For Chinese children who are geographically isolated, as is the case in this present study, the ambitious Scottish Schools Digital network (GLOW) should be used to develop community language skills through video conferencing, teaching and learning. Also allowing all pupils in Scottish schools the opportunity to learn community languages will raise awareness of languages, and will help break down ethnic barriers and thus have a positive impact on citizenship and anti-racist initiatives. Further guidance on supporting isolated bilingual learners is outlined by NALDIC (2005a).

Conversations with the sample of mainstream teachers in this study showed that their construction of pedagogical practices was perceived exclusively in terms of English. There is a need to provide a sustained programme of continuing professional development (CPD) as a means of enabling educational practitioners to value biliteracy and develop strategies to promote these within their practice. There is also a need for student teachers to receive professional development in their initial teacher education (ITE) designed to enable teachers new to the profession to reflect critically on their professional thinking and practice in response to increasingly diverse classrooms.

When student teachers are dealing with the challenges of the interpretation of the place of languages, literacies and cultures in education, it is all too easy to resort to stereotypical and simplistic categorizations without exploring the richness of human reality and diversity within and between minority communities. Contributors to this debate such as Ang (2008) criticize curriculum documents where the rhetoric of 'providing for cultural difference' may serve to mask structural inequalities, particularly around class and ethnicity. Furthermore, the guidance is indicative of fixed linguistic and cultural orientations rather than notions of fluid, evolving and hybrid identities. The exploration of Chinese families in Scotland in this study have confronted these homogenized understandings of how people live out their lives, in terms of individuals' changing proficiency, allegiances and affiliations to different languages and literacies and how these are inextricably entwined with emerging multiple identities. Teachers not only need to consider how they can build on these varied life experiences of multilingual children in imaginative and stimulating ways

in their practice, but must also learn to decentre and reflect on their own situated identities in today's postmodern and globalised world.

ITE programmes should reassess their responsibilities towards preparing students for the rapidly changing demands of diverse classrooms and rethink the philosophy of teacher education instruction. This can be achieved through Problem-based learning (PBL) which enables students to actively participate in more reflexive thinking and to gain access to alternative perspectives into multilingual classrooms. These instructional methods involve collaborative group enquiry in an attempt to seek potential solutions to real world problems (Bond and Feetti, 1997; Stokes, 2001). That is, it envisages learning as a process of co-construction of knowledge where through sharing our understandings of the world with others, new understandings are generated. Integral to this are the principles of listening to others and nurturing respectful relationships, but also a commitment to empowering students to critically reflect on their own beliefs, professional thinking and learning. Classrooms are not only places where children learn, they are also places where aspiring teachers can learn as well. With a commitment to creating a caring ethos and listening to the learner's voice, students can gain valuable insights into individual children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds and then apply these intercultural insights to their own teaching. As Schultz *et al.* (2008: 155) suggest 'taking a listening stance implies entering the classroom with questions as well as answers, knowledge as well as a clear sense of the limitations of that knowledge'.

The research highlights children as analytical learners with metalinguistic and metacognitive knowledge as a result of their learning to read diverse scripts. There is a need to move beyond the traditional purpose of assessing children's literacy development in relation to already pre-determined skill-based categories. More could be done on listening to multilingual children and their own interpretations of their experiences with literacy learning drawing on the work of Rinaldi (2006) and Clark and Moss (2001). These constructs of childhood start from a philosophical stance – that children are experts in their own lives and active agents who make choices. According to Peter Moss (Learning Teaching Scotland, 2006)

If you want to find out about childhood, why not go and ask the people who are living it. Children are meaning makers – they are constantly trying to construct meaning out of their lives.

(LTS, 2006: 24)

The approach is also based on the recognition that parents, children and educationalists are a learning community and that professionals should continually review their practices.

This documentation approach brings together a mosaic of evidence such as child conferencing, photographs and recordings (Clark and Moss, 2001). This acts as a basis for co-constructed dialogues which reflect on children's learning paths and processes and are used as a foundation to support further learning and teaching. An effective example of this type of transformative pedagogy is the 'Identity Texts' project in a primary school in Toronto, Canada (Cummins, 2006). Using technologically-mediated literacies the process explores how interpersonal spaces are created within the classroom that support the development of literacy in both English and the home language. Illustrated dual language stories that build on children's cultural and linguistic capital are worked on in collaboration with parents and older students who are literate in the home language.

9.3 Suggestions for future research

A national infrastructure for supporting research into language education has a strong foundation in Scotland. Funded by the Scottish Executive and coordinated by Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching (SCILT) this research agenda has generated a number of substantive projects directly related to informing future decisions on language policy, provision and practice. Several of these research projects have been referred to throughout this thesis. However, there are many aspects identified in this study worthy of further investigation. The following are suggestions for future studies:

- Longitudinal studies of children in Chinese families designed to investigate the complex dynamics of linguistic expertise and to explore the changing allegiances to different literacies over time.

- Observation of shared literacy practices in Chinese homes to investigate the role of parents, siblings as ‘teachers’, grandparents, community class teachers and friends. The role of new digital literacies should also be explored.
- Observations of literacy practices in complementary schools and their impact of children’s biliteracy development.
- Investigations into how Chinese children develop different strategies involved in the cognitive processing of two diverse orthographies and transfer across learning contexts.
- Similarities and differences in reading strategies between native speakers of English and EAL learners.

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Appendix 1 Summary of Interview Schedule

Family name:
 Parent(s) age:
 Place of birth:
 Place children born:
 Age/gender of children:
 Parents' employment:
 Age came to Scotland (where appropriate):
 Length of residence in other countries:
 Heritage visits (duration):

What language do you speak to
 Parents brother/sister children friends

What language do the following speak to you
 Parents brother/sister children friends

Place of schooling:
 Age started: Age finished:
 Language of instruction:
 Level attained: Primary Secondary Further/Higher
 If educated in Hong Kong/China did you have English language classes?
 If educated in Scotland did you attend community language classes?

What is your standard of spoken English?
 Very Good Good Not very good

What is your standard of spoken Cantonese/Hakka/Putonghua (or other spoken variety)?
 Very Good Good Not very good

What is your standard of reading/writing in English?
 Very Good Good Not very good

What is your standard of reading/writing in Chinese (traditional/simplified characters)?
 Very Good Good Not very good

Any communication difficulties with heritage visits to Hong Kong/China (oracy/literacy)?

Do your children attend community language classes?
 Where (if appropriate)? Reasons for (non) attendance?
 Why? Why not?

What are your children's attitudes to attending weekend classes and learning Chinese?

What is your attitude to your children being bilingual/biliterate?

How do you think learning to read and write in Chinese should be taught?

Is it different to learning to read and write in English?

What do you think of the way your children are taught in Scotland?

Do you help your children with their English homework? (reading and writing) how often?

Do you help your children with learning Chinese? (reading and writing) how often?

Appendix 2 Reading Conference Prompt Sheet

Self-assessment

- Do you enjoy reading?
- Is there anything you particularly like or dislike about reading?
- How do you rate yourself as a reader?
- Is there any area of reading where you feel you could improve?

Range and preferences

- How do you choose a book?
Size, cover, pictures, end papers, title, author, recommendation, TV programme, length of chapters
- What are your favourite kinds of books?
Picture books, poetry, adventures, scary stories, science fiction, historical stories, fairy stories, folk tales, myths and legends, comics, joke books, magazines
- Do you have a favourite author?
- Do you have a favourite illustrator?
- Why do you like their books?
Plot moves forward quickly, text easy to read
- When do you like reading? Where?
- Do you like to read quietly or with someone else? Who?
- What books have you most enjoyed recently?
- Was there anything you particularly liked about the book?
The plot, the characters, the artwork, the language, the emotional appeal
- Which character did you like best/least in the book? Can you explain why?
- Were there any word or phrases that interested or puzzled you?
- What would you tell a friend to try to persuade them to read it?
- Do you like information books?
- Have you read one recently?

- Do you read books in other languages?
Dual language books, newspapers, magazines, comics, books published overseas
- Where do you read them?
- Do you read them on your own or with someone else? Who?

Skills

- What do you do when you don't know a word?
Use pictures, guess, think of what would make sense, reread sentence, read ahead, initial letter, split into syllables, ask someone
- If you want to find out more about something you are interested in, what do you do?
Ask someone, use TV, books, magazines, write off for information
- How can you find a book about a subject you are interested in?
Ask a teacher, go to a library, book shop, use subject index, hunt through alphabetical order, use classification system
- If you find more than one book, how do you choose the one that will be most

useful?

- How would you use an information book to find an answer to a particular question?
Contents, index, captions, subheadings, skimming, scanning

Current reading

- What are you reading at the moment?
- Would you like to read a bit to me, or tell me about it?
- What do you think will happen next?
- How do you think it might end?
- What might you choose next?

Appendix 3

Reducing an Iron Rod to a Sewing Needle

Li Bai (A.D. 701-762), better known to Westerners as Li Bo (or Li Po), is one of China's greatest poets. More than 900 of his poems have survived. He is as respected in the Chinese-speaking world as Shakespeare is in the English-speaking world. However, when he was young, Li Bai was not very fond of going to school. He particularly disliked the books of classics and history that his teacher made him read. He thought they were difficult and boring.

One day young Li Bai managed to slip out of his classroom while his teacher was taking a nap next door. On a sunny spring day, the outside world looked fascinating and relaxing. Young Li Bai loitered here and there, and before he knew it, he had arrived at a little brook. It gurgled and giggled as if to say, "Hello, hello" to him, which made the little guilt Li Bai felt about playing truant evaporate instantly. Lighthearted and carefree, he was sauntering along the bubbling brook when he ran into an elderly woman honing a thick iron rod by the water. She was so focused on what she was doing that she did not notice the presence of Li Bai until he spoke to her.

"What are you doing, Grandma?" asked Li Bai. Like all polite Chinese children, he spoke to strangers the way he did to his own family members.

"I am making a sewing needle", answered the elderly woman, a little startled at first but quickly collecting herself at the sight of a gentle boy.

"Making a needle?" Li Bai asked in bewilderment, for he did not understand how the grandma could possibly reduce the thick iron rod to a tiny sewing needle. "Grandma, what you have in your hands is an iron rod, not a needle!" the puzzled young Li Bai pointed out.

"You are right, son," said the elderly woman. She rubbed the beads of sweat off her forehead with the back of her gnarled hand as she raised her head and looked at Li Bai's chubby face. Then she continued, her amiable smile reminding Li Bai of his own grandma, "I am honing the iron rod because I want to reduce its size and make a needle out of it."

"But since the iron rod is so thick, when do you think you can make it as small as a needle?" asked Li Bai, apparently unprepared for the grandma's surprising answer.

"It's true that the rod is big and thick, and it is very difficult to make it thinner." The elderly woman paused and said to Li Bai in a significant tone, "But I will never stop working at it. If I persist, I will get the result sooner or later." She patted Li Bai on his little shoulder and went on, "Remember this, son: As long as you work hard, you can reduce an iron rod to a sewing needle."

"I understand now, Grandma!" exclaimed Li Bai, who had a sudden revelation, "that no pains, no gains! What you said is true also with my studies. So long as I don't give up, I will be able to overcome any difficulty down the road." Li Bai said thanks to the elderly woman and hurried back to the school. He apologised to his teacher and classmates, told them about his encounter with the elderly woman, and promised to study hard every day.

This story gave rise to the proverb tiechu-chengzhen (an iron rod can be reduced to a sewing needle).

Appendix 4

Appendix

Revision before school test

1. 選詞填充 (Fill in the blanks with given words)

e.g. 每天早上, 我和姊姊一起 _____ 去。(上學 / 連忙)

2. 改正句中的錯別字 (Find and correct the wrong words)

e.g. 職員們在辯工室工作。()

3. 填上適當的標點符號, 、。: ; ? ! (Fill in the correct punctuations)

e.g. 太空人早已到過月球了____月球上其實是沒有仙女的____

4. 造句 (Make a sentence with given word)

e.g. ... 快樂...

5. 作句 (Make a sentence with the given pattern)

e.g. ... 因為 ... 所以

6. 重組句子 (Rearrange words into a sentence)

e.g. 誰 毛衣 ? 的 這是

7. 看時鐘, 寫時間 (Look and write the time in Chinese)



e.g. _____

Appendix 5a Ka Shing

Text: Dick King Smith (1998) *Emily's Legs*. Hove: MacDonald Young Books
(T – text) (KS – learner) (AH – Teacher)

- AH What was the first thing you thought of when you read the passage?
 KS It's a very old house because it got lots of spiders because they got hundreds of spiders
 AH Have you any other thoughts?
 KS I was different to everybody in the school
 AH Tell me more about that
 KS Because Emily has ten legs and makes me thinking I like Emily....different Emily.. like unusual because of my skin and hair
 AH Discussion about 'feeling different'
 AH Tell me about what you have been reading
 KS That spider called Emily. He had hundred babies, he (*pause*) because he got ten legs he ate it then...then two spiders don't like it so...he not ...he ran out of the....then fall off the vacuum cleaner suck it up (*laughs*) he can't scream and cry...bottom of the vacuum cleaner bag... and picked up bag in the dust bin...walk in a safely line then then (*pause*) I don't know what that is about (*points to page*)
 AH Did anything about the reading make it hard for you?
 KS I find it easy but a little bit hard because of the long words

The interaction

- T Emily ran out of the Gym as fast as her ten legs would carry her
 KS Emily ran out of the Gym as fast as her ten legs would carry her
 T She ran down the wall, dashed across the carpet
 KS She ran down the wall, dashed across the carpet
 T and hid in a crack in the skirting-board
 KS and **hide** in a crack in the **skirt-ing** board Do you know what the skirting board is?
 No *explains and shows skirting-board in classroom*
 T She wait, facing outwards
 KS She **wait**, facing **outward**
 T The crack was narrow
 KS The crack was **narrowed**
 T so that they would only be able to come at her one at a time
 KS so that they would only be **unable** to **her** at her one at a time
 T "I'll jolly well show'em," she said to herself

- KS "I **jokey will** show'em," she said to herself
- KS "I'll **jolly will** show'em," she said to herself
Silence
- T "Calling me a cheat. They'd better be careful."
- KS "Call me a cheat. They'd better be careful."
- T She could hear the spiderlings chattering to each other
- KS She **would** hear the **spiding** chattering to each other
- T as they ran about the room in search of her.
- KS as they ran about the room in search of her.
- T "Wait till we find her!"
- KS "Wait till we find her!"
- T "We'll make her wish she'd never been hatched!"
- KS "We make her wish (omission) **ever be** hatched!"
- T "We'll show her!"
- KS "We show her!"
- T "We'll show Miss Emily Ten-legs!"
- KS "We show Miss Emily (omission)-legs!"
- T "Let's pull off one of them!"
- KS "Let's pull off one of them!"
- T "Let's pull off two! Then she'd be a proper spider!"
- KS "Let's pull off two! Then **she** be a proper spider!"
Be a normal spider because they got eight and she only had ten legs
- T You just try it, thought Emily. I'm not afraid of you
- KS You just try it, thought Emily. I'm not afraid of you
- T But she was, and it was a great relief
- KS But she was, and it was a great **ru ru rutie**
Don't know
- R E (*pronounces letter names not sound*)
- Can you read that again and look at the words?
What does 'I'll jolly well show'em' mean?
(*explains*)
- What do they mean 'she'd be a proper spider'?
- What is that word? (pointing to 'relief')
Look at the beginning. How do you say this bit (re)?
If you don't know a word what do you do?

you use the information

Tell me more about how you use the information

you scrunch together the information

So how would you use the information in this word (relief)?

I'm not sure it's difficult. It helps if I know a word just like that

T to hear her mother's voice

KS to **heard** her **mother** voice

T calling angrily to the others

KS calling **angry** to the **other**

T "What are you doing, you naughty children?"

KS "What are you **going**, to **lar lar** children?"

Let us look at this again

Appendix 5b Ka Shing

The Analysis

<i>No</i>	<i>Miscue</i>	<i>Level of miscue</i>	<i>Source of miscue</i>	<i>Learner response</i>	<i>Teacher prompt</i>
1.	hide (hid)	graphophonic/ syntactic	present instead of past tense	leaves	leaves - acceptable
2.	wait (waited)	graphophonic/ syntactic	as above	leaves	leaves - acceptable
3.	outward (outwards)	graphophonic	omits plural	leaves	leaves - acceptable
4.	narrowed (narrow)	graphophonic	expects past tense	leaves	leaves
5.	unable (able)	graphophonic	adds prefix	leaves	leaves
6.	(come)		reading ahead construction	leaves	leaves
7.	I (I'll)	syntactic	causes difficulty	leaves	
8.	jokey (jolly)	graphophonic	unknown word	doesn't respond	asks to re-read and explains
9.	call (calling)	graphophonic	expected verb structure	leaves	leaves
10.	would (could)	graphophonic	as No 9	leaves	leaves
11.	spiding (spiderlings)	graphophonic	initial syllable but unknown word	leaves	leaves
12.	we (we'll)	syntactic	as No 7	leaves	leaves
13.	ever be (never been)	graphophonic	contracts		leaves
14.	she (she'd)	syntactic	as No 7	leaves	leaves
15.	rvtie (relief)		unknown word		draws attention to look at word
16.	heard (hear)	graphophonic/ syntactic	expects past tense	leaves	leaves
17.	mother (mother's)	graphophonic	unvoiced apostrophe	leaves	leaves
18.	angry (angrily)	graphophonic	predictable structure	leaves	leaves
19.	other (others)	graphophonic	as No 17		leaves
20.	going (doing)	graphophonic	initial letter		leaves
21.	larlar (naughty)		unknown word	pronounces letter sounds	draws attention to word

Appendix 5c

Name: Ka Shing

Text: Chinese Mid Autumn Festival

NO.	MISCUE		LEVEL OF MISCUE	SOURCE OF MISCUE	LEARNER	TEACHER
1.	Target 圓又亮	Result 又亮又圓		semantically		T: have similar meaning
2.	就	在	semantically	T: graphic similarity	---	corrects
3.	過	去	---	T: unknown character	---	corrects
4.	並	但	orthographic visual error	T: unknown character and mix up with other character	pause, then guess	corrects
5.	呢	()	semantically visual error	T: look similar	---	gives

Appendix 6a Alan

Text: ‘The Followers’ Collins Pathways

(T – text) (A – learner) (AH – Teacher)

Alan read the first part of the story silently and the following conversation ensued

AH Tell me what happened in the first part of the story?

A *(long pause)* Rajinder’s running to Lisa’s house.

AH Tell me something else

A She were tired.

AH Did you find anything else?

A There was a fire...

AH There was a fire?

A Yes

AH We’ll read it again see and if you are right. What was the first thing you thought of when you read the passage?

A I’ve seen a big fire

AH Tell me about the big fire?

A Home.. on the cooking business it was *(unclear)*

AH Tell me about what happened?

A Call the fire brigade

Discussion about a fire in family business

AH Did anything about the reading make it hard for you?

A I think it hard because some words I don’t know

AH Can you show me some of the words

A *(points to ‘desparately’)*

Interaction

A

AH

T Rajinder saw it first.

A Rajinder saw it first.

T She’d gone to buy some milk for her mum

A **She** gone to buy some milk for her mum,

T and there it was, as clear as anything.

A and there it was, as **cle** as anything.

T She said she’d stared at it for a minute,

A She said // *(adding she said to end of previous sentence)* **she //started** at it for a minute,

T and then ran all the way back to our block to tell me.

A and then ran all the way back to our **block** (SO) to tell me.

T The first I knew about it was a loud banging on our door.

A The first I knew about it was **hearing** (insert) a loud banging on our door.

T Mum opened it.

A Mum opened it.

T “Where’s the fire?” she asked, as I looked past at Rajinder

A “**Wh...where..**where’s the fire?” she asked, as I looked past at Rajinder
T who was desperately trying to catch her breath
A who was **des..per..ate..d** (SO) trying to catch her breath
T “Lisa...you’ve got to...it’s...”
A “Lisa **got** Lisa...**you** got (SC) to...it’s...”
T “What’s the matter, Jin?” I asked, moving towards the door.
A “What’s the matter, Jin?” I asked, moving towards the door.
T “You’ve got to come with me?”
A “**I** got to come with me?”
T “Is something wrong?” Mum asked, sounding worried.
A “Is something wrong?” Mum asked, **s_s_sounding** (SO) worried.
T “No nothing,” said Rajinder.
A “No nothing,” said Rajinder.
T “I just want to show Lisa something.”
A “**I want** I just want (SC) to show Lisa something.” *What does Rajinder want to show Lisa?*
The fire is spreading *Where is the fire?*
In the house *What do you think will happen?*
They run away *Lets read on and find out*

T “Don’t be long then, ” said Mum.
A “Don’t be long then, ” said Mum.
T “You haven’t even had your breakfast.”
A “You haven’t **any** had your breakfast.”
T Rajinder practically pulled me out of the door.
A Rajinder **practice_ly** pulled me out of the door. *Look at this word again*
Pract-til practical *Look at the end*
Practical *Practically*

What do you do if you don’t know a word?
Can you give me an example?

Break it up. Just like find words
Like Ra-jind-er

T “Come on!” she shouted, as she ran towards the stairwell.
A “Come on!” she shouted, as she ran towards the stairwell.
T “What is it? Jin, just tell me what it is!”
A “What is it? Jin, just tell me what it is!”
T Rajinder ignored my pleas, and kept on running.
A Rajinder ignored my pleas, and **kepted** on running.
T I gave up and concentrated on keeping up with her.
A I gave up and **con-cen-trate** (SO) on keeping up with her. *What does concentrated mean?*
Don’t know *(Explains)*

T We reached the bottom of the stairs and even then she didn’t stop.
A We reached the bottom of the stairs and even then she didn’t stop.
T She tore across the estate, past all the other tower blocks,
A She **talk** (P) across the **e-state** (SO/P), past all the other tower blocks,

e-state
They ran..... in the middle
Is it the pavement?

What's this word? They ran across the what?
ESTATE. What does this mean?
Tell me what you are thinking

(long explanation follows about the housing estate next to the school)

T and across the square of grass,
A and across the square of grass,
T with the funny-shaped statue.
A with the funny-shaped **statue (SO)**.
It doesn't move
T As we turned the corner,
A As we turned the corner,
T onto the parade of shops, I saw it.
A onto the **pr-ide** pri-de (R- unsure if it makes sense?)
of shops, I saw it.
Pride

What is a statue?
You're right it doesn't move

The fire

(studies the picture and shakes head)

Sometimes

No
The fire alarm isn't on

What's this word?

PARADE parade of shops (gives explanation)
What do you think she (Lisa) saw?
Look at the picture. Can you see the fire?
Do you look at the pictures when you read?
You should also look at the pictures in the book. It helps you understand what is happening in the story. Do you think there is a fire?
What makes you think that

T I stopped running and we linked arms,
A I stopped running and we linked arms,
A Walking **slow-ly** (SO)towards it.
T And as we stood in front of it,
A And as we stood in front of it,
T Rajinder just turned to me and grinned.
A Rajinder just turned to me and **grin-ded**.(SO)

GRINNED. What does grinned mean?
What do you do if you don't know a word?

No reply

Try to spell it

T 'We did it, Lisa, we did it.'
A 'We did it, Lisa, we did it.'

T I grinned back proudly,
A I **grinn-ed** back proud-ly,
T and gazed at what used to be Mr Carter's newsagent's.
A and **gaz-ed** (R-SO) at what used to
be Mr Carter's newsagent's.

g-a-z -ed

*Look at this word
What are you thinking when you
read this word?
You are right when you
sound out the letters but it is
pronounced gazed. What does
gazed mean?*

Don't know

T The windows and door were boarded up
A The windows and door were //board-ed up
T and there was a 'PREMISES TO RENT' sign in the front.
A and there **were** a '**PROMISE (SO)TO**
RENT' sign in the front.

*Look at this word again
What is for rent?*

*Prem-is
The shop*

T We had worked hard to see that sign up there.
B We had worked hard to see that sign up there.
T We had worked all summer.
B We had worked all summer.
T I thought about how it had all begun-
B I **through** about how it had all begun-

*Do they get the shop..the newsagents
back?*

*What do you think happens?
We'll have to read on and find
out. Tell me about what happened
to the newsagents?
Who has it at the moment?
Can you explain more
Would they give it to them for free?*

*Somebody else wants it.
He wants to rent it to somebody..
Like borrow
No, pay for it*

Appendix 6b
Alan

The Analysis

<i>No</i>	<i>Miscue</i>	<i>Level of miscue</i>	<i>Source of miscue</i>	<i>Learner response</i>	<i>Teacher prompt</i>
1.	she (she'd)	graphophonic/ syntactic	construction causes difficulty	leaves	leaves
2.	clee (clear)	graphophonic	unknown word	leaves	leaves
3.	started (stared)	graphophonic	unknown word	leaves	leaves
4.	hearing		acceptable insertion given 'banging' in sentence	leaves	leaves
5.	desparated (desperately)	graphophonic	unknown word	leaves	leaves
6.	got		difficulty in the ellipsis	leaves	leaves
7.	I (you've)		difficulty with personal pronoun	leaves	leaves
8.	any (even)		predictable sentence structure	leaves	leaves
9.	practicely (practically)	graphophonic	unknown word	sounds out	draws attention to word
10.	keeped (kept)	graphophonic/ syntactic	anticipated past tense for keep		
11.	concentrate (concentrated)	graphophonic	unvoiced 'd'	sounds out	gives/ asks for meaning draws attention to word
12.	talk (tore)	graphophonic	unknown word		draws attention to word
13.	pride (parade)	graphophonic	unknown word		draws attention to word
14.	grinded (grinned)	graphophonic	unknown word		gives/ asks for meaning
15.	was (were)	graphophonic	expected verb tense		
16.	promise (premises)	graphophonic	unknown word	sounds out	draws attention to word
17.	through (thought)	graphophonic			draws attention

Appendix 6c

Name: Alan

Text: Li Bo

NO.	MISCUE		LEVEL OF MISCUE	SOURCE OF MISCUE	LEARNER	TEACHER
	Target	Result				
1.	條	根	semantically	T: character of similar meaning	----	corrects
2.	在	()	omission	T: unknown character	pause, no attempt	gives
3.	在	()	omission	T: unknown character	skip, no attempt	gives
4.	慢慢	望望	phonological	T: mix up with the character with the similar sound	---	correct
5.	告訴	()()	omission	T: unknown character	pause, no attempt	gives
6.	要	()	omission	T: unknown character	pause, no attempt	gives
7.	把	()	omission	T: unknown character	ask T	gives
8.	鐵棒	()()	omission	T: unknown character	pause, no attempt	gives
9.	磨成	()()	omission	T: unknown character	pause, no attempt	gives
10.	只要	()()	omission	T: unknown character	skip	gives
11.	恆	誠	graphophonic	T: mix up with the other character have similar meaning	---	corrects

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|---------|--------------|---|------------|----------|
| 12. | 便 | 有 | semantically | T: guess the character by the meaning of the sentence | ---- | corrects |
| 13. | 用功 | () () | omission | T: unknown character | no attempt | gives |

Appendix 7a Stephen

Text: *We are the Detectives* by Rita Ray (1996) (*Read On* Level 6 Book 2).
Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes

(T – text) (S – learner) (AH – Teacher)

After reading the passage silently first Stephen initiates the conversation

- S First I want to know what words that? (*pointing to 'detective' line 12*)
AH Tell me how you say the word?
S *dis-dis*
AH *de*
S *de-vite*
AH DETECTIVE (*teacher gives*), do you know what a detective is?
S His job is when the get the clues... when like Scooby-Doo
AH That's right Scooby-Doo is a detective programme. Did you find the story
easy or heard to read?
S Not difficult but not easy. Sometimes sore head when get that words
(*pointing to dectective*) in the reading books
AH What else were you thinking about when you first read the passage?
S About the women taken thing.....Cos sometimesthe boys maybe hit
yous until you getgive me money aye just hits the boys ... and take the
little boys monies and argue with teachers in my classroom ...one of them
(*boy's name*) he argues with teacher all the times is very bad.
(*conversation continues about the bullying episode*)

Interaction

- T The man and the woman went away in a police car.
S The man and the woman went away in a police car.
T A policewoman stayed at the supermarket.
S A policewoman //is (insertion) stayed at the supermarket.
T She talked to Vicky, Mark, Tom and Gran.
S She **taken** to Vicky, Mark, Tom and **Grand**.
T "Well done," said the policewoman.
S "Well done," said the policewoman.
T "How did you know they were taking things?"
S "How did you know they were taking things?"
T "We watched them," said Vicky.
S "We watched them," said Vicky.
T "The woman was putting things in her coat pockets," said Mark.
S "The woman was putting things in her coat **pockets**, (SO)" said Mark.
T "Look at this," said the policewoman.
S "Look at this," said the policewoman.
T She picked up the woman's coat.
S She **picks pick** pick-ed (SC) up the woman's coat.
T "See, she had made some very big pockets in her coat.

S “See, she had made some very big pockets in her **coats**.
T She hid the things in there.”
S She **hide** the things in there.” *What does that mean ‘she hid the things in here’?*
What means putsno *She put things in there didn’t shewhy do you think she was putting things in her big pockets?*

Er cosso she don’t need to pays any monies *She was stealing from the shop?*

Yes, but I think its very stupid *why?*
Because they put the camera where watch it...
watch every place anyones took the things (Discussion about shoplifting)

What happens if they get caught?
In the jail, maybe ten year or nine year (Discussion about shoplifting)

T “Your mum’s here,” said the supermarket detective to Vicky and Tom.
S “Your mum’s here,” said the supermarket **detective** to Vicky and Tom.
T “I rang her up. I know your mum. I see her at work.”
S “I rang her up. I know your mum. I see her at work.”
T Vicky’s mum came in.
S Vicky’s mum came in.
T “What have they been doing Sam?” she asked.
S “What have they been doing Sam?” she asked.
T “They’ve been helping me,” said Sam, the supermarket detective.
S “They’ve been helping me,” said Sam, the supermarket detective.
T “Mum, you know a detective,” said Tom.
S “Mum, you know a detective,” said Tom.
T The supermarket manager came in.
S The supermarket // **m-maga** came in. *Tell me what you are thinking when you look at this word*
I saw some monies *Look at it again*

I think its ‘man –a-ger’ *You’re right! Its ‘manager’. Tell me Stephen what did you do here. You put your finger on it. When you are reading this word here. How did you now it was ‘manager’?*

Becos I’m thinking about see what ‘man’ I’m just thinking about if ‘man’ should be another words. I just remembered the sounds because manager got ‘er’ on them

T "Thank you very much," he said.
S "Thank you very much," **said he (SC)**.
T "Here's a shopping trolley.
S "Here's a shopping // _____." *Tell me what you were thinking when you read this word here (trolley)*

Think about the first two words (pointing to the first two letters) and what is makes the sounds T R so make the sound t-r-a..... should be.... *What is the first two letters there? Why just the first two letters?*

So maybe help me because help me much about what words will be

T Go and fill it up.
S **Goed** and **fling** it up.
T You do not need to pay.
S You do not need to pay.
T You can have a video each, too."
S You can have a video each, too."
T "Thanks very much," said Vicky's mum.
S "Thanks very much," said Vicky's mum.
T "But you don't have to give us anything.
S "But you don't have to give us anything.
T The children like to do good turns for people."
S The **child** like to do good turns *What does 'to do a good turn for people' mean? (explains)*

It means ..I dunno

Appendix 7b Stephen

The Analysis

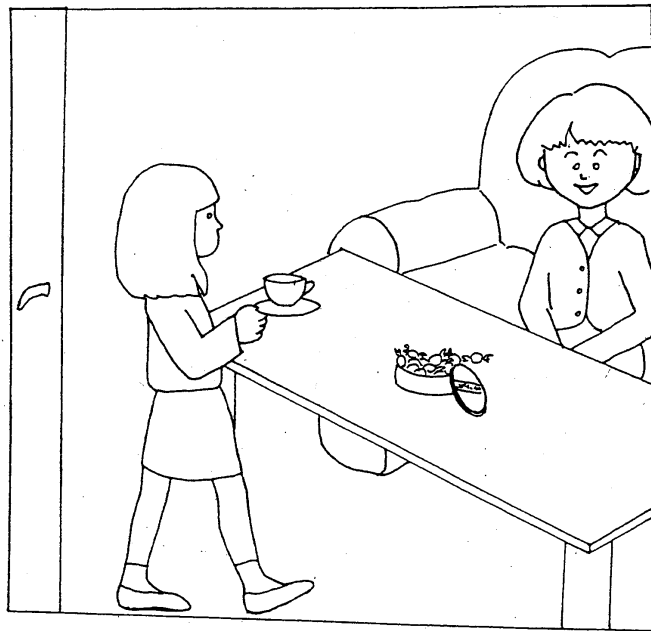
<i>No</i>	<i>Miscue</i>	<i>Level of miscue</i>	<i>Source of miscue</i>	<i>Learner response</i>	<i>Teacher prompt</i>
1.	is		unacceptable insertion	leaves	leaves
2.	taken (talked)	graphophonic/ syntactic		leaves	leaves
3.	grand (gran)	graphophonic		leaves	leaves
4.	coats (coat)	graphophonic	adds plural	leaves	leaves
5.	hide (hid)	graphophonic	expects present tense		gives correct model
6.	maga (manager)	graphic	unknown word		draws attention to word
7.	goed (go)	graphophonic/ syntactic	verb error past tense	leaves	leaves
8.	fling (filleven)	graphophonic	unknown word	leaves	leaves
9.	child (children)	graphophonic	singular/construction	leaves	draws attention to sentence

here (makes sense) (八) 客人來

客人來探婆婆，
 媽媽請她先坐下，
 我送上一杯茶，
 還請她吃糖果。

Annotations:
 - 客人: visitor
 - 來: come
 - 探: sub (that person)
 - 婆婆: grandmother [old women single]
 - 媽媽: mother
 - 請: say [mummy]
 - 她: she
 - 先: first
 - 坐: sit
 - 下: down
 - 我: I
 - 送: take
 - 上: up
 - 一: one
 - 杯: cup
 - 茶: tea
 - 還: still / again
 - 請: please
 - 她: she
 - 吃: eat
 - 糖: sugar
 - 果: fruit / sweet
 - 糖果: sweets (some means Ms. in formal)

pause and looked for support -
 Kayer supplied.
 repeated correctly.
 "can't remember that word"
 understands meaning when told know character when asked.
 她 didn't know character so said something instead "can't remember that word"
 guesses / pause when don't know character - looks for help -



叔叔 爺爺 姨媽 舅父

Appendix 8a

Name: Ying Yan

Text: Blind Men and the Elephant

NO.	MISCUE	LEVEL OF MISCUE	SOURCE OF MISCUE	LEARNER	TEACHER	Think aloud
1.	Target 傘	Result 扇	semantically	T: have similar meaning		--- corrects
2.	子	了	semantically	T: graphic similarity	---	corrects
3.	繩子 ()	---	T: unknown character	---	gives	
4.	壁 gives	壓 visual error	orthographic mix up with other character	T: unknown character and		pause, then guess
5.	腿	腳 visual error	semantically	T: look similar	---	corrects
6.	別	到 visual error	orthographic similar	T: part of the character look		--- corrects
7.	各	名 visual error	orthographic similar	T: part of the character look		--- corrects

Appendix 8b Ying Yan

TEXT: Louis Sacher (2004) 'Alone in his Teacher's House'. Marvin Redpost Readers Book 4, London: Bloomsbury

(T – text) (YY – learner) (AH – Teacher)

AH Tell me what you have been reading about so far

YY Its about a boy who have to baby sit an old dog ...and because his teachers is going away for one week and no ones looking after the dog...so he have to look for...after the dog for one week..and he get to pay..hes pay.. teachers pay him three pounds a day if he doing well might get four pound extra

AH Did you find out anything else?'

YY The boy call Marvin Redcross he been taking him...the dog for a walk

AH What are you thinking now?

YY We have no dog (laughs) My dad have a ..I dunno what it called...like hayfever

AH allergic to dogs

YY yeah
(discussion about allergies follows)

Interaction

(T – text) (YY – learner) (AH – Teacher)

T "I'll be your teacher for a week," she said

YY "I'll be your teacher for a week," she said

T "so let's all try to get off to a good start.

YY "**she les** all try to get off to a good start.

T That includes you, Marvin."

YY That **include** you, Marvin."

T Patsy Gatsby sneezed.

YY **Pastey Gates..Gates.by** sneezed. (*looks to teacher for reassurance*)

Pastey

*That part is pat (exposes with hand)
and then that part sy*

Patsy

I cover that part 'gats' and that part 'by'

What is this word here?

*What are you doing when
you are looking at that word?
So how do you say it?*

And the next word?

Yes Patsy Gatsby

T 'Bless you," said Miss Hillway.

YY 'Bless you," said Miss **Hill...Hillwave.**

(pause) Don't know...is it...

Get a tissue (both laugh)

*Why did Miss Hillway say 'Bless
you' when she sneezed?*

*If you sneeze does your Mum say
anything?*

YY 'Thank you," Patsy said shyly,

J 'Thank you," **Patsy say** shyly,

It's like you don't want to do that thing

T wiping her nose on her sleeve.

YY wiping her nose on her **sleeves.**

T Nick leaned back in his chair,

YY **Nicky** leaned **her** leaned back **on** ..in his chair,

T took a great big bredth

YY took a great big bredth

T then sneezed as loud as he could.

YY then **sneezes** as loud as he could.

*Let's look at this word again
Sneezed*

T Miss Hillway smiled at Nick.

YY Miss Hillway smiled at Nick.

T “Bless you,” she said.
YY “Bless you,” she said.

T Casey Happleton sat next to Marvin.

YY **Cas-y Happlechun ... Happlechun** sat next to Marvin. *Explain what is happening in your head when you look at that word?*
I split it up *Tell me how you split it up*
Hap-le-chun is that chun? ...ton *Yes, that's right Happleton*
Happleton
Shall I read on? *Yes*

T She had a ponytail that stuck out
YY She had a ponytail that stuck out

T of the side of her head. Not the back.

YY of the side of **his her (SC) hair.** *At the side of her..*
 Not the back.
Head

T Casey held her nose and said,
YY **Cissee** held her nose and said, *CASEY*
Casey

T ‘Ah-ah-ah-Choooo!’ Her sideways
YY ‘Ah-ah-ah-Choooo!’ Her sideways

T pony-tail bounced up and down.

YY pony-tail **bounces** up and down.

T Miss Hillway didn’t bless her.
YY **Mrs** Hillway didn’t bless her.

T Stuart sneezed. Travis sneezed.

YY **Surers sneez zed.** Travis **sneez-zed.** *Let’s look at that word again*
S T stu..art *Yes, Stuart. It’s a boy’s name.*

T Mrs Hillway didn’t smile

YY Mrs Hillway didn't smile

T I'm serious now,

YY I'm **s.s.series ser-i-ous** (SC) now,

T I don't want to hear another sneeze
, she warned

YY I don't want to hear another sneeze, *What are you thinking now?*
she warned

He might get more ill and maybes like get stuck

in there and you have to breath *What did you think of the passage?*

ok.....quite hard

T You never know when to quit

YY You never know when to quit

*What do you think this
means?*

Go out somewhere

(Explains)

Appendix 8c
Ying Yan

The Analysis

<i>No</i>	<i>Miscue</i>	<i>Level of miscue</i>	<i>Source of miscue</i>	<i>Learner response</i>	<i>Teacher prompt</i>
1.	she les (so let's)	graphophonic/syntactic	difficulty with constructions	leaves	leaves
2.	include (includes)	graphophonic	unvoices plural 's'	leaves	leaves
3.	pasteey (patsy)	graphophonic	reference to unknown name		draws attention to look at word
4.	gates (gatsby)	graphophonic	as above		as above
5.	hillwave (hillway)	graphophonic	as above	sounds out	as above
6.	say (said)	graphophonic	expects present tense	leaves	leaves
7.	sleeves (sleeve)	graphophonic	expects plural	leaves	leaves
8.	nicky (nick)	graphophonic	possibly known first name	leaves	leaves
9.	her		expected insertion given sentence	leaves	leaves
10.	on		as above	leaves	leaves
11.	sneezes (sneezed)	graphophonic/syntactic	as No 6		draws attention to word
12.	casy (casey)	graphophonic	as No 3	sounds out	
13.	Happlechun (Happleton)	graphophonic	as No 3	repeats	draws attention to word
14.	his (her)	graphophonic	mixes gender	self corrects	
15.	cissee (casey)	graphophonic	as No 3		gives
16.	bounces (bounced)	graphophonic/syntactic	as No 6	leaves	leaves
17.	Mrs (miss)	semantic	predictable form of address		leaves
18.	surers (stuart)	graphophonic	as No 3	sounds out	draws attention to word

Appendix 9a

Name: Chun Wah

Text: Shakespeare

NO.	MISCUE	LEVEL OF MISCUE	SOURCE OF MISCUE	LEARNER	TEACHER	
1.	Target 鄉村	Result ()	---	T: unknown character	pause, no attempt	gives
2.	講	聽	---	T: guess the character by the meaning of the sentence	---	corrects
3.	便	使	orthographic / visual error	T: mix up with other character suffix is the same	---	---
4.	鄰家	()子	---	T: unknown character and mix up with other character	pause, then guess	gives
5.	扮	分	orthographic / visual error	T: look similar	---	---
6.	演	黃	visual error	T: part of the character look similar	---	gives
7.	於	()	---	T: unknown character	ask T	gives
8.	貧	()	---	T: unknown character	pause, no attempt	gives

9.	他	也	orthographic / visual error	T: mix up with other character suffix is the same	---	corrects
10.	戲	()	---	T: unknown character	pause, ask T	gives
11.	裏	內	semantic error	T: substitute with other character that has similar meaning	---	corrects
12.	演戲	拍戲	semantic error	T: guess the character by the meaning of the sentence	---	corrects

Appendix 9b Chun Wah

Text: Ruth Symes (2004) 'The Twelfth Floor Kids'.
Literacy World: Essential Fiction Anthology Stage 1 Heinemann
(T – text) (CW – learner) (AH – Teacher)

AH Do you think this will be an interesting book?
CW Yes, I read at the back ..a surprise, get into trouble. What's this? (points to word burglar)
AH try to read it for me
CW ber-ger (sounds out)
AH BURLAR. Do you know what a burglar is?
CW (*shakes head*) *Given in Cantonese*
(Discussion about burglars)
AH I want you to read it to yourself, then tell me about it.

Reads passage silently

CW It's a house a big house one two twelve it talk about the children.
(means have twelve floors)

AH Would you like to live in a flat like the children?

CW No

AH Why not?

CW Upstairs noisy and downstairs noisy

Interaction

T Hi, my name's Amy.

CW Hi, my name **is** Amy.

T I live on the twelfth floor of Beechtree Flats

CW I live on the twelfth floor of Beechtree Flats

T with my mum and dad, my twin baby brothers,

CW with my mum and dad, my **twin** baby *Look at that word again.*
brothers,

Twin

What does twin mean?

That mean two. Two out the same time

T Nicky and James, and my big sister, Tina.

CW Nicky and James, and my big sister, Tina.

T This is my room. This is a poster of Red Fox.

CW This is my room. This is a poster of Red Fox.

T Hi, I'm Eddie.

CW Hi, I **am** E-del.

T I live in this flat with my mum and big sister, Jess.

CW I live in **that** flat with my mum and big **sisty, Jess**

T Mum and Jess work in Mum's shop in the High Street.

CW Mum and Jess work in Mum's shop in the High Street.

T Sometimes I start to make the dinner for when they get home.

CW Sometimes I start to make the dinner for when they get home.

T I've always lived in this flat.
 CW I always lived in this flat.
 T I like looking over the balcony and
 CW I like looking over the **be cony** and
 T seeing what's happening far down below.
 CW seeing **what** happening far down below. *Look at that again.*
I like looking over the...
Yes, balcony. Do you know what a
balcony is?
 (sounding out) *bal co ny*
 No *(refers to picture in the book)*
It's this bit outside from the door.
Tell me what you did when you
read this word?
I read this bit first 'bal' 'co' then 'ny' *ok let's read the next bit*

T Hello, I'm Seeta.
 CW Hello, I **am Seea.** *I am SEETA*
 Seeta

T I live here with my dad and mum and two older brothers.
 CW I live here with my dad and mum and two **(omission) brother brother.**

T This is my room.
 CW This is my room.
 T I like doing magic tricks and
 CW I like doing magic tricks and
 T when I grow up I'm going to be a magician.
 CW when I grow up I'm going to be a *Say this word again.*
magician. (SO) *Yes, magician. What's a magician?*
Tell me what you were thinking
when you read that word?
I didn't read the word I know.
I just did the hard one that be 'magic' and that 'ian'

T This is my jar of magic star paint.
 CW This is my jar of magic star paint.
 T I bought it at the art shop.
 CW I bought it at the art **sho-op.**
 T It's a special sort of paint that glitters when it dries.
 CW It's a special **short of pain the** gitters *Go back and start the sentence*
 when it **drier.** *again*
 (unclear) *Can you tell me what that sentence*
is about?
special mean very important and *(reads sentence)*
paint like ink
oh aye *Shall we read on?*

T Hi, my name's Dan.
 CW Hi, my name's Dan.
 T I live with mum and my cat, Jinny.
 CW I live with **my** mum and my cat, Jinny.
 T My dad lives over the other side of town and

CW My dad lives over the other side of town and
 T sometimes I go to see him at the weekend.
 CW sometimes I go to see him at the weekend.
 T I've had Jinny ever since she was a kitten.
 CW I've **(omission)** Jinny **over sigh** she was a **kitty**.
 T When I go to bed Jinny curls up and
 CW When I go to bed Jinny **curl** up **I**
 T goes to sleep at the end of my bed.
 CW **go** to sleep at the end of my bed. *tell me what you are thinking*
the cat *what are you thinking now*
Sometimes I need a picture if it hard.
Everytime he sleeping.. at the very end or maybe
he be easier go down like that *How do you think he got the cat?*
(imitates cat settling down)
I think he buy it in a pet shop *(Discussion about cats)*
or he found it

Appendix 9c
Chun Wah

The Analysis

<i>No</i>	<i>Miscue</i>	<i>Level of miscue</i>	<i>Source of miscue</i>	<i>Learner response</i>	<i>Teacher prompt</i>
1.	name is (name's)	graphophonic	difficulty with construction	leaves	leaves
2.	twel (turn)	graphophonic	unknown		draws attention to word
3.	I am (I'm)	graphophonic/syntactic	difficulty with construction	leaves	leaves
4.	that (this)	graphophonic	predicted structure	leaves	leaves
5.	sisty (sister)	graphophonic	difficulty with final	leaves	leaves
6.	I (I've)	graphophonic/syntactic	as No 3	leaves	leaves
7.	becony (balcony)	graphic	unknown word	sounds out	draws attention to word
8.	what (what's)	graphophonic/syntactic	as No 3		
9.	seea (seeta)	graphophonic	reference to unknown name		gives
10.	(older)		omission		
11.	brother (brothers)	graphophonic	unvoiced plural 's'	repeats error	
12.	short (sort)	graphophonic			suggests backtrack
13.	pain (paint)	graphophonic			as above
14.	the (that)	graphophonic			as above
15.	gitters (glitters)	graphophonic	possibly pronunciation 'e' sound		as above
16.	drier (dries)	graphophonic/syntactic	unvoiced plural 's'		as above
17.	my (-)			leaves	leaves
18.	- (had)		omission	leaves	leaves
19.	kitty (kitten)	graphophonic	colloquial style	leaves	leaves
20.	curl (curls)	graphophonic/syntactic	omits third person	leaves	leaves
21.	go (goes)	graphophonic/syntactic	as above	leaves	leaves

Appendix 10a

Name: Kit Wai

Text: Weighing the Elephant

NO.	MISCUE		LEVEL OF MISCUE	SOURCE OF MISCUE	LEARNER	TEACHER
	Target	Result				
1.	冲	中	orthographic / visual error	T: look similar	attempt to read	----
2.	稱	稱(清)	semantically/ phonological	T: mix up sound with a word look the same but mean and sound differently	attempt to read	----
3.	砍	很	phonological	T: mix up sound with other character	attempt to read	----
4.	棵	科	phonological	T: mix up sound with other character	attempt to read	----
5.	秤	平	orthographic/ visual error	T: look similar	attempt to read	----

6.	舷	玄	orthographic/ visual error	T: part of the character look similar	attempt to read	----
7.	去	()	omission	T: skip a known character	---	-----

Appendix 10b Kit Wai

Text: Jirik and the speaking animals (1995) Collins Educational
(T – text) (KW – learner) (AH – Teacher)

- AH What was the first thing you thought of when you read the passage?
 KW The king was stupid
 AH Why was he stupid
 KW because he believed the old women
 AH Did anything about the reading make it hard for you?
 KS No
 AH What happens if you don't know a word?
 KW The teacher lets us think for a little bit but if we don't really know the teacher will say the word
 AH Tell me what happened in the story
 KW There was an old women she wanted to see the king and the king was greedy and feeling naughty and bored and the old women had a gift for the king....a magical snake. She said when you cooked it and ate it you will understand animal language

The interaction

- T It was a strange a stormy day when the old women
 KW It was a strange a stormy day when the old women
 T came to the castle of the king
 KW came to the castle of the king
 T In her wrinkled hand she
 KW In her wrinkled hand she
 T Carried a basket with a lid.
 KW Carried a basket with a lid.
 T She was led up the long corridors
 KW She was led up the long corridors
 T And into the stately room where the king held court.
 KW And into the stately room where the king held court.
 T The king was sitting on his throne feeling grumpy and
 KW The king was sitting on his throne *Why do you think he was feeling grumpy?*
 feeling **quite** grumpy and
 Because of he storm *ok read on*
 T The last thing he wanted to do was talk to some old women.
 KW The last thing he wanted to do was talk to some old women.
 T 'Your majesty.' She whispered
 KW 'Your majesty.' **he** whispered
 T 'I have a gift for you. A most magical gift!'
 KW 'I have a gift for you. A most magical gift!'
 T the king was interested.
 KW the king was interested.
 T 'And what might that be?' he asked pompously.
 KW 'And what might **it** be?' he asked *Look at the word again*
 Pomp-ous-ly *What were you thinking when you*

tried to read this word?

*I see the vowels. Sometimes break it up
Just 'pomp' and then the other bit*

T 'A snake. A most magical snake!

KW 'A snake. A most magical snake!

T When you have cooked and eaten it, you will discover the

KW When you have cooked and **ate** it, you will discover the

T most marvellous powers and you will be able to understand all the animals.'

KW most marvellous powers and you will be able to understand all the animals.'

T She smiled an oily smile.

KW She smiled an oily smile.

What does an oily smile mean?

A little bit freaky or scary

T The king was impressed.

KW The king was impressed.

T And because he was quite stupid and greedy,

KW And because he was quite stupid and greedy,

T He did not even wonder why this old

KW He did not even wonder why this old

T women wished him such a gift.

KW women wished **to give** him such a gift.

T He found a cheap coin in his pocket

KW He found a cheap coin in his pocket

T And dropped it in the women's hand.

KW And dropped it in the women's hand.

T She gave a creaky bow,

KW She gave a **cricky bow**, (P) as in bow-tie

T Put the basket on he floor

KW Put the basket on he floor

T And shuffled out of the room.

KW And shuffled out of the room.

What are you thinking now?

*You shuffle the cards and the cards are (discussion about 'shuffled')
sliding*

T The king was excited.

KW The king was excited.

T He pressed a bell and summoned his servant, Jirik.

KW He pressed a bell and summoned his servant, Jirik.

T Jirik came running.

KW Jirik came running.

T He was a handsome young man, and eager to please.

KW He was a handsome young man, and *Look at that word again*

anger to please.

Eager

What does that mean?

Try hard

What are you thinking when you

do

this?

When I did it wrong sometimes or if I don't know this one

I will start here again (pointing at beginning of sentence)

T 'Jirik! I have a fish and I want you to cook it for me.

KW 'Jirik! I have a fish and I want you to cook it for me.

T But,' the king wagged his crooked finger,
KW But,' the king **waggled** his crooked finger,
T 'you must not taste even the tiniest bit.'
KW 'you must not taste even the tiniest bit.'
T The king dismissed Jirik.
KW The king dismissed Jirik.

Appendix 10c Kit Wai

The Analysis

<i>No.</i>	<i>Miscue</i>	<i>Level of miscue</i>	<i>Source of miscue</i>	<i>Learner response</i>	<i>Teacher prompt</i>
1.	quite		predictable insertion given sentence	leaves	gives correct model as a sentence
2.	he (she)	graphophonic	mixes personal pronoun	leaves	leaves
3.	it (that)		predictable sentence structure	leaves	leaves
4.	postfully (pompously)	graphophonic	unknown word		discusses strategy
5.	ate (eaten)	syntactic	predictable verb structure	leaves	leaves
6.	to give		predictable insertion given sentence	leaves	leaves
7.	cricky (creaky)	graphophonic	unknown word	leaves	leaves
8.	anger (eager)	graphophonic	unknown word	leaves	leaves
9.	waggled (wagged)	graphophonic/syntactic	predictable verb structure	leaves	leaves – syntactically acceptable