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CASE STUDY OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S BILINGUAL LITERACY (MANDARIN AND ENGLISH) PRACTICES AT HOME, AT SCHOOL, AND IN A COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOL IN SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO CANADA

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CASE STUDY OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S BILINGUAL

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SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO CANADA

(Spine title: Case Study of Chinese Immigrant Children's Biliteracy Events)

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by

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ABSTRACT

The demographic context of Canada, a multicultural and multilingual country, provides an exciting research site for the investigation of immigrant children's bilingual literacy practices. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2006, the People's Republic of China has been the top source country of immigrants to Canada, and Mandarin has been reported as the top minority language since 1998. It is worthwhile to explore the bilingual literacy practices of young Chinese immigrant children in Ontario, where fifty percent of immigrants have chosen to settle.

This research project consisted of a qualitative case study. Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were employed as the main tools of data collection. Family visits were made, and artwork and documents were also collected as supplementary sources of data. Interpretational and domain analysis methods were used to analyze the data (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; Wolcott, 1994).

Findings of the study indicate that there is a complementary learning community, including a formal public school education, supportive community language school and home literacy environments facilitating the five participating children's bilingual literacy development. The public school culture, parents' perceptions and support of their children's bilingual literacy development, as well as the community Chinese language school have all influenced the five participating children's biliteracy development. Based on the findings, this study makes suggestions for teachers, parents and curriculum designers. Public schools should create democratic school cultures where minority

children's culture and first languages are valued and embraced. Teachers should apply

effective literacy instruction to help minority children's bilingual literacy development in

an authentic literacy environment. Curriculum designers should pay attention to English

language learners' cultural backgrounds and meet diverse teachers' and children's needs.

Key words: bilingual literacy development (Mandarin and English), Chinese immigrant

children, literacy environment, literacy instruction.

DEDICATION

To my beloved husband, parents and parents-in-law: Zhang Yupeng, Du Chunwei, Xiao Fenglan, Zhang Xuemin and Bao Caixia

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Finally, I would like to thank all the participants in the study as well as the principals in the two participating schools. Without your permission, cooperation and support, I could not complete this study. I thank all five participating Chinese families who provided an excellent opportunity for me to learn more about Chinese immigrant children's bilingual literacy practices at home. I thank all three participating teachers who helped me learn more about literacy instruction in diverse Canadian classrooms.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This qualitative case study was conducted in a multicultural and multilingual community located in a mid-sized city in southwestern Ontario, Canada, between September and December 2007. I investigated the pedagogical practices and literacy events of five Chinese immigrant children in three domains; namely, at their homes, their public school and their community Chinese school. The study involved two primary classroom teachers at one public school, one Chinese teacher at the community Chinese school and five Chinese immigrant families. This research aims to shed light on current literacy practices in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom as well as on Chinese immigrant families' attempts at first language maintenance. I hope the study can contribute to researchers' and educators' further understandings of minority language children's, especially Chinese immigrant children's English literacy development and first language maintenance in an environment in which English is the dominant language.

1.1 Background of the Study

Canada is a multicultural and multilingual country, with a high influx of immigrants. "Two-thirds of Canada's population growth was attributable to net international migration" (Statistics Canada, 2006). According to the Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2006 Immigration Overview, the People's Republic of China has been the main source country of immigrants to Canada since 1998. In 2006, there were 33,080 Chinese immigrants, which accounted for 13.2% of the total immigrant population. There were 28,050 (11.2%) new immigrants from the People's Republic of China speaking Mandarin

as their mother tongue. Mandarin has been reported as the largest minority language since 1998 (See Appendix A). In light of this situation, it is vitally important for educators and researchers to further understand and study Chinese children's bilingual literacy development in Canada.

Furthermore, despite the fact that large numbers of Chinese students are entering Canadian schools, language policies and research still put great emphasis on the two official languages: French and English. In the North American education research field, more focus has been put on Spanish-English bilingual programs in the U.S. and French-English immersion programs in Canada. There is less research devoted to Chinese-English bilingual and bicultural understanding. Last but not least, there are many research studies concerning minority languages, language shift or language loss (Ricento, 2006, p.238-311). However, less attention has been paid to the Chinese language and the situation of Chinese immigrants in North America (Li, 2001, 2003, 2006; Lao, 2004).

Therefore, I propose to explore the bilingual literacy environments of young Chinese children, describe different literacy practices at home and school, explore some factors that could contribute to Chinese children's bilingual literacy development, and understand more about language choice, language shift or loss and language maintenance.

1.2 The Research Questions

In this study, I seek to understand how young Chinese immigrant children develop biliteracy at home and school. With reference to educational research literature, I explore the major question: **What literacy practices do young Chinese immigrant children**

engage in at their homes, in their public school, and in their community Chinese

school? Sub-questions include: For primary grade Chinese immigrant children

studying in southwestern Ontario, what are some similarities and differences among

the observed language and literacy practices in the three domains: home,

community school and public school? What are the perceptions of the participating

children's parents about English-only schooling and the possibilities of their

children losing their first language?

In order to answer these research questions, I conducted a qualitative case study

which allowed me to situate myself in the research context, have an empirical inquiry into

Chinese immigrant children's opportunities for biliteracy practices in the context of a

multilingual and multicultural community, depict in detail and depth the bilingual literacy

practices in the three domains, and reflect participants' perspectives (Stake, 2000; Yin,

2003; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; Merriam, 1988; Cohen, et al.; 2000). There were four

instruments employed to collect data, including the two main tools of classroom

observations and semi-structured interviews, and the two supplementary tools of

document and artwork collections and analysis. All data were analyzed in a critical and

comparative way using interpretational analysis and domain analysis approaches to

further understand the phenomenon of the bilingual literacy practices of Chinese

immigrant children in three domains (Tesch, 1990; Wolcott, 1994). There were three

teacher participants in two participating schools and five Chinese immigrant children

from five Chinese immigrant families.

1.3 Significance of the Study

As an English as a Second Language (ESL) learner with a Chinese cultural background in Canada, I am very interested in the literacy learning opportunities of young Chinese immigrant children in this predominantly English speaking environment. I conducted this study of the bilingual literacy (Mandarin and English) learning opportunities and events of Chinese immigrant children based on a review of pertinent literature, and explored, with Chinese parents and children as well as with teachers, the ways in which their practices support current recommendations for Chinese-English biliteracy learning.

The purpose of this study is to give a rich and thick description of Chinese children's bilingual literacy learning experiences at school and home and better understand their bilingual literacy practices in an English-speaking society. I hope this study will help people have a better understanding of Chinese immigrants' backgrounds, especially children's Mandarin learning experiences and the influence of Chinese culture on literacy instruction. I also hope this study will facilitate teachers' literacy instruction planning and practices in multicultural and multilingual classrooms, and will encourage Chinese immigrants, especially parents, to make a commitment to support their children's mother tongue and maintain their Chinese culture.

This study will contribute to the practical understandings of biliteracy pedagogies for Chinese immigrant children. First, I hope the study will facilitate educators' understandings of Chinese immigrant children's home culture, home literacy practices,

and help them to recognize the value of home literacy practices.

Second, studying the literacy learning environments of young immigrant children may help educators to better understand minority students' literacy development background, process and challenges. My study will also support native English speaking teachers in instructional decision-making. Research indicates (Li, 2006a) that most teachers teach in the way that they were taught. If teachers understand more about Chinese families' home culture and literacy practices, they could design programs to meet Chinese children's needs in the area of biliteracy development.

Third, this study, in the social context, would help educators to better understand the minority cultures and languages, especially of Chinese immigrant children, as well as urge language policy makers to take minority languages into consideration in further policy design in order to achieve social equity. The Ontario primary grade language arts and ESL curriculum documents do not address the specific needs of immigrant children from the People's Republic of China. My study will contribute to policy makers' understanding of the specific needs of Chinese minority language children by adding to the knowledge base of this topic.

Fourth, this study, from a theoretical standpoint, will contribute to deeper understandings of English-Chinese bilingual literacy development and minority home literacy practices. In Canada, most research on bilingual education focuses on first language followed by a second language immersion program. My study adds to a small but growing body of research concerning North American Chinese children's bilingual

literacy development.

Fifth, taking a socio-cultural perspective can facilitate understandings of ESL learners' home literacy background. As Pahl & Rowsell (2006) state, literacy is social practice infused with cultural traditions within a historical situation (p.9).The social and cultural perspective may also help to explain why and how certain Chinese immigrant families give up or promote bilingual literacy at home.

Sixth, I hope this study will contribute to Chinese and English bilingualism research, encourage classroom teachers in the formal education system to validate and value minority children's home culture and first language maintenance and development, as well as urge Chinese parents to make efforts to facilitate their children's bilingual literacy development.

1.4 Limitations

One limitation of this study lies in the time constraint. The data collection process was four months long, which may not have been a long enough time frame to produce a complete picture of the whole process of children's bilingual literacy development. It takes a long time to develop in-depth and detailed understandings or a complete picture of children's bilingual literacy development in different literacy environments. For this reason, this study focused on a "snapshot" of the bilingual literacy practices of five Chinese immigrant children in three literacy domains, in a primary public school, a community language school and in the five participating children's homes.

Another limitation concerns generalizability. The results of the data analysis of this

study cannot represent all young Chinese immigrant children's bilingual literacy development in Canada, since the particularity of the research site, a unique multicultural and multilingual learning community including the public school, community Chinese school and Chinese homes; and the small number of purposefully chosen participants could not represent the large population of immigrant students living in Canada. But this study can still help researchers to better understand Chinese immigrant children's bilingual literacy development in similar contexts. Readers can assess for themselves the extent to which the findings are relevant and transferable to their own situations.

1.5 Overview of the Study

In total, there are five chapters in this research report. In Chapter One, I have provided the background and context of the present research, proposed the research questions, addressed the significance of this study, and finally stated its limitations. In Chapter Two, I first introduce the definition of literacy and biliteracy, and then review the literature on different literacy learning environments including home and school literacy environments with an aim to provide a theoretical foundation for the study. In Chapter Three, I explain the rationale for the research methodology, describe the case study context and the profile of the research sites, present the methods of data collection and analysis, and finally, discuss the potential limitations of this methodology. In Chapter Four, I first describe all the participants in detail, and then present the findings of this study in the form of emerging themes according to the research questions. In Chapter Five, I discuss these findings in the light of pertinent literature review, provide

suggestions for literacy instructors, policy-makers, curriculum-designers and Chinese

parents, and make suggestions for future study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

My study focuses on the literacy learning environments of young Chinese immigrant children in southwestern Ontario Canada using a qualitative case study methodology and examining the data through a socio-cultural lens.

This chapter includes a review of literature on: the history of literacy definitions across linguistic groups; the relationship between oral language and literacy; mainstream ideas about how children are expected to learn to read and write and how teachers organize their literacy programs. I also examine research about the ways in which home and school environments can interactively support literacy learning for bilingual and multilingual children.

2.1 Literacy and Language

2.1.1 The Meaning of Literacy

The meaning of literacy has changed over the years. Literacy expert Andrea Butler (cited in Bainbridge, Heydon, & Malicky, 2008, p.6) maintains the meaning of being literate in Western countries has been changed greatly throughout history:

In the 1700s, people who could sign their name were considered literate. One hundred years later, you had to be able to sign your name and read a prepared passage (usually from the bible). 1915 saw the advent of the literacy test, with the United States army creating what might possibly be one of the first ones. It consisted of a short reading passage and then a list of literal comprehension questions. Gradually society began to demand increasing literacy skills of people just so that

they could get by in their day-to-day lives (e.g., reading appliance directions, workplace manuals, and completing income tax forms). In contemporary society, the literacy demands that are placed on people are greater than ever before and these demands require *all* of the language arts.

Olson (1996) also described a picture of changing meaning of literacy and listed six meanings or assumptions that have been debated among current scholars:

First, writing is the transcription of speech. Second, the superiority of writing to speech. Third, the technological superiority of the alphabetic writing system. Fourth, literacy as the organ of social progress. Fifth, literacy as an instrument of cultural and scientific development. Sixth, literacy as in instrument of cognitive development. (p.3-7)

The first meaning points out past ideas on the relationship between oral language and written language. Writing was simply viewed as a "transcription" of the oral language. As Olson (1996) explains "since readers are already speakers, learning how to read comes to be seen as a matter of learning how one's oral language (the known) is represented by visible marks (the unknown)" (p.3). The second meaning is also concerned with the position of writing and speaking. However, in this case, writing is regarded as being precise and powerful while speech is considered as "loose and unruly" (Olson, 1996, p.3). Olson (1996) goes on to contend that "one learns to write, in part, as a means of learning to express oneself correctly and precisely in one's oral speech " (p.4). The third meaning points out the glory of alphabet invented by Greek during a cultural revolution. The

alphabet was thought of as "the progressive achievement of more and more precise visible means for representing sound patterns, and phonology of the language" (Olson, 1996, p.4).

The fourth meaning provides insights into the significance of literacy in social development. Literacy that contributed to "rational, democratic social institutions as well as industrial development and economic growth" and if there was a decline of literacy, there would be a decline in the every aspect of development of democratic society (Olson, 1996, p.5). Literacy was thus regarded as the power for every perspective of positive development and progress in society. The fifth meaning offers up the idea that it is writing and literacy that gives rise to "distinctive modern modes of thought such as philosophy, science, justice and medicine, conversely, that literacy is the enemy of superstition, myth and magic" (Olson, 1996, p.6). This meaning of literacy gives a new orientation to language, mind or thoughts and "changes the technology of communication" (Olson, 1996, p.7). Implicit in the last meaning is that literacy helps a person to learn knowledge and abstract thoughts, in other words, "literacy skills provide the route of access to that (genuine) knowledge" (Olson, 1996, p.7).

Literacy is neither just about learning to read and write, nor is it a set of technical skills. Literacy is immersed in the cultural context as Olson (1996) argues:

Literacy in Western cultures is not just learning the ABCs; it is learning to use the resources of writing for a culturally defined set of tasks and procedures. Literacy is not just a basic set of mental skills isolated from everything else. It is the competence

to exploit a particular set of cultural resources. It is the evolution of those resources

in conjunction with the knowledge and skill to exploit those resources for particular

purposes that makes up literacy. We require a richer more diversified notion of

literacy. (p.43)

Perez (1993) states that "until recently, the term 'literacy' was best defined within the

dichotomy of literacy-illiteracy, that is, by its negative connotation for 'illiteracy.' In this

context, literacy was perceived, by many, as a rather simple notion, referring to the ability

to read and write" (p.118). That is, the definition of literacy has been closely related to a

function that emphasizes how people use literacy to achieve communication or other

goals in different contexts using print media.

The purpose of literacy can be applied to learning, working, and pleasure. People

come from diverse social, cultural, historical and linguistic backgrounds and have diverse

understandings of the meanings and uses of literacy. In Chinese schools, teachers place

emphasis on print literacy, at home some families also pay attention to print literacy and

oral communication while others may not. Baker (2006) identifies a number of

pedagogies for language learning. These include the skills approach, that is, emphasis on

the ability to read and write; the construction of meaning approach, that is, reading and

writing is to construct and reconstruct meanings; the socio-cultural literacy approach that

emphasizes the social nature of literacy which means reading and writing is related to

social activities; and the critical approach which criticizes the ways that literacy is used

by the dominant group of people to maintain social and political power and encourages

people to view literacy from different perspectives (p.319-345).

Perez (1993) further provides a definition of functional literacy and suggests that "literacy must necessarily vary from context to context and group to group. Literacy is a technology or a tool that is culturally determined" (p.118). People may choose different registers or notions or forms of literacy or language in different contexts such as at the work place and at home. People from different cultural backgrounds may express the same event or subject differently even though they all express it in English. In addition, even in academic organizations such as colleges and universities, people can still notice the differences of language choice between professors in a Science and an Arts department. People may find that some professors in the Chemistry or Physics department like to speak directly while some professors in the English department will give information in a literary way, for example, by telling a story.

For the purpose of my study on the literacy practices of young Chinese immigrant children in southwestern Canada, I argue that literacy is not only about learning to read and write but also closely related to social and cultural practices or traditions (Perez, 1993, p.118).

2.1.2 New Literacy Studies: the socio-cultural perspective

Some researchers view literacy from a socio-cultural perspective. Harding-Esch & Riley (2003) state that "Language is a social phenomenon and language learning is therefore a social activity. There are many aspects of language use which can only be learned in direct, face-to-face interaction with a wide variety of partners." (p.21). As

Perez (1993) says "the use of the term literacy has come to reflect a more unified holistic view of reading, writing, thinking, and problem solving situated in social and intellectual contexts" (p.118). Li (2006a) argues that "Literacy is a socio-cultural discourse" (p.18). Literacy is not just about learning to read and write, but is embedded within culture and society. Li (2006a) adds to these thoughts by stating that "Literacy learning and teaching as a dynamic process is also highly political" (p.20). The process of literacy learning and teaching as well as schooling can cause some tensions and dissensions in the contexts of home, community, school and society. Gee (1992) proposes to view literacy from the socio-cultural perspective and contended that "literacy is inherently plural (literacies) and that writing, reading, and language is always embedded in and inextricable from discourse (social practices, culture, subcultures, or whatever analogous term is used)" (p.32).

Neither literacy nor language are exclusively explained as individual psychological processes. Literacy reflects and is embedded in culture and social practices. Vygotsky (1978) theorized that interactive communication between children and teachers or parents was at the center of education, and "the focus of learning was the use of cultural tools, that is, literacy, mathematics, and so forth" (Cited in Perez, 1993, p.119). Literacy and culture are closely related. From a Vygotskian perspective, literacy is practiced in a variety of social and cultural events that represent and take place in various forms in different contexts, and they vary from society to society, community to community, group to group and from individual to individual.

Scribner and Cole (1981) point out that "literacy is not simply learning how to read and write a particular script, but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts for use" (p.236). Students from different cultural backgrounds may apply and interpret literacy differently and in ways that may clearly reflect their cultural values. Pahl & Rowsell (2006) state that "literacy is a social event and a set of global and local practices" (p.8). Literacy is not just a set of reading and writing skills, but is associated with cultural and social practices. Literacy is also practiced in communities that reflect not only school values but students' cultural backgrounds, belief systems, languages, and community values (p. 5). It is important for educators to connect school literacy with home literacy. Encouraging students to bring their home literacy's texts to class and share them with others is one example of a practice that connects home to school.

2.1.3 Major Differences between English and Chinese

Various studies have explored differences between English and Chinese in reading and writing systems. English is an alphabetic writing system while Chinese is a logographic language. As Li (2006b) state, this distinct feature of Chinese led to some differences in writing and how reading works. "For the Chinese children to develop biliteracy, they need to master the language-specific orthographic skills in learning to read and write in two languages in addition to spoken forms of the languages" (p.377). Anderson, Li, Nagy & Zhang (2002) conduct an ethnographic study on the metalinguistic awareness of Chinese literacy, mainly focusing on reading proficiency in the perspectives of vocabulary, syntactic understanding, and sentence and passage reading comprehension.

In their study, they are concerned with two broad facets of metalinguistic awareness: phonological awareness and morphological awareness. They state that "phonological awareness in Chinese consists of the knowledge of onset, final, syllables and tones' (p.89), and "morphological awareness in Chinese consists of three facets: "morpheme awareness, homograph awareness and radical awareness" (p. 90). After analyzing statistics of the study, they found that while both phonological awareness and morphological awareness are important in reading proficiency, morphological awareness is more important (p. 105). In another study of phonological awareness in Chinese reading, Taylor (2002) finds that in reading and writing, phonological awareness is more important in English than Chinese, and "visual skills are more important in Chinese than in English" (p. 56). Buckwalter & Lo (2002) give a detailed description of writing development in English and Chinese. They pointed out that, children generally go through five stages of learning to write in English: "scribble writing, the pre-phonemic stage, the early phonemic stage, letter-name stage and the transitional stage. They go on to contend preschool children have four stages to learn to write in Chinese: "scribbles/unidentifiable features, linearity (use of vertical and horizontal strokes), and constricted size, presence of discrete symbol units and correct writing" (p.288-289).

All these studies imply that there are important differences between English and Chinese reading and writing that have implications for early literacy teaching. It is much more difficult for young children to learn to write Chinese characters because there are so many vertical and horizontal stokes, and different Chinese characters have different

structures. In summary, Chinese has an orthographic system that makes it difficult for young children to learn, however children can learn to write Chinese with morphological awareness that helps them to make a logical connection among Chinese characters, meanings and pronunciations.

2.1.4 The Model of Balanced Literacy

Bainbridge, Heydon, & Malicky (2008) present a graphic image of a balanced literacy framework for the 21st century (see Figure 1). The authors base their framework on the idea that "literacy is at base about communication and identity—it is a social undertaking" (p.47). This can be deduced to mean literacy teaching and learning need to take into account the social context. Teachers need to take their students' social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as their grade levels into consideration, when they design their teaching plan and conduct literacy instruction. They also contend that literacy learning and teaching is a gradual process that takes time, or "developmental process" (p.47). The concept of *balance* includes "teachers knowing and beginning with individual students and considering the contexts in which they are teaching" (p.49).In addition, they provide some questions for teachers to further understand the meaning of *balance* in teaching language arts. The questions include:

- Where should I begin my teaching? Should I start with the "parts" of language or "whole" pieces of languages? For instance, when I'm teaching writing, do I let the children just go to it or do I start with grammar? When I'm teaching reading, do I focus on phonics first and then go on to reading a whole book for meaning?

- Upon which of the language arts should I focus?

- There's so much research out there and it doesn't all say the same thing. Who do I believe?

- How do I decide when and how to group students for instruction?

- There are a lot of pre-packaged programs available. Do I use them and how?

- How much teaching from the front of the class or "explicit" instruction should I do compared to centre time or implicit instruction? (Bainbridge, et al., 2008, p.48)

These questions stimulate ideas for teachers prior to teaching and building a class that is inclusive to literacy and a language learning environment where students' needs, teaching materials, and teaching methods are considered.

It is impossible for a teacher to orchestrate all of the following literacy activities or instructional components in a short period of time. Teachers need to take their students' developmental needs and their own context seriously and create their appropriate teaching instructional tools that fit their situation and facilitate their students' literacy and language development.

Figure 1: Balanced Language & Literacy Framework for the 21st Century

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Balanced Literacy:
Immersing children in the language arts

Students need to be   in all language arts
(i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing,
representing)   and genres (e.g., narrative, poetry,
blogs, video games), across   the curriculum through
a variety of *interactive language experiences* (e.g.,
literacy and play centres, drama).

Instructional Decisions
Teachers must balance:
- The 6 dimensions of language arts
- A variety of genres and texts
- Degrees of teacher support
- Student groupings
- Explicit and implicit instruction
- Language and literacy instruction across the curriculum

Assessment
- On going
- Focused   on improvement
- Feeds into instruction
- Provides feedback to students (response)

Instructional Components

Higher teacher support   Lower teacher support

Demonstration   Use

Interactive Read Aloud Shared Reading	Guided Reading Independent Reading
Interactive Write Aloud Shared Writing	Guided Writing Independent Writing
Mini-Lessons	Reader Response Activities
(conventional language use, word study)	Explorations

2.1.5 The Meaning of Biliteracy

Moll, Saez & Dworin (2001) point out that there are, primarily three types of

biliteracy studies. Firstly, there are quasi-experimental studies such as Geva,

Wade-Wooley, & Shany, 1997 in which monolingual or bilinguals perform certain tasks

on reading and writing. Secondly, there are studies such as Jimenez, Garcia, &Pearson

1995, 1996, and Calero-Breckheimer & Goetz, 1993 emphasizing process, usually

isolating reading and writing for analysis within a case study format. Thirdly, there are

studies such as Hornberger, 1992 and Howard & Christian, 1997 focusing on biliteracy

analysis in social contexts like homes or classrooms (p.437-438). My study, a qualitative

case study, focuses on young immigrant children's biliteracy practices in school and

home contexts, belongs to the third set.

Perez (1993) points out that there was a shift in the study of learning in bilingual

programs or in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms. The foci of studies have

changed from an interest in the general influence or results of educational programs to an

examination of children's literacy development within classrooms and identification of

students' learning strategies through interviews and observations (p.122). Miramontes

(1990) using reading analysis finds that generally speaking, observed students (in the

study) develop elaborate copying strategies for literacy and schooling experience.

Learning to write in Chinese involves a lot of repetition or copying Chinese characters.

Whether young Chinese immigrant children have developed good strategies of copying is

still under study. O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanners, Kupper, & Russo (1985) find

that older students can use meta-cognitive strategies (such as planning language use),

cognitive strategies (such as analysis and transformation), and socio-affective strategies

(such as social interaction) (p.123). Whether these three categories of learning strategies can be developed and used by younger children is still under investigation.

A body of literature argues that minority children should have the right to learn in their first languages. Baker (2000) states that

Since literacy emancipates, enculturates, educates and is inherently enjoyable, there

seems to be a strong argument for biliteracy. Pragmatically, most minority language

students need to function in both the minority and majority language societies.

Biliteracy is required, not literacy only in the majority language. (p. 117)

From Baker's perspective, minority children need to learn their first languages. Moreover, learning two languages involves learning, experiencing and embracing two cultures and this will emancipate them. Recently, Hornberger (1990) describes biliteracy as "any and all instances in which communication occurs in two or more languages in or around writing" (p.213).

According to Garcia, Bartlett & Kleifgen (2006), most schools view biliteracy as literacy skills in one or two languages but biliteracy is not simply about learning to write and read at school (p.3). Biliteracy is defined by early scholars such as Goodman & Flores (1979) and Fishman (1980) as "mastery of reading and writing in two languages". Later, Reyes (2001) extends the meaning of biliteracy to include the mastery of speaking. Bertha and Torres-Guzman (1996) give a broad definition of biliteracy as "the acquisition and learning of the decoding and encoding of and around the print using two linguistic and cultural systems in order to convey messages in a variety of contexts" (p.54).

As is the concept of literacy, biliteracy is complex and changes over time. Biliteracy as discussed in this paper refers to the communicative use of two languages in reading, writing, speaking and listening in different contexts. Biliteracy can be print literacy or multimodal literacy including writing and reading online.

2.2 Different Literacy Environments

A variety of studies have discussed factors that contribute to children's literacy development and have found that parents' and children's attitude and literacy instruction at school and at home are important.

2.2.1 Home Literacy Environment

Many researchers have studied the influence of the home literacy environment on children's literacy development. Harding-Esch & Riley (2003) provide a handbook for parents in a bilingual family and find that there are several factors that will affect parents' decision whether to bring up children as bilinguals. They present the following questions:

1. What is your language background and history?

2. What language(s) do you speak to one another?

3. How do you use your respective languages?

4. Who is going to look after your child?

5. What are your attitudes towards your own language?

6. What contacts do you have with the rest of the family?

7. What are the languages concerned?

8. What means of support are available for maintaining the language?

9. What would you have to do to change the way you communicate with one

another? (p.77-86)

The first question is concerned with whether parents are bilingual themselves and if

so, there is the increased likelihood that their children will be brought up as bilinguals.

The second question asks about language(s) parents speak with each other. If there is only

one language used in daily communication, children have more chances to learn this

language; while if two languages are used in the home environment, it is more likely that

children will become balanced bilinguals (Li, 2006a). The third question pertains to ways

that parents use their respective languages. If parents tend to use a certain language in the

private domain and the other language in the public domain, then children do likewise.

The fourth question is concerned with the childcare provider. Since the person who takes

care of the child(ren) spends the most time with them, the language he/she speaks will

certainly influence the children's language choice and learning or input and even the

output in the future. The fifth question emphasizes the significance of the parents' attitude

toward first language. As Harding-Esch & Riley (2003) state that "Parents vary greatly in

their attitude towards their own language and it is this which usually determines how

committed they are to the idea of a bilingual home" and "The parents' attitude towards

their own language is perhaps more important than the objective situation of that

language in the foreign country" (p.81). The sixth question seeks to find out whether

there is contact with extended family members living in or out of country. If family

relatives such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles, only speak their first language, parents

often visit these relatives and they will encourage their children to learn the mother tongue. If some other relatives stay in the same country, the children will have more opportunities to establish bilingual language and social relations. The seventh question recognizes the importance of each individual language. Differences in language structures are less important. "Structural differences do have an influence on the actual mechanics of the acquisition process, but they do not determine whether or to what extent bilingualism will be achieved" (Harding-Esch & Riley, 2003, p.84). For example, Chinese differs greatly from English, but this does not mean that there is no chance for children to learn Chinese and communicate in Chinese in an English-speaking environment. In addition, Harding-Esch & Riley (2003) argue that the status of the first language in the second language environment will also have a great effect on parents' decisions about whether to bring up bilingual children. "High prestige languages" are defined as:

> those that are regarded as world languages, or that have some special economic, religious or cultural value: English, French, and Spanish are the most obvious examples, but languages such as Arabic, Chinese and Hebrew should also be included in this category." (p.84)

In the United States and Canada where English is the dominant and powerful language, the status of Chinese languages is still in question. Even though Chinese may be one of the largest minority languages in North America, Chinese is still not widely used in the public domain. As Harding-Esch and Riley (2003) further explain, "Differences in status

between languages clearly influence the parents' decision as to whether or not to establish a bilingual home, but they also act directly on the climate in which children will become bilingual and the variety of means available" (p.85).

The eighth question is concerned with whether there is available support to help parents raise bilingual children. In general, there is a rich literacy environment for the dominant language. However, there may or may not be many resources or support for parents to help their children maintain their first language. In Canadian metropolitan cities such as Toronto and Vancouver, parents may find books or audio cassettes in their first languages, while in smaller cities such as Saskatoon, there may not be as many non-English first language literary resources available. The last question raises the idea that parents may have to change the way they communicate in social circles in order to build a rich bilingual literacy environment at home that will help their children develop and strengthen their bilingual practices.

Harding-Esch & Riley (2003) give parents some "golden rules" to help them reach a decision about whether to bring up bilingual children or not. They emphasize that "most obviously: the child's happiness comes first" (p.87). The importance of the children's happiness is explained more thoroughly. In many instances making the children's happiness a priority means making efforts to maintain their mother tongue and become bilinguals in the widest sense. Children need their first language to communicate with parents and relatives, and they need their additional language(s) to communicate with their friends (p.87-88). Second, it is important for parents to be consistent with their

linguistic behavior, and to devote time and efforts to build a rich bilingual literacy environment for their children. Third, "Play it down". Learning two languages will be fun, interesting and useful in life. Parents need to support their children's literacy development and create a rich, comfortable and happy bilingual home literacy environment for their children (p.88).

The home literacy environment plays an important role in children's literacy development. Leichter (1984) finds that the home literacy environment may affect children's reading development in three ways:

1. Interpersonal interaction (e.g. literacy experiences shared by family members)

2. Physical environment (e.g. print materials in the home)

3. Motivational climate (parents' attitudes toward literacy)

In addition, there is evidence that family status and parents' education influence children's literacy development (this can refer to both Chinese and English literacy). After making questionnaires and giving reading tests to 574 Chinese children, Anderson, Li, Ku, Shu, & Yue (2002) find that the home literacy environment plays an important role in young children's literacy development and the following factors influence young Chinese children's literacy development: literacy resources in the home, parent-child literacy related activities, family status, parents' education, and children's independent literacy related activities (p.208).

Kenner (2004) follows six young children's experience of studying to write in Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, and English. In Chapter five, she focuses on teaching practices

in different bilingual families and states that each family had its own way to teach

children to learn or especially how to write in their mother tongue. Teaching styles may

probably depend on family members' literacy knowledge, time and cultural traditions.

Kenner (2004) shows that the home literacy environment including parents' support and

attitude toward minority languages plays an important role in young children's biliteracy

development (p.127-150).

Literacy resources and practices at home also influence children's literacy

development. Taylor (1983) finds that in a "rich" literacy home environment, children

have many literacy materials available and they are actively engaged in literacy events

with their parents.

Sulzby & Edwards (1993) argue:

The stereotype is that there are literacy-rich homes in which there are multiple

literacy materials and many literacy events (events involving literacy either directly

or indirectly, in which children are observers or active participants), and where

parents are physically and emotionally available to interact directly to encourage

children with activities that closely match those found in school environments. Such

an environment would support children's active explorations in literacy. Actual

observations point to greater variety and complexity than the stereotype. (p.162)

Based on the above studies, it appears that if there are more print and non-print texts

at home, if parents or other family members spend more time with children on literacy

related activities, if parents have more years of education, and if young children have

more literacy support at home, children are more likely to do better in their literacy development at school.

Li (2006b) states that the home literacy environment played a crucial role for children's success or failure in achieving biliteracy. There are several factors that will affect children's achievement of biliteracy at home such as parents' understandings of their status in the society, their beliefs about the majority and minority languages, their teaching methods, and their own proficiencies in the dominant language. Li further argues that positive and balanced parental or familial attitudes toward Chinese and English and sufficient home literacy support can contribute to children's biliteracy development. The more parents value Chinese and English, the more attention and efforts they provided in learning two languages, the more likely their children were to succeed in biliteracy development. In the article, the Tang family had a balanced view of biliteracy development. They believed that learning both English and Chinese was important for their daughter, Alana. They lived in Canada and it was necessary and significant to learn English well. And they also thought that as the Chinese economy was developing quickly, they might go back to China in the future. They encouraged their daughter to learn English at school; at the same time, they taught her Chinese at home using text books and story books bought from China (p.367-370). By reviewing Li's study, we can see the influence of parental attitudes and support towards biliteracy development.

Some factors have a great influence on children's literacy development such as parents' education background, parents support, parents' literacy-related involvement

with children, parents' attitude toward minority and majority language, home social and

economic status, and literacy materials at home. There is an association between

socioeconomic status and literacy achievement; children from poor and minority families

tend to lag far behind children from mainstream families (Teale, 1986). Li (2001) also

identifies a strong relationship between Chinese children's biliteracy development and

family socio-economic status and parents' education. In her study, a working class

Chinese family operated a small Chinese restaurant and the parents just had high school

education. They struggled to make a living and did not have extra money or energy to

concentrate on their children's literacy development. The children learned a little Chinese

mainly by communicating with customers in the restaurant and they did not learn English

well at school. The lower socioeconomic background of the family limited parents'

support for their children's literary development.

2.2.2 School Literacy Environment

In addition to the home literacy environment, the school literacy environment is an

important factor contributing to children's biliteracy development. The school literacy

environment may include the following factors: school language policy, curriculum,

school culture, literacy instruction, and teachers' expectations and values.

Goldstein (2003) addresses the school's role in maintaining children's mother tongue

and supported the multilingual classroom activities rather than an English-only classroom.

Schecter & Cummins (2003) argue that it is of great significance and use to make

school-based language policy in culturally diverse contexts (p.2), to create an inclusive,

democratic and friendly climate for newly arrived students (p.17), to respect and value

different students' cultural traditions and backgrounds (p.18), to take multilingual and

multicultural approaches in teaching and learning (p.32), to create more spaces and

opportunities for minority students to express themselves (p.62), to actively communicate

with parents and community (p.81), and teachers need to prepare carefully to meet

different students' needs (p.63). Democratic school culture will provide a inclusive and

supportive school climate that welcomes and values minority children's first languages

and home cultures. Therefore, school culture is of great importance in children's literacy

development.

Gibbons (2002) points out that teachers should recognize students' differences,

believe that they have the potential to achieve academic progress, and help new English

language learners (ELLs) to make a smooth transition to the mainstream school

environment. Gibbons suggests that teachers should have a critical view of assessment;

positive assessment can help teachers to better know their students and make teaching

plans; language or literacy should be taught in contexts such that of listening, speaking,

reading and writing in the second language need to be placed in the context of a range of

school subjects; because second language learning involves a continual process of

meaning making. Therefore, teachers, their beliefs or values and their teaching methods

can have much influence on children's learning (Li, 2006a). Baker (2000) suggests:

> if parents, community leaders, workers and artists are included in the learning
>
> experiences of children, home notions of culture are represented, valued, and

celebrated. Different forms of worthwhile knowledge, experience and expertise are

shared in the classroom, raising the self-esteem of children, the language minority

group and the community. Hidden talents, oral histories, household skills, and latent

abilities are discovered and shared. These social, cultural and intellectual resources

become important curricular elements. (p.84)

School culture plays a significant role in children's biliteracy development. How a school

promotes multiculturalism and multilingualism means a lot to young children's literacy

learning process and language choice in the future. Kenner (2004) states that in general,

many teachers and parents think that young children will be put in confusing and difficult

situations if they learn two or more languages at the same time. But *Becoming biliterate*

presents readers a different story and shows that young children have many capabilities to

learn two languages at the same time appropriately and without confusion. At an early

age of five or six, young children in the study have the capability of recognizing and

finding differences in the writing system of two languages'. Findings show that a

biliterate learning experience can stimulate young children's ability in logical thinking

and creative imaging in their studies. Therefore, maintaining or learning the mother

tongue will not hinder children's English language literacy development (Kenner, 2004, p.

1-33). However, most schools still carry out transitional policies to assimilate minority

children to English language and culture as soon as possible (Gibbons, 2002, p. 6-7).

Many Canadian schools do not allow Chinese children to speak their mother tongue at

school. English-only is the unspoken language policy or rule at some schools, which has

great influence on children's attitudes on maintaining minority cultures and learning

minority languages. Cummins & Danesi (1990) state that "Canadian schools have

succeeded much better in encouraging students to relinquish rather than maintain their

culture and language" (p.102). For large numbers of minority children born in Canada or

arriving in Canada prior to school, English language acquisition is not a big problem;

however, "maintenance of the first language is extremely problematic" (Cummins &

Danesi, 1990, p.105-106). If there is a multicultural and multilingual school, is the

language policy still English only? If not, what happens to minority students?

Li (2006a) points out that there is a great "conflict" regarding understanding of

literacy instruction between teachers and parents. She also states that the English-only

policy and the dominant social status of English language affect both students' and

parents' attitudes toward learning Chinese, and result in a language shift to English. In

another article, Li (2003) contends that Chinese students "suffer" at school due to cultural

differences, and school policies and instruction (p. 195-198). In addition, Li (2006a)

states that some Canadian teachers believe that because children speak too much Chinese

at school, they may not learn English well. As a result, most teachers do not allow

children to speak Chinese at school (p. 361). Is it true that speaking Chinese will prevent

Chinese children from learning English well? According to Cummins & Danesi (1990),

when minority language provision is rigidly separated from the mainstream school

classroom, teachers often think that children's first language is none of their business but

teaching English language is the priority and most important at a mainstream school. This

belief can communicate to minority children that "their first language has no place in the school or in their education" (p.110). Schools culture therefore plays an important role in children's choice of languages.

Houk (2005) demonstrates that establishing "cultural democracy" can affirm and embrace students' culture and first languages, and in this way bilingualism and biculturalism are highly valued at school (p.11-16). Pahl & Rowsell (2006) argue that teachers should highly value students' home culture and make full use of their home cultural and literate backgrounds in their teaching practices at school, and in this way teachers can create "a third space" for minority children to practice their literacy (p.54-58). Chow & Cummins (2003) state that it is important to value and apply multilingual and multicultural teaching practices in classrooms to facilitate minority children's literacy development (p.32-35). Liu & Taylor (2004) also point out that teachers' positive attitudes toward minority languages and cultures can facilitate children's biliteracy development (n.p.).

2.2.3 Home and School Relationships

Wells (1981) describes differences between language use at home and at school:

The school social context makes children familiar with interaction that is pedagogically motivated, in contrast with the multiplicity of goals underlying interactions at home, and also familiarizes them with the requirement of conversation involving many participants, in contrast with smaller numbers at home. The school also provides the systematic training that helps develop higher levels of symbolic

functioning associated in particular with the teaching of reading and writing, which contrasts with the spontaneous, untaught acquisition of speech at home. (p. 20-21) Children from minority groups may experience even greater differences in literacy learning at school and at home since people from different cultures have different understandings, beliefs, and teaching methods in literary learning.

More specifically, Dyson (2001) finds that immigrant parents communicated less frequently with teachers or the school compared with other non-European families. Most immigrant parents put great emphasis on communication of their children's academic progress or achievement at school, and they were much more concerned with the quality of teaching at school than other aspects of school life such as social activities (455-476). This study points out that it is of great importance to have continual parental involvement and effective communications with teachers and school. However, parents from different cultures often emphasize different perspectives on school life than do their children's teachers.

Li (2003) focuses on one Chinese Canadian family and critiques what she calls the model minority students and their great academic achievement at school and later in society. Li tells sad stories of a Chinese immigrant family that encountered great difficulties with schooling. The study describes and analyzes the complicated interrelationships among home literacy, minority and majority culture and policies of the mainstream school. Li argues that culture difficulties are not the only factors that lead to students' school failure. Other factors such as misunderstandings of multilevel

interactions among parents, teachers and school, culture shock, different models of incorporation and imbalanced power structures between the school and home in society also play a part. Li's article helps people to look at Chinese immigrant families from different perspectives although it may not actually apply to all Chinese families in Canada.

The above literature indicates that if there is a democratic school culture, minority children will feel more supported in their first languages. If teachers have positive attitudes toward minority languages, children whose families speak those languages will be more wiling to learn and use them. If there are more understanding and communication between teachers and parents, there will be more effective literacy instruction to facilitate children's literacy development.

In summary, the research literature on literacy learning provides rich understandings relevant to children's biliteracy practices. Home and school literacy environments play important roles in children's biliteracy development. In the home context, the following factors affect children's literacy development: parents' education background, parents' knowledge or belief about literacy, parents support, parents' literacy-related involvement with children, parents' attitude toward minority and majority languages, home social and economic status, and literacy materials at home. In the school environment, school culture, language policy at school, teachers' beliefs about the importance of maintaining or even promoting minority language and culture, and teachers' teaching methods in a diverse classroom have to be considered.

These studies provide background about the contributing factors in children's biliteracy development at home and school. In the next chapter, I will discuss the qualitative case study that I conducted in my explorations of Canadian Chinese immigrant children learning to read to write in the early primary grades.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

My study focused on bilingual literacy learning practices and events of Chinese children in southwestern Ontario. My goal was to gain a better understanding of the ways that children learn English and Chinese at school and home. I intend to critically analyze what goes on in the school and home literacy learning environments from a socio-cultural perspective.

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodology I used in my qualitative case study, including a definition of qualitative case studies, characteristics of case studies, the process of conducting a case study including selecting a site, choosing a sample, collecting data and analyzing data, as well as issues of validity, reliability and ethics.

3.2 Defining Qualitative Case Studies

3.2.1 Definition of Qualitative Case Studies

According to Stake (2000), case study research is "a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry" (p.436). In other words, a case study inquires what is happening in a real life context. Yin (2003) defines case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.13). Similarly, Gall, Gall & Borg (2007) define case study research as "(a) the in-depth study of (b) one or more instances of a phenomenon (c) in its real-life context that (d) reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon" (p.447). Therefore, we

can regard a case study as a process of investigation of present instance(s) or event(s) in

an authentic context and it presents the participants' ideas and understandings in the

context.

Merriam (1988) defines a qualitative case study as "an intensive, holistic description

and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p.16). A qualitative case

study is used to describe, interpret and analyze in-depth a phenomenon in a social context;

as Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, (2000) further explain, "case studies strive to portray

'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, produce 'thick descriptions' of participants'

lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for, a situation" (p. 181).

A case study approach is applied to investigate and reflect on a phenomenon which is

defined by Gall, Gall & Borg (2007) as "a process, event, person or other item of interest

of the researcher" The phenomenon or instance in this study is children's bilingual

literacy development. A case is "a particular instance of the phenomenon" (p.447). The

case in my study is young Chinese immigrant children's English and Chinese literacy

development in Canadian society. The macro social context of my study was a

middle-size southwestern Ontario city. The micro social contexts of my study were the

educational environments of Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy learning.

Specifically, I focused on three educational environments: a culturally diverse public

primary school, a community Chinese school, and the Chinese families' literacy

environments. These sites are real-life contexts in the sense that "they are where the

particular actors participate in the phenomenon" (Gall et al., 2007, p.449). The main

actors in the particular context are teachers, Chinese immigrant children and their parents. Teachers and students are the major characters who participate in literacy teaching and learning practices at school. And children and their parents are key characters who participate in literacy learning and sharing at home.

In summary, I examined the biliteracy development of Chinese immigrant children at home and school in a southwestern city in Ontario, Canada. For the purpose of my study, a group of Chinese immigrant children comprises a particular cultural group or a social unit. I sought to understand and describe Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy development process. My objective was to interpret whether the mother tongue was maintained in a predominantly English learning, English-speaking dominant environment, with the aim of informing others of Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy development.

3.2.2 Characteristics of Qualitative Case studies

I chose a single case study since my study focused on one case investigation. In addition, my study included characteristics of ethnographic case studies and descriptive case studies, in the sense that it focused on a particular group of students (Chinese immigrant children) and specific classroom practice (literacy teaching and learning); and included detailed descriptions of teaching and learning processes of teachers and children based on field work.

In using case study for my research, I was mindful of the characteristics of a qualitative case study as presented by Merriam and other researchers. For example, Merriam (1998) indicates that case studies are "particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic"

(p.29). First, a qualitative case study is *particularistic* in that it investigates a particular

phenomenon, or event in a specific context or situation (p.29) Shaw (1978) further argues

that case studies "concentrate attention on the way particular groups of people confront

specific problems, taking a holistic view of the situation" (p.2). Second, a qualitative case

study is *descriptive* in the sense that the final product is a detailed description of the

studied phenomenon. Merriam (1998) uses "rich" and "thick" description, and points out

that "thick description" is originally from anthropology and means "the complete, literal

description of the incident or entity being investigated" (p.29-30). Descriptive is also one

of the features of qualitative research, as Wilson (1979) explains that "case studies use

prose and literary techniques to describe, elicit images, and analyze situations...present

documentation of events, quotes, samples, and artifacts" (p.448). Third, case study is

heuristic in that it can further facilitate the audience's understandings of the investigated

phenomenon or event. A qualitative case study can help readers to better understand what

they already know and may also give them opportunities to discover new ideas and

explore new experiences. Stake (1981) argues that "previously unknown relationships

and variables can be expected to emerge from case studies leading to a rethinking of the

phenomenon being studied" (p.47).

3.3 Rationale of Conducting a Qualitative Case Study

A case study approach can help me to investigate my topic that is the biliteracy

development of Chinese immigrant children at school and home. Such a topic may not

easily covered by other methods. Yin (2005) states that researchers can apply case study

the approach in at least two situations:

> First and most important, the case study method is pertinent when your research
>
> addresses either a descriptive question (what happened?) or an explanatory question
>
> (how and why did something happen?)... Second, you may want to illuminate a
>
> particular situation, to get a close understanding of it. The case study method helps
>
> you to make direct observations and collect data in natural settings, compared to
>
> relying on the 'derived' data. (p.381)

I chose the case study method primarily because my research questions were

descriptive and focused on the understanding of Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy

development and I hoped to find the contributing factors of successful and unsuccessful

balanced literacy development. Further, I chose this method because I wanted to focus on

literacy environment and conduct a close examination of what happened in that

environment; the case study method allowed me to make close and direct observations

and collect different forms of data (such as field notes, samples of literacy work and

interview transcripts) in the real-life context that of this study in classrooms and homes.

In summary, I sought to understand Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy

development and learning experiences at home and school, to analyze the contributing

factors of successful and unsuccessful bilingual literacy development, and tried to address

the relationship between biliteracy development and the literacy environment at home

and at school. Case study approach helped me to "penetrate situations" and "provide a

unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas

more clearly" (Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 181).

3.4 Setting and Sample Selection

In this case study, I focused on a particular issue: bilingual literacy development of

Chinese immigrant children that is also called the "case" by Yin (1994) (cited in Hays,

2004, p.226).

3.4.1 The Setting of the Case Study

The macro geographic site was a community in a southwestern city, in Ontario,

Canada where there is a high percentage of Chinese immigrants. The micro sites in my

case study were a public elementary school in which there are students from diverse

cultural and linguistic backgrounds and a large number of Chinese students, a community

Chinese language school that is near the public school in the community, and the homes

of (five) Chinese families. More specifically, I did my field work in one Grade one

classroom and one Grade 1/2 classroom in the public primary school; one classroom in

the community Chinese language school; and in the Chinese immigrant children's homes.

3.4.2 Sample Selection in the Case Study

According to Merriam (1998), basically there are two types of sampling:

"probability" and "non-probability" sampling. "Non-probability sampling is the method

of choice for most qualitative research... the most common form of which is called

purposive (Chein, 1981) or *purposeful* (Patton, 1990)" (p.61). Since I wanted to "discover,

understand, and gain insight into" Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy development, I

needed to choose a specific group of children. Therefore, I chose *purposeful* sampling.

Merriam (1998) points out that there are some common types of *purposeful* sampling: "typical, unique, maximum, convenience, snowball, chain, and network sampling" (p.62). I used the *unique* type of *purposeful* sampling, since I am interested in Chinese immigrant children, a specific group of children, not all children in a class and this is suitable for my research interest and the case in this study.

In the present study, the sample was purposively chosen. The participating children were Chinese immigrant children from primary grades (Grade 1 and 2) in the public primary school who also went to the community Chinese school. The sample also included the children's parents (mothers or/and fathers) and classroom teachers in the public school and community Chinese school. The term "Chinese immigrant children" in this study referred to Chinese children who were born in Canada or in China. Since they just entered school to receive formal education, it is a good starting point to examine their biliteracy development. In addition, I chose immigrant families who came to Canada after 1995, when there were large numbers of Chinese immigrants coming to Canada; this represents recent understandings and experiences of Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy development. Most Chinese children in this study have been in Canada for more than five years, and their parents have higher education. Some children were born in Canada and others not (such as in Europe and mainland China).

I chose a primary school in a city (located in southwestern Ontario, Canada) where there is a multilingual and multicultural school culture and with a critical number of Chinese students. Then I went to the primary school, talked with the principal about my

study and obtained permission to conduct research in the school. I contacted the Grade

1/2 and Grade 1 classroom teachers and asked them to recommend more than three

Chinese immigrant children in their classrooms with different levels of English and

Chinese language proficiency. With the help of the classroom teachers, I met and talked

with the children and their parents face to face about my study in detail. From the initial

discussions, I invited several Chinese immigrant children from Grade 1, and 2 to

participate in my study. In the Grade 1/2 class, there were six Chinese children (two boys

and four girls; two in Grade 2 and four in Grade one) of 17 children but four Chinese

children (one boy and three girls) were attending the community Chinese school. Since I

wished to balance the number of girls and boys in my study, I went to another Grade 1

class in which there are 3 Chinese boys out of 15 children but only one was attending the

community Chinese school.

Subsequently, I met teachers and parents at mutually convenient times and explained

my study in detail to invite them to participate and gain permission to include them and

their children in the study. Two public school teachers, one teacher from the community

school, and five Chinese children's parents agreed to participate in the study. There was

no teaching or intervention involved.

The two public school teachers have more than twenty years of teaching experiences

in primary grades. One has teaching experience of ESL course (teens and adults). The

teacher in the community Chinese school used to be a teacher in a middle school in China

for more than ten years and she has attended a Canadian college on Early Childhood

Education and was working in a daycare during the time of this study.

In summary, the sample in this study was purposively chosen including five Chinese

children (three girls and two boys, and four from Grade 1, and one from Grade 2) and

their parents and three teachers.

3.5 Data Collection

There are many types of data collection. Yin (2003) states that there are six common

sources in case studies: "documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations,

participant observations and physical artifacts" (p.85). In this study, I used documentation,

interviews, direct observations, and physical artifacts.

3.5.1 Documentation

Document is a general term and can include "a wide range of written, visual and

physical material relevant to the study at hand" (Merriam, 1998, p.112) A document can

be public (such as newspapers and magazines) or private (such as journals and diaries).

Yin (2003) provides a list of the variety of documents that can be used in case studies:

Letters, memoranda, and other communiqués; Agendas, announcements and minutes

of meetings, and other written reports or events; Administrative

documents—proposals, progress reports, and other internal records; Formal studies

or evaluations of the same "site" under study; Newspaper clippings and other articles

appearing in the mass media or in community newsletters. (p.85-86)

Documents are helpful and useful in case studies in that documents are "stable—can

be reviewed repeatedly; unobtrusive—not created as a result of the case study; exact—

contain exact names, references, and details of an event" (Yin, 2003, p.86). The type of document used in this study was the Ontario primary grade language arts curriculum since it provided detailed information on English language literacy, and helped me to compare with what I observed in class.

3.5.2 Interviews

Interview is one of the important ways of data collections. Hays (2004) highly recommends interviews, "interviews are one of the richest sources of data in a case study and usually the most important data to be collected" (p.229). Indeed, interviews can provide a great range of information from a great variety of perspectives. Yin (1994) states that

Overall, interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs. These human affairs should be reported and interpreted through the eyes of specific interviewees, and well-informed respondents can provide important insights into a situation. They can help you provide shortcuts to the prior history of the situation, helping you identify other relevant sources of evidence. (p.85)

There are many types of interviews. Merriam (1998) categorizes interviews in to three types by the way of the kinds of questions asked in the interview: "highly structured, semi-structured, and unstructured" (p.75). Unstructured interview is also called open-ended (Yin, 1994, 2003, p.90). There are also single interviews and group interviews. In this study, I conducted single semi-structured interviews with three

teachers, and five parents. Semi-structured interviews were used to "respond to the

situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the

topic", and allowed interviewees to respond in their own way and voice their

undertakings and ideas freely. All interviews were audio-taped with the interviewee's

permission. After each interview, I transcribed the voice document into a word document

on my personal computer, and then I e-mailed the transcript to the interviewees to obtain

their responses and comments. All interviewees agreed that parts from their interviews

could be quoted in this study.

3.5.3 Direct Observations

"A frequent source of information in case study research is observations" (Hancock

& Algozzine, 2006, p.41). Observations are important sources in case study in that they

are "contextual [and] cover events in real time" (Yin, 2003, p.86). In this study, I went to

one Grade 1/2 class and one Grade one class in the public primary school as well as one

class in the community Chinese language school to observe the literacy environment and

teaching practices. Field notes provided important data information in the process of

observation and my field notes included time, date, location, specific activities and events.

When I was doing class observations, I also wrote my initial impressions of the event.

And later when I transcribed the field notes, I also wrote down my further comments and

reflections. The limitation of direct observation is "selectivity", it was impossible for me

to cover all the literacy events at school in just four months. Besides this, I could add my

personal comments that reflected only my personal understandings in the field notes

transcription.

3.5.4 Physical or Cultural Artifacts

Physical or cultural artifacts are also of great importance to this study. They are

"usually non-reactive and unobtrusive, and ubiquitous and readily available for study"

and can also be used to "supplement data gathered through interviews and observations"

(Merriam, 1998, p.118). There is a wide rage of physical or cultural artifacts such as "a

technological device, a tool or instrument, a work of art, or some other physical

evidence" (Yin, 2003, p.96). I collected literacy work samples from the five participating

children including journals, literacy work sheets completed at school and home such as

written work from the Chinese exercise book and literacy related work sheets at the

public school. I also took pictures of artifacts made by the Chinese teacher to help

children to practice nursery rhymes in Chinese. All these artifacts helped me to better

understand Chinese children's biliteracy learning process and progress, and also showed

some clear differences in written forms between Chinese and English.

In summary, there were multiple sources of evidence in my study that helped me to

have more precise understandings of the biliteracy issue, prepare a detailed description of

the case (Chinese children's biliteracy development) under study, develop "converging

lines of inquiry" (Yin, 2003, p.98), and write a convincing and accurate study.

3.5.5 Summary of Data Collection

To summarize, I obtained data through classroom observations, interviewing teachers,

parents and their children, and scanning children's literacy work at home and school with

permission from teachers, parents and students. I participated in classroom observations three days a week over a four-month period (from the beginning of September to the end of December, 2007) in the public school. I went to the community Chinese school once a week over a four-month period (from the beginning of September to the end of December, 2007). In order to observe different literacy activities on different weekdays, I went to the public school and community Chinese school every weekday during the first week in order to decide which day would be more valuable for observation to get a complete picture of the classroom literacy practices at school. Based on teachers' suggestions, I worked out my schedule and continued the field work on a regular basis. I went to the Grade 1/2 class on Mondays and Tuesdays and Grade 1 class on Wednesday or Thursdays. I went to the community Chinese school on Mondays or Tuesdays. I interviewed two public school teachers and one Chinese teacher; I also visited five Chinese families and interviewed parents and their children in November and December, 2007. I scanned and photocopied children's literacy texts created both at home and school to have a better understanding of their bilingual literacy development. The literacy texts included journals, drawings, and crafts in both English and Chinese.

In summary, the multiple sources of data collected in my study were the Ontario primary language arts curriculum, observation field notes, interview transcripts (with teachers, children and their parents), and samples of students' literacy work at school and home.

3.6 Data Analysis

Tesch (1990) discusses several types of qualitative research data analyses and points out three types of approaches that have been used to analyze case study data: "interpretational analysis, structural analysis, and reflective analysis" (n.p.). Structural analysis aims to "identity patterns inherent in discourse, text, events or other phenomena" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007, p.471), so this is often used in communication analysis. In reflective data analysis, "the researcher relies on intuition and judgment in order to evaluate the phenomenon" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007, p.473), so this is often used for evaluations. According to Gall, Gall & Borg (2007), interpretational analysis is to "find constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to describe and explain the phenomenon being studied" (p.466). In this study, I sought to find themes that can describe and understand the biliteracy development of Chinese immigrant children. So, I used interpretational analysis in the process of data analysis. All forms of data were coded and analyzed carefully, systematically, and critically. Interpretational analysis helped me to achieve insights into the environments supporting children's biliteracy development.

The first step of interpretational analysis is to establish a computer data set comprised of all the case study data. All field notes were reviewed and coordinated into electronic Word documents. All audio-taped interviews were transcribed into separate Word documents and e-mailed to interviewees for confirmation and suggestions. Each page and each line of the field notes and interview transcripts were numbered. All this formed a database in my computer titled DXX Med Thesis Data including several file

folders such as Interviews (sub-file folders: Teachers, Children and Parents), Field notes

(sub-file folders: English school field notes and Chinese school field notes), Artifacts

(sub-file folders: Star, Sky, Xinxin, Lingling and Laurie) .

According to Merriam (1998), "coding is nothing more that assigning some sort of

short-hand designation, to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve

specific pieces of the data" (p.164). All the case study data (including children's literacy

artifacts) were coded such as E represented English, C represented Chinese, B

represented boy, G represented girl, S represented school, and H represented home. The

children's real names were not used in the study, instead I gave each of them a name in

the study based on their characteristics, that is, two boys' names: Star, Sky; and three

girls' names: Xinxin, Lingling and Laurie. So, there were codes such as Star_E_S_1,

Star_C_S_1, Star_E_H_1 in the children's artifacts, In the field notes, there are codes like,

E_Sept.4_p1_l1 that meant English school September 4th field notes page 1 line 1; if the

first letter was C that represented the Chinese school.

The second step involved developing a set of categories. Merriam (1998) states that

"category construction begins with reading the first interview transcript, the first set of

field notes, the first document collected in the study" (p.181). I reviewed the purpose of

my study (to understand the process of children's biliteracy learning) and my research

questions (what literacy practices do children engage in at home and school?). I then read

and reread all the data, making notes in the margins to write down comments on the data.

I wrote a separate memo to myself mainly about my reflections, tentative themes, ideas

and understandings that I found from the first month data. I found things that I wanted to

observe, or ask during the second month of data collection. After finishing all the data

collection, I sat down and reviewed all my data with comments, reflections and emerging

themes, and then found a set of tentative categories or themes that could answer my

research questions in my study (Merriam, 1998, p.161-162).

The third step is to group categories. I reviewed the tentative categories and

examined them in detail; then I redefined these categories looking for new categories,

based on the following guidelines given by Merriam (1998):

- Categories reflect the purpose of the research.

- Categories should be exhaustive, that is you should be able to place all the data

    that you decided were important or relevant to the study in a category or subcategory.

- Categories should be mutually exclusive. A particular unit of data should fit into

    only one category.

- Categories should be sensitizing. The name of the category should be as

    sensitive as possible to what is in the data.

- Categories should be conceptually congruent. This means that the same level of

    abstraction should characterize all categories at the same level. (p.183-184)

I printed hard copies of all the data including interview transcripts, field notes,

artifacts in the case study, and worked page by page with comments and reflections. In

addition, tentative categories or themes would be found and written in different color-

pens on large pieces of spread paper; each color represented one theme and the consistent

part of the hard copies were underlined. So besides one written theme, you would find where it was from (interview or field note or artifact with line and page number). In the process of working page by page, I conducted content analysis and constant comparisons that helped me to work on the entire database without losing important information, while I analyzed the data critically.

Following Wolcott's (1994) approach of domain analysis, I developed major domains (categories) such as home literacy environment and school literacy environment. All interview transcripts and notes of classroom observations were sorted into different domains (categories). The two major domains were further categorized into smaller themes. For example, the home literacy environment was divided into home literacy resources, parents' attitude, education level of parents and family status. The school literacy environment was divided into teachers' attitude, teaching method, type of literacy evaluation, classroom language policy, and classroom language support. After this step, I had a clear and detailed set of categories, in which I could find various events from different sources of data collection to help me to further understand the data.

To summarize, the procedure of data analysis included: first, a review all the collected data; second, a transcription of audio-taped interviews and about transforming field notes into electronic documents using Microsoft software; and then coding all of them; third, diagrams or charts were created based on the coordination of data and categories of data in different domains; fourth, I analyzed each domain in depth and detail with further comments; finally, the results of the data analysis were written up.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

According to Merriam (1998), "validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to the study's conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which findings are presented" (p.199-200). I paid special attention to these procedures to make sure validity and reliability were reached. Kemmis (1983) stated that "What makes the case study work 'scientific' is the observer's critical presence in the context of occurrence of phenomena, observation, hypothesis-testing (by confrontation and disconfirmation), triangulation of participant's perceptions, interpretations and so on" (p. 103).

3.7.1 Validity

3.7.1.1 Internal Validity

Internal validity is defined by Merriam (1998) as "the question of how research findings match reality" (p.201). This means the focus on internal validity is on the meaning of reality. Reality, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) is "a multiple set of mental constructions... made by humans, their constructions are their minds, and they are, in the main, accessible to the humans who make them" (p.295). In a qualitative case study, the human being is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. So, to some extent, interpretations of the reality are accessed directly through researchers' observations and interviews, and "internal validity is a definite strength of qualitative research" (Merriam, 1998, p.203).

Merriam (1998) argues that researchers can use six basic strategies to enhance

internal validity, "triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory or collaborative modes of research and researchers' biases" (p.204-205). I followed Merriam's strategies, which means, I used multiple sources of data (document, interview transcripts, field notes, and physical or cultural artifacts), and multiple methods (interpretational analysis, theme or domain analysis, context analysis, and constant comparison) to confirm the emerging findings; took data and tentative interpretations back to participants and ask them if the results are plausible; I spent four months at the research site doing repeated observations of the same phenomenon (biliteracy development of Chinese immigrant children); asked fellow colleagues and supervisors for comments and suggestions on the merging categories or themes as well as primary findings; involved participants in all steps of research from conceptualizing the study to writing up the findings; and clarified my own assumptions (such as the influence of parents' attitudes to biliteracy learning), worldviews (such as how meanings are constructed by human beings in different social events), and theoretical orientation (such as social and cultural aspects of literacy development) at the outset of the study (Merriam, 1998, p.204-205).

For internal validity of the study, I also followed the suggestions provided by LeCompte and Goetz (cited in Nunan, 2006) that high internal validity derives from the data collection and analysis techniques employed (p.62). I spent more time with participants in the process of data collection, making informant interviews, active participant observations, and incorporating research reflections (continual questioning

and reevaluation).

3.7.1.2 External Validity

External validity is defined as "the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. That is, how generalizable are the results of a research study" (Merriam, 1998, p.204-207). In this single qualitative case study, a small sample was selected precisely because the aim of the study was to understand the particular group (Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy development) in depth. However, it does not mean that the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other studies.

Nunan (2006) stated that "the researcher can guard against this threat by describing a phenomenon so explicitly that it can be compared with other studies, or by carrying out multiple-site investigations" (p.62-63). In my study, I clearly and explicitly stated the whole procedure of the study so that it could be compared later and I also considered the effects of sample and setting selection to ensure the credibility of future comparison. Some part of the findings in this study may also apply to those who employ a similar research methodology and study the same particular group within a certain time.

To further enhance the possibility of the results of a qualitative study generalizing to other studies, Merriam (1998) provided several strategies: "rich and thick description, typicality or modal category, and multi-site designs" (p.211-212.). In my study, I provided "rich and thick description' in detail and in depth so that the audience could gain a clear understanding of the research questions, the studied phenomenon, data analysis procedures and findings and then decide whether the findings could be transferred. In

addition, I also described how typical the phenomenon was and how the sample was

compared so that readers could make comparisons with their own situations. Last but not

least, I went to different situations to study the phenomenon such as the public school, the

community school and children's home, and this "allow[ed] the results to be applied by

readers to a greater range of other situations" (Merriam, 1998, p.212).

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to "the extent to which research findings can be replicated"

(Merriam, 1998, p.205). In order to achieve the reliability of the study, I adopted the

guiding strategies identified by LeCompte and Goetz cited in Nunan (2006) including

low inference descriptors, peer examination, and mechanically recorded data (p.60-61).

In the process of writing the final product of this study, I used less highly inferenced

descriptors and made sure that people without educational research background could

also understand the study. I also asked for participants' and supervisors' comments on the

study and actively interacted with peers for further suggestions. I used audio recordings

and electronic documents to preserve primary data and guard against threats to internal

reliability.

In addition, I also followed the techniques suggested by Merriam (1998) to ensure

that the results are dependable, that is "the investigator's position, triangulation and audit

trail" (p.207-208). I explicitly and clearly stated my research questions, and explained the

sample selection, data collection and analysis in detail, and the social context from which

data were collected. I also used multiple methods to collect and analyze data, and

triangulation further enhanced reliability as well as internal validity. This process could

assist other researchers who might wish to conduct similar studies; in other words, this

would make sure that this study could be replicated by other researchers.

3.8 Ethics

Since the study involved human subjects, I had to take serious consideration of

ethical issues. Participants' dignity, privacy and confidentiality have to be respected and

careful consideration must be given to vulnerable persons (children), and free and

informed consent had to be obtained from all the participants (UWO Ethical Review,

2002, p. 2-11). In the whole study, the real names of school, teachers, parents and

children were not mentioned, and anonymity and confidentiality was ensured by using

pseudonyms. For confidentiality, although I knew that the information provided could

identify participants, I would "in no way make the connection known publicly; the

boundaries surrounding the shared secret were protected" (Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 62). In

order to achieve equity and inclusiveness, both female and male Chinese immigrant

children were chosen. I tried my best to maximize the benefits of the study to all

participants by providing helpful and useful advice on biliteracy development after

completing the study. A clear, systematic and detailed form of Informed Consent was

prepared for all participants. I only entered the school, classrooms, and homes to make

observations and conduct interviews after receiving their informed consent to participate

in the study. Since I was working with young children in the study, I paid attention to the

choice of language used in the interview (English or Chinese), and simplified my

questions to help the children's understanding.

3.9 Limitations of Qualitative Case Studies

A possible limitation of the study lies in the process of analyzing data in that I may

be influenced by my own understanding and overlook other possible ideas. In a word, it

may be too subjective rather than objective. Therefore, it is significant to situate myself in

the study. There are also time limitations. It takes a long time to get a complete picture of

children's biliteracy development. For this reason, I focused on a "snapshot" of the five

participating children's biliteracy development. Furthermore, the findings of the study

could not be generalized to all young Chinese children in Canada, since the sample was

not randomly chosen and not large enough. However, this study can help researchers to

understand the case in southwestern Ontario, Canada. And this study could be generalized

to the biliteracy development of other Grade 1 and 2 Chinese children with similar family

and home literacy practices in primary schools.

3.10 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the methodology of qualitative case study used in

my research. To begin with, I discussed defining qualitative case study research and the

rationale of using a qualitative case study approach. Then, I focused on collecting

different kinds of data and the procedure of data analysis. Finally, I discussed issues of

validity, reliability, ethics and limitations of qualitative case studies. In the next chapter, I

will discuss my findings using a qualitative case study approach based on diverse sources

of information or data collected in the field work.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this study, I focused on examining Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy (Mandarin and English) practices at home, in the public school and at the community Chinese school. The major research question is what literacy practices do young Chinese immigrant children engage in at their homes, in their public school, and in their community Chinese school? I sought to understand the ways that children learn English and Chinese in the above three literacy environments.

In this chapter, I provide the case profile including three literacy learning environments (home, the public school, and the community Chinese school), and participants (three teachers and five Chinese families). The data are reported according to themes and categories, including categories that reflect the major research question.

4.2 The Case Profile of this Study

I conducted this case study in a multilingual and multicultural community. I did my field work in one public school, one community school and with five Chinese families. In addition to classroom observations, I also interviewed teachers, parents and children.

4.2.1 Two Participating Schools

4.2.1.1 The Primary Public School

The primary public school, founded around 1956, is an affiliate of a large School Board in southwestern Ontario. There were 21 teachers (including 3 Education Assistants) and 270 students. The public school is located in a multicultural and multilingual

community. At this public school, most children's parents worked or did post-graduate studies at the university near the public school. This public school was immersed in a highly academic neighborhood. It had a good reputation for high quality teaching and excellent teachers. Students at the school did very well on the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Tests in Ontario. According to a former principal, it was one of the best primary public schools in Ontario. There were multiple classes of Kindergarten to Grade six. There were several school-wide literacy programs including the Literacy Groups and Book Buddies. In 2007, there was a book exhibition to promote reading and fund raising for school development. There was also a food, toy, and book drive to promote caring about others. There were also interactive activities going on including multicultural dinner night and meet the teacher night to enhance the relationship between the school and students' families. In addition, the school supported the students' council and organized a variety of activities such as a Multicultural party, Remembrance Day assembly, talent show, pajama day, basketball competition, soccer competition, Halloween dress-up competition, guess the weight of a pumpkin, and Christmas door decoration competition. Students actively participated in various extracurricular activities at the school. The public school in the study is regarded as an energetic, democratic, multicultural and multilingual school.

4.2.1.2 The Community Chinese School

The community Chinese school was located in a multicultural and multilingual community where there was a high percentage of Chinese immigrants. Most residents of

the community were university graduate or post-doctoral students or university staff. The

community Chinese school was a parent-managed, non-profit and non-political education

organization.

The community Chinese school was founded in1994 by the Chinese Scholars

Association at the local university to facilitate Chinese parents (scholars) to take care of

their children after school and Chinese children in this neighborhood to learn the Chinese

language (Mandarin) and Chinese culture. With the development of the community

school, a parents' committee was founded in 2006 and consisted of five children's parents

(mother or father) and the principal.

The goals of this community Chinese school included fostering Chinese children's

interest of learning Mandarin, to improve their Mandarin language ability in conversation,

reading comprehension and writing; to cultivate children's respect for the People's

Republic of China; as well as to maintain, inherit and develop prominent Chinese ethnic

culture.

The school calendar of this community Chinese school matched the public school

calendar. The daily schedule of the community Chinese school was from 3:30 to5:30 in

the afternoon on weekdays. At first, there was only one class; later due to the large

number of Chinese students, two classes (beginning level and intermediate level) were

established. In total, there were 36 students including 20 students at the beginning level

and 16 students at the intermediate level. These two classes shared the community center.

Most children attended the neighborhood public school and several children were from

other public schools. The tuition was fifty five Canadian dollars a month.

Every school day afternoon, two Chinese school teachers went to the public school to pick up children, and walk to the Chinese school located in the community center in the neighborhood. The first period of the class was from 4 o' clock to 4:40 PM in the afternoon, and mainly consisted of reviewing and learning new lessons. Following that, from 4:40 to 5:00 PM was recess time. During recess (depending on the weather conditions), children could choose to go outside and play on the playground in the community park or stay inside and play some board games provided by the Parents Committee and teachers. After recess, from 5:00 to 5:30 PM was the second period that involved engaging children in learning Mandarin in authentic literacy activities. After school, there were always two or three children from each class responsible for cleaning the two classrooms.

The free textbook was a standard Chinese subject textbook published by Beijing Normal University Press. This textbook was considered suitable for Chinese children to learn Mandarin (Putonghua) outside mainland China. It taught children to recognize Chinese characters, learn Pinyin, and then learn to write Chinese characters, which helped children to build their confidence in learning Mandarin. At the community Chinese school, children at the beginning level learned three to five new Chinese characters a day and completed learning a text in a week. They were required to read fluently or recite every text. There was a quiz on the Chinese characters in the text at least once a month. In addition, children (except for children in the beginning level) were asked to write a

weekly journal to improve their writing ability in Mandarin.

4.2.2 Participants

4.2.2.1 Three Teachers

Three teachers participated in the study including two primary grade classroom teachers at the primary public school and one beginning level Chinese teacher at the community Chinese school. All teachers have been given pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

Mrs. Will is a Grade one teacher at the public school. She is a passionate and energetic teacher with more than twenty years teaching experience including teaching outside Canada. She taught kindergarten for seven years before moving to this grade one position. Mrs. Will designed a variety of literacy activities to facilitate children's English literacy development and she valued children's home culture and language.

Mrs. Holly is a Grade one and two teacher at the public school. She is also a pleasant and experienced teacher who has been teaching primary grades at different schools for twenty-eight years. She has taught English as a second language (ESL) to children, teenagers and adults. Mrs. Holly prepared diverse literacy activities to help children to develop their English literacy while encouraging children to keep their first languages.

Ms. Zhang is a warm-hearted language teacher with fifteen years' experience teaching in mainland China. She believes that if children are very interested in Mandarin, they will devote themselves to learning Mandarin. She designed various Mandarin language literacy activities to motivate children's interest and confidence in Mandarin

learning. When she was teaching in China, she liked to read about research on teaching

methods and pedagogy to improve her teaching. She said that her former principal

thought she was a teacher full of passion. She came to Canada in 2002, and then in 2005

she decided to study Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the local college. She stated

that she learned a lot about children's psychology, the Canadian education system,

teaching theories and practices from the ECE program. Shortly after her graduation in

2007, she got a job in a daycare. In 2006, she came to teach beginning level Mandarin at

this community Chinese school.

4.2.2.2 Five Participating Chinese Families

In total, five Chinese families (3 girls and 2 boys) participated in the study. All five

Chinese families are from mainland China and came to Canada after 1993. All parents

have higher education and most of them are completing their post-graduate studies in

Canada. Pseudonyms are used for the purpose of confidentiality.

Star is a six-year-old boy in Mrs. Will's Grade One class, who was born in Canada.

He has been attending the community Chinese school since 2005. The family is from the

northern part of mainland China and came to Canada first in 2000 and then again

permanently starting in 2003. Star's parents are engineers and pay much attention to his

education. He used to take piano lessons and currently he just attends art and soccer

lessons on the weekends. Star's parents aim to support his literacy development and

cultivate his different interests.

Xinxin was in Mrs. Holly's Grade One class. She was born in mainland China and

turned six years old in October 2007. The family came from Beijing, China and landed in Canada in 2004 and settled here in 2005. Her father was doing his doctorate in engineering and her mother was previously a professor teaching management courses in a university in China. She now stays at home to take care of her children. Xinxin began attending the community Chinese school in 2006 when the family moved to the area. Xinxin also participated in extracurricular activities including swimming, skating, dancing and drawing, which were of personal interest to her. Xinxin's parents told me they supported her literacy development and involvement in extracurricular activities.

Lingling was in Mrs. Holly's Grade One class. She was born in Sweden, where her parents did medical research. She turned six years old in December 2007. The family originally came from the southern part of mainland China. They moved to Canada in 2004. Her father did a post-doctoral fellowship at the local university while her mother engaged in medical research at the University of Toronto. Lingling's older sister attended a secondary school in the city. Lingling began attending this community Chinese school while also attending grade one in the public school system starting in September 2007. On the weekends, she took piano lessons, swimming lessons, and art lessons. Lingling's parents told me they placed importance on their children's education and growth.

Sky was in Mrs. Holly's Grade One class. He was born in Canada and turned six years old in December, 2007. The family is from southern China. Members of their family came to Canada at different times. First, his father came to Canada in 1994. A year later, his mother came to Canada, and in 1996 his older brother came to Canada. Sky's

father worked at an American company and usually comes back home on weekends and holidays. His mother worked as an engineer at the local university and his older brother attended secondary school. Both of his parents have higher levels of education. Sky began to go to the community Chinese school in September, 2007 at which point he started his Grade one at the public school. Anxious at first, he gradually came to like Chinese school and enjoyed attending. In his spare time, he likes playing with Bionicle toys, computer and video games. Sky's mother is supportive of his education.

Laurie was in Mrs. Holly's Grade Two class. She turned seven years old in November, 2007. She was born in the northern part of mainland China and went to preschool there. Her family came to this city in the summer of 2006. Her father worked as an engineer in a company in mainland China and only came to Canada on holidays. Her mother was studying to be an accountant at the local university. And her younger brother was in China with their father. She began attending the community Chinese school in September 2006. In her free time on the weekends, she takes piano lessons and drawing lessons. Laurie's mother said she did what she could do to support Laurie's education.

4.3 Findings of the Study

In this section I describe and discuss the home, public school and community language school learning environments in which five children participated in the study

4.3.1 Home Literacy Environment

4.3.1.1 Physical Literacy Environment

Generally speaking, there are many children's literature books (such as textsbooks,

story books, novels, comic strip books) and literacy reference books such as dictionaries,

atlases, encyclopedias, and household books (cooking, repairing, and etc.) at all five

Chinese homes. There are also many supplies for children to practice their literacy at

home such as computers, small boards, markers, pencils, crayons and papers.

I found that the living style and culture of literacy of each family was unique.

Xinxin's family lived in an apartment building. The living room was full of children's

toys and books and much stationery.

Lingling's family lived in a newly built house near a secondary school in a quiet

neighborhood. The home decor was simple and plain. There was an electronic piano in

the living room. There were many children's literature books both in Chinese and English,

as well as several books in Swedish found in Lingling's bedroom.

Laurie's family lived in a house that is close to both her public school and her

Chinese school. There were several traditional Chinese paintings and calligraphy on the

walls (see Appendix B), a great variety of Chinese and English literature books in the

bookshelves, and many supplies for her to practice literacy. There was a Chinese cultural

atmosphere at Laurie's home.

Star's family lived in the neighborhood near the school. In the living room, there was

a nice piece of traditional Chinese painting. The decoration style was simple. On the floor

of the living room, there were many supplies for Star to practice literacy by drawing,

writing, and making board games. There was a great variety of Chinese and English

children's literature books as well as parents academic and reference books at home.

There was a rich literacy (English and Chinese) environment at Star's home.

Sky's family also lived in a neighborhood close to the school. The decoration style

reflected modern western fashion. Nearly all books, magazines and newspapers at home

were in English. There were many supplies in the living room and bedroom. Sky had

many toys at home and lots of games such as Game Boy. There was an English literacy

and western culture environment at Sky's home.

4.3.1.2 Motivational Literacy Climate: Parents' Attitude toward Bilingual Literacy

In addressing literacy development of the young participants I have followed

Leichter's (1984) designations. Researchers (Ariza, 2006; Li 2006a; Li, 2003) find that

most Chinese parents highly value their children's education. They consider education as

a bridge to better career opportunities and a higher standard of living in the future. Many

Chinese parents put great emphasis on their children's performance at public school. For

example, they highly value what teachers say in the report card and carefully examine the

grades received. English language fluency or competence is a very important component

of children's good performance at school. In other words, parents pay a great deal of

attention to their children's English literacy development at school. In this study, parents

of all five children emphasized their children's performance at public school.

There were different attitudes among parents who sent their children to learn

Mandarin at the community Chinese school. It seemed that parents would like their children to learn the Chinese language and know about Chinese culture for various reasons. These might include some parents sending their children to the school for convenience. It was easier to pick up their children at the community Chinese school after work. Laurie, Xinxin, and Lingling's mother's each said, "[The community Chinese school] is very convenient". For most Chinese parents, if they did not send their children to the community Chinese school, there was no one available at home to take care of children after school. If they did send children to other educational organizations, such as day care, it would be much more expensive. Since all five children's parents worked or studied at the local university, sending their children to the community Chinese school was thought to be a good choice for saving time and money, and it provided an opportunity to learn the Chinese language and culture. Parents reflected on the ethnic pride and the necessity of learning the Chinese language and culture. Xinxin's mother said, "We are Chinese, we need to learn Chinese". Lingling's mother concurred and stated, "We are proud to be Chinese. It is our pride to learn Chinese and maintain Chinese culture". It was then evident that parents believed it is significant and necessary for children to learn the Chinese language and Chinese culture. This was made clear when Star's mother said, "We are Chinese and if we do not know or understand Chinese, it is a great regret". Star's parents thought that learning the Chinese language (Mandarin) and culture would be a great treasure for Star. In this way, when he grew up, he would not regret having missed out learning his native language and culture.

Another common reason some parents sent their children to learn Mandarin at the

community Chinese school was that when they went back to visit family relatives and

friends in China, children could communicate better in Mandarin. Star's family concurred

with this thought by stating, "If we go back to China to visit family relatives such as

grandmothers and grandfathers, Mandarin is the only effective language for

communication."

Another reason parents gave for sending their children to community Chinese school

was to have their children learn Mandarin. Beyond this commonality, parents had

different levels of expectations. The diversity of expectations is captured in the following

comments: Sky's mother's expected Sky

> to learn Mandarin; at least know spoken-Mandarin and not to forget Mandarin. I did
> not expect him to learn the whole Chinese language system, perhaps just speaking a
> little bit of Chinese.

Star's parents' expectations were for him to,

> Learn to understand, speak, read and write in Mandarin. That way there are more
> opportunities for him to communicate with other children at Chinese school.

Similarly, Xinxin's mother stated,

> Xinxin can learn more about reading and writing in Mandarin at the community
> Chinese school.

Lingling's mother noted that Lingling's Mandarin reading comprehension improved a lot

after she went to the community Chinese school. Laurie's mother's expectation for her

was to improve her overall Mandarin.

Some parents voiced higher expectations for their children to practice listening,

speaking, reading and writing while others observed thought learning to speak Mandarin

was sufficient. It is thought that parents' expectations and attitudes toward learning

Mandarin will affect their literacy support and practices at home as well as their

children's language choice and efforts in Mandarin learning.

In addition to the above reasons for sending children to Chinese school, children's

own ideas also played a part in parents' decisions. For example, Xinxin's mother said,

"Xinxin loves Mandarin". Lingling's mother said "Lingling likes to go to Chinese

school". If children like or love the Chinese language and want to learn Mandarin, this

will affect the children's future language choices and further literacy development.

4.3.1.3 Parents' and Children's English Literacy Interactions and Practices at Home

All the parents said that they started to read to their children at a very young age.

Secondly, parents told me they engaged children in literacy learning especially in reading

in different ways. It is worth noting that five children's parents spoke fluent English.

They provided a variety of literacy resources and supported children's literacy

development at home through reading, writing, and vocabulary building activities.

However, the five participating children worked on their English literacy learning in

different ways at their homes. In addition to English literacy, they also spent time on

extracurricular activities such as drawing, playing the piano, watching TV and playing on

the computer.

Xinxin's mother told me that she spent a lot of time on Xinxin's English reading

development. She took Xinxin to libraries at least once a week to borrow children's books.

When Xinxin was in Junior Kindergarten at another school, she got a list of leveled books

from the teacher who also told her that when children complete the Beginner Level Three,

they can read long novels or chapter books by themselves. Therefore, she often went to

the library and borrowed leveled books for Xinxin. Furthermore, Xinxin read Home

Reading Books to her parents who listened carefully to her pronunciation and helped with

new words. Her parents taught phonics during the reading sessions. For example, once

they worked on the "oo" sound; Xinxin's mother gave Xinxin some words like good,

book, cool and let her find out what sounds "oo" makes in different words. In addition,

when Xinxin asked her parents to spell a new word, her mother would usually pronounce

the word first and let her guess the spelling and then teach the correct spelling. Xinxin's

mother found that Xinxin learned a lot of new words from TV such as names of many

animals and plants that she did not know. Besides reading, Xinxin's parents also spent

time supervising her printing homework. At home, Xinxin liked to make cards and wrote

to friends who had moved away. In brief, Xinxin's parents stated that they spent a lot of

time with Xinxin on her English language literacy development including phonics,

spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary building, and reading development.

Star received similar parental support. His parents told me they read at home by using

such tools as Home Reading Books and library books. They also practiced similar

strategies for spelling and phonics which involved spelling based on pronunciation.

Besides reading, Star also liked to draw pictures, design board games, make cards and

watch sports and children's programs on TV at home. According to his mother, Star also

attempted to write on the computer. Once she took him to her office, and Star wrote a

short journal about his weekend in a Word document on the computer. In brief, Star's parents said they provided much parental support at home for Star's English literacy development such as reading and writing.

Lingling's mother worked in another city and came back home on the weekends. She told me that she would like to work with Lingling on her school home work such as Home Reading Books and Printing Homework. She said that on weekdays, it was Lingling's father who read with Lingling at home. Due to her parents' busy working schedule, Lingling may not get as much parental support as other children in the development of English literacy. However, Lingling spent a lot of time working with her sister on literacy related activities such as word guess, reading and creating stories.

Laurie's mother told me she studied at the local university and was very busy with her own school work, so Laurie did a lot reading and writing on her own. Laurie, in Grade two, had formed good studying habits at home, and spent most of her time reading books, or writing letters or cards to friends at home. The public school teacher said that Laurie was a fluent reader at her grade level and she has already been given chapter books to read for the Home Reading program. Laurie's mother said that Laurie was an independent learner who did all the homework by herself and would ask for help only if necessary. Even though Laurie's mother was busy, she still spent time going to libraries with Laurie to borrow books, sending her to learn German on the weekend, and accompanying her to piano lessons and drawing lessons. In brief, Laurie's mother said she has paid attention to Laurie's education including English literacy development.

Sky's father worked in the USA on weekdays and his mother was busy at work. Usually, Sky spent after school time watching TV and doing a little bit of reading and writing at home. Sky's mother said she focused on Sky's Home Reading Books; no matter how busy she was, she still found time to listen to Sky's reading and tutoring his printing homework. Sky's mother told me that on the weekends she brought Sky to the library to borrow books. She expressed that there was a small section with children's literature books in the nearby library, so sometimes she would like to go to the central library where she could find a larger selection of different genres of children's literature books. Sky loved science books especially books on space, universe, the galaxies and planets. His mother liked to choose some story and picture books for him in order to balance his reading interests. After receiving Sky's report card from school, Sky's mother decided to spend time on improving his writing by asking Sky to write at least one sentence of what happened at school every day at home. Sky's mother said she paid much attention to Sky's English literacy development.

4.3.1.4 Mother Tongue Maintenance

Participating parents' comments reflected their commitment to support their children's bilingual literacy development at home. For example, Xinxin's mother said,

We (parents) speak Mandarin all the time at home while Xinxin will communicate with us thirty percent of the time in English and seventy percent in Chinese.

Similarly, Star's mother said,

We (parents) speak Mandarin nearly all the time at home while Star will respond twenty percent in English and eighty percent in Chinese.

Star's father said,

When I was in China, one of my American friends told me that if the natural language environment is English, you had better speak Mandarin with your child. There is no need to worry about their English development; he would pick up English quickly. So I have great confidence in Star's English fluency and persist in speaking Mandarin at home.

Lingling's mother said,

We (parents) speak Mandarin nearly all the time at home ninety five percent of the time while she speaks twenty percent in Chinese and eighty percent in English. We sometimes speak English at home to practice our English and learn from her.

Laurie's mother said, "

I speak Mandarin all the time at home and Laurie speaks seventy percent in English and thirty percent in Chinese.

Sky's mother said,

I try to speak Mandarin as much as I can at home, about eighty percent and so does his dad. Sky and his brother speak English nearly all the time at home.

Parents told me that they would like to speak more Mandarin at home, hoping their children would not forget Mandarin and improve their Mandarin understanding. Nearly all parents pointed out that after children went to daycare or kindergarten; they spoke less and less Mandarin and more and more English at home. To some degree, this phenomenon reflected the assimilative process of public education. But it is neither fair nor easy to make a conclusion saying that it is the fault of public education. In fact, the current dominant English language environment could be one major contributing factor of the assimilation that could be the main reason why some Chinese parents would like to help their children to maintain their first language. The above evidence suggests that if parents persisted with speaking Mandarin at home, children would likely still speak some Mandarin at home, but if parents did not often speak Mandarin at home, how could their children speak Mandarin? In the study, I found that language choice and practice at home

could reflect parents' perception and support of first language maintenance.

Parents had different expectation levels for their children's first language

development, and this also greatly influenced their Mandarin literacy support at home.

Xinxin's mother said Xinxin's father spent time on weekends working with Xinxin

on the Chinese journal writing, and she also taught Xinxin Chinese characters that Xinxin

needed in her Chinese journal writing. There was a small white board at home that

Xinxin's mother used to teach her new Chinese characters, words, and phrases. They also

helped her to translate English nursery rhymes to Chinese, which was a part of the

Chinese journal writing homework. Xinxin liked to read or recite Chinese texts to her

parents and showed her progress in Mandarin learning at home. Xinxin's parents said that

they made a lot of effort to support her Mandarin learning at home.

Laurie's mother said that she helped Laurie in the Chinese journal writing, and she

supported Laurie's learning of traditional Chinese painting and writing. When Laurie

went back to China for a holiday, she learned traditional Chinese painting and writing and

developed an interest in it. While there was no teacher available here, fortunately, her

mother found a drawing class for Laurie to attend. When her father came to Canada for

Christmas in 2007, he bought Laurie several books on traditional Chinese painting and

writing (see Appendix B) in order to encourage and support Laurie's interest in traditional

Chinese painting and writing. Laurie's parents said that they did what they could to

encourage and support Laurie's Mandarin learning.

Lingling's mother said she liked to check Lingling's Chinese character writing in the

exercise book, listened to her reading Chinese texts in the textbook, and read new texts with Lingling on the weekends. For example, once she read a new Mandarin text called An Ant and A Bee from a textbook to Lingling at home. When she finished reading the text, Lingling laughed happily and told her that the Ant could not understand the Bee's writing on the leaves since they did not speak the same language. Lingling's mother was very happy that Lingling would fully understood the text, and she also used the opportunity to tell Lingling that it is of great importance to learn to write in Mandarin so that she can communicate with friends and relatives in China. Even though Lingling's mother was busy, she still spent time on weekends with Lingling working on learning Mandarin.

Star's parents said they spoke Mandarin all the time at home to facilitate Star's listening comprehension and oral communication in Mandarin. They said they also helped Star with Chinese journal writing and English nursery rhyme translation by teaching new words and phrases he could use in his journal. In addition, Star's parents also indicated that they listened to Star's reading texts, reciting Chinese (or translated) nursery rhymes and singing Chinese songs, and praised Star's performance in order to encourage him to learn more Mandarin and make further progress at Chinese school. Star's parents confirmed that they tried their best to support him in learning Mandarin.

Sky's parents said that they tried to speak more Mandarin with him in hopes he would speak more Mandarin at home. Sometimes Sky liked to read and recite the Chinese texts that he had learned, sing Chinese songs, and recite Chinese (or translated Chinese)

nursery rhymes at home. Sky's parents were surprised by his Mandarin progress, because before Sky went to the community Chinese school, he could not communicate with his grandparents in China on the phone. Sky's parents said they encouraged him to speak more Mandarin at home.

In summary, the five participating Chinese children's parents provided support for their children's first language maintenance in the format of journal writing, reading texts, daily oral practice, and authentic literacy activities.

4.3.2 Public School Literacy Environment

4.3.2.1 Democratic School Culture

Like the neighborhood, the public school was culturally and linguistically diverse. It was not uncommon for new students to arrive at the school speaking little English. There were about sixty English language learners (ELL) taking the pull-out ESL program (about twenty-two percent of the whole student population). On the left side of the school's entrance, there was a poster from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) saying "People come from all over the world to make Canada their new home" and "Let's welcome our new friends, neighbors and families". In the middle of the poster, there was a house in front of which children from different countries held hands and smiled happily (see Appendix D). At the school entrance, there was a cupboard in which there were many artifacts from different parts of the world (see Appendix D). Each artifact told a different story and represented places where students originally came from. The exhibition indicated the multicultural nature of the school and respected different cultures.

Inside the school, there were displays of students' work with mathematics work, drawings,

and newsletters on the wall (see Appendix D). Near the primary entrance, there were two

large paintings (see Appendix D): one was about children from different countries happily

holding hands around the globe, which promoted children as the key to the future; the

other depicted children from different countries holding hands in a circle in a nice and

friendly neighborhood. There were also several framed paintings depicting similar ideas.

All this reflected the multicultural context at the school and in the community, and

promotion of harmony, peace, friendship and cooperation.

Like the former principal who retired in the summer of 2007, the new principal told

me that the school emphasized students' literacy development, valued minority students'

home culture, and fully supported education research. The school teachers and staff were

friendly. It was observed that at the school, it was easy to hear different languages (such

as Mandarin, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Hindi) spoken and teachers did not criticize

students for speaking their first languages, but thought it was helpful for teachers' and

students' effective communication and students' better understanding of classroom

instructions.

4.3.2.2 Literacy Learning Environment: Immersing Children in English Literacy

I discussed the observed literacy learning environments based on the guidance of the

balanced literacy model: Immersing children in the language arts, that is "students need

to be immersed in all language arts (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing,

representing) and genres (e.g., narrative, poetry, blogs, video games), across the

curriculum through a variety of *interactive language experiences* (e.g., literacy and play

centers, drama)" (Bainbridge's, Heydon's, & Malicky's designations, 2008, p.48-51) .

Teachers' Positive Attitude toward Bilingualism

Mrs. Holly supported children's literacy development. Facing children at different

literacy levels, she would apply the general curriculum and then choose a specific

appropriate program for children based on their literacy levels and needs. She stated,

> There is a wide of range of language abilities among children here. You still present
> the same overall program and then you select specific things that children need.

She also thought that there was a close relationship between reading and writing:

> Basically, when you look at literacy (development), children learn to read first and
> then some of those strategies will transfer to their writing. Writing is a developmental
> thing for most children, through age and skills.

For children's first language development, she thought that it was important for

children to maintain their first languages. She found that

> For some children, they may be born in Canada, but English is not the language
> spoken at home. You want to encourage them to keep their first language. It is
> important to maintain children's first language and I try to get this message to parents:
> 'Do not replace the first language with English. It is adding another language literacy
> experience'.

Even though there are many differences between English and Chinese, Mrs. Holly

believed that certain reading skills in the children's first language could be transferred to

English learning. She explained,

> There are certain similarities. Children who are able to speak and begin to read in
> their first language can usually quickly transfer (those skills they have in their first
> languages) to the second language (learning). The idea is that there is a message in
> print, whether they are Chinese characters or English letters, similar skills are needed
> when you are learning English.

For the issue of children speaking their first languages at school, Mrs. Holly thought

that it was nice to have a translator who can help new-comers to understand and adapt

into new class. She stated,

> Certainly, we encourage English to be spoken in classroom while at school. But it
> matters if somebody needs translation. You get someone able to do that for you; of
> course it is of help. It is nice to have a translator.

In summary, Mrs. Holly thought that English literacy development was a developmental

process. She would like to choose specific literacy activities to help children at different

levels to develop their literacy learning, and she did a lot of reading and oral activities to

help children to improve their writing; for children's first language development, she

encouraged children to keep their first language and allowed children to speak their first

languages for better understanding and learning at school. While Mandarin Chinese is

different from English in many ways such as written forms, for children who are learning

two languages at the same time, it is more than just adding something else to learn, but to

some degree is a whole different adventure. There are further concerns regarding whether

and how oral literacy activities or input will help children develop print literacy

especially for English language learners without much English. Teachers need to think

about using visual and audio tools such as setting up multilingual word wall and

presenting multilingual videos in order to help children's literacy learning.

Talking about teaching English literacy in a diverse cultural and multilingual

classroom, Mrs. Will said that she used the same teaching strategies she used with

English-speaking children. She stated that children just learned English by immersing

themselves in the natural language environment. She reflected,

I am not sure that I did anything different if I was with all English-speaking kids. Because at this age group these children are just five or six years old, they seem to pick up the language just being in the room by watching carefully and listening carefully.

Similarly to Mrs. Holly, Mrs. Will believed that reading influenced writing development.

She also did a lot of oral activities to help children to get into printing. She noted,

I like children to sit around and speak, to be able to vocalize and then to get it in the printing and also do the drawing with it. [...] (The interviewer said, "Reading, writing, speaking and listening are involved in everyday literacy activities".) You cannot do one without the other. I print morning messages everyday. I think that is very helpful as well. [...] I think routines help them, and repetition of sentences [helps children in reading the morning message] and the way we do the calendar; we do it the same way, and repeat it day after day. Even children who are learning English; they do not know what it means, they can sing the calendar song. And children learning languages love to sing. They will sing before they speak. I know that's lovely for them to have music as well. Even though they do not know what they are singing, they still sing. I think that is really nice.

Mrs. Will also thought that repetition and daily routines such as reading the morning message and doing the calendar were helpful for children's English literacy development. In addition, she believed that singing or music was also a good way for children to learn English. Mrs. Will believed that it was important for children to be immersed in the classroom environment where natural and authentic English literacy learning took place.

For children's first languages development and learning English, Mrs. Will supported children's bilingual literacy development and stated,

I think they should do both. I am always interested to know what language they speak at home. I know it is very important to keep up a second language if you have it. It will benefit children later in life to have those languages. I do not think you want to lose it, you want to keep it.

In summary, Mrs. Will's expressed that children at this age learned English by naturally immersing themselves in the English-speaking language environment, and

repetition helped them to better understand the language; the oral experience would help

their printing; she supports bilingual literacy and thought it was important for children to

keep their first languages because they would benefit from that in the future.

Making Literacy Instructional Decisions

Mrs. Holly and Mrs. Will made an effort to know about all the children in their

classes: who they were, where they were originally from, what language they spoke at

home, and their English literacy level. For instance, when the new term began in

September 2007, Mrs. Holly introduced herself to the whole class and also designed the

All About Me activity to get to know about all children in her class (see Appendix E).

During morning news sharing or Show and Tell, children would share their news with the

class, or brought in something special, and then presented and talked about it to the class.

In this way, teachers could know more about children in the class and at the same time,

provided a good opportunity for children to get to know each other. Basically, the

teachers knew simple facts of students' language and literacy level in their first languages

(L1), such as Xinxin spoke Mandarin at home and attended the beginning level of

Mandarin class at the community Chinese school. If teachers could know more about

children's L1 literacy performance, this might help them to further understand and support

children's second language learning at school.

A month after school started there was a "meet the teacher" night. Parents and their

children came to school and met their teachers. It was a good opportunity for teachers and

parents to learn more about each other. For example, teachers could have a better idea of

students' family and home literacy environment; parents could have a better understanding of the school environment and may have some guidance in helping children to improve their English literary at home. Xinxin's father had a talk with Mrs. Holly and learned more about school literacy practices and Xinxin's performance at school.

Mrs. Will also conducted many fun activities to get know her students in the class. From the first week of school, she introduced a "Star of the Week/ Special Me" activity as part of the morning exercise. Every week one child was chosen to be the "Star of the Week". Mrs. Will would prepare a card on which also printed "Star of the week! (Child's name) You shine!" She would also put the child's information as well as his or her picture on the Special Me poster (see Appendix F). During this activity, the child would come to the front, wear a golden crown, sing the "Special Me" song together with the rest of the class, and put his or her right arm up in the air saying "Great! Great! Great!" Then the child would hold the poster and talk about himself or herself such as birth place, birthday, favorite book, favorite food, favorite animals, what I like most at school, what I do well, and who I admire. Sometimes, children would also write a biography in which they would talk about the language spoken at home, where they are originally from, and what they liked to do at home. The child would also bring something special to him or her such as favorite book, favorite toy to share with the class. After that, the child would choose several students who would like to tell the class what they know about the Star of the Week. Mrs. Will said that

We start to go over that each day about what you know about your friends up here. It is nice for parents as well. I encourage them to come in and see what's happening. Things really work for us and I think children love this. I think it is a good way to learn about each other and (it is) good for all the other children.

This is an amazing way to get to know and learn more about each student in the class; as well as promoting the idea that everyone in the class is special and his or her home culture and languages are valued at school. In addition to "Special Me", Mrs. Will also did morning news sharing/Show and Tell to provide a chance for children to get to know each other better. On the "Meet your Teacher" night, Star's family came to school, experienced Star's school and classroom environment, got to know his teacher and classmates and learned more about Star's performance at school. They liked the school very much.

Assessment was an important aspect of the two participating teachers' literacy programs. Both Mrs. Holly and Mrs. Will started to assess children's literacy level using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) by Joetta Beaver at the beginning of the school year. After assessment, each student got an alphabet letter that represented their reading level and this was also used by teachers for lesson planning and instruction. Teachers made their teaching plan and literacy instruction based on the results of DRA.

Balancing Literacy Instructional Components

Both Mrs. Holly's and Mrs. Will's classrooms immersed children in the language arts. There were many English literacy texts and artifacts in the classroom. Children were surrounded by different genres of children's literature, their own paintings or artwork (such as Halloween poster), seasonal greeting posters (in different languages), and

standard printing of Alphabet and Arabic numerals /numbers. (Mrs. Holly and Mrs. Will shared a big room. There was just a row of long tables used for exhibiting books that divided the large space into two classrooms).

Mrs. Holly and Mrs. Will arranged tables into different groups to promote children's discussion and cooperation. On grouping children, Mrs. Holly said,

> At the beginning of September, I had little information about the children, as time passes by, I see how groups are doing. During the school year, I may need to move children around to better their learning.

Mrs. Will further explained,

> The grade ones are working at tables in groups to promote talking (and sharing ideas with each other).

Next, I will discuss English literacy instruction in the order of four basic literacy skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Generally speaking, as children came to school, they were immersed in a natural English language environment. Nearly everything they heard or spoke was in English. This included greeting teachers and friends, singing O Canada, listening to morning announcements, responding to the attendance check and lunch plan, sharing morning news, listening to stories, daily communication with teachers and friends inside and outside classrooms, doing the calendar, learning literacy, mathematics and social science, spending time in listening, reading and play centers, Monday journal circle, library time-enjoying stories, and computer lab-discussing with friends, and book buddies—reading together. It seemed that every moment at school was an English literacy learning moment. As Mrs. Will said,

> Children seem to pick up the language just being in the room by watching carefully and listening carefully.

To some extent, there was a great amount of English related information input as long as children were at school. Teachers also provided many opportunities for children to have verbal or vocal experiences to improve or promote oral English, such as sharing morning news, doing the calendar, talking about weekend news, or discussing stories. Every Monday morning, teachers would ask children to make a nice, big circle to share their weekend news. Children started with "On the weekend ..." This is a good way to help children to become good listeners and good speakers. Mrs. Holly said,

> Yes, we do a lot of that (practice listening and speaking), too. The idea of sharing weekend news or things like that is that it is important to be a good listener, but you must be able to speak clearly.

Mrs. Will further stated,

> I spend a lot of time making sure that the pronunciation is correct, working on correcting incorrect grammar, and trying to get all children to speak slowly.

Mrs. Will would always wait for children to finish their talk, then write the misspoken word on the blackboard, read it aloud and teach the meaning of the word and then ask children to read after her so that children could practice the correct sounds and understand the correct meaning. In brief, both teachers care about not only children's literacy information input such as listening but also children's literacy output such as speaking out.

For print literacy (reading and writing) instruction, Mrs. Holly and Mrs. Will conducted contextualized teaching of skills and strategies; that is, putting literacy learning in a context. Both of them thought that reading would help children with their writing, and they did a lot of reading aloud. They selected different genres of children's

literature books and paid attention to text selection that would relate to the children's daily lives. In addition, Mrs. Holly and Mrs. Will chose diverse themes for different months of the school year including seasons for September, Thanksgiving and Halloween for October, five senses for November, Christmas for December, and snow for January. For example, Mrs. Holly once chose a story on Picture day since the class was also going to take pictures that week, and she once read a story of Wednesday is Spaghetti Day on that Wednesday. Mrs. Will read Halloween and Christmas stories to match the season. Since not all children in the class celebrated Christmas, Mrs. Will also read stories like Hanukkah, and how people from other places of the world celebrate the New Year. In this way, children's home culture was valued and respected; and teachers did not take for granted that all children just celebrated Christmas.

Reading Activities:

1. Interactive Read Aloud

Every morning, Mrs. Holly and Mrs. Will printed the Morning Message on a poster (see Appendix G and H), which was carefully selected according to the month theme such as fall and winter. Teachers would read the Morning Message with children every morning, which was believed to be a good way for children to get to know sentence patterns and punctuation, enlarge their vocabulary and be familiar with the daily school schedule. Mrs. Holly said,

> I am trying to write different types of sentences such as questions so that children are aware of punctuation. Children know exactly where there is a comma and period, and that pleases me. They are observing punctuation carefully.

Similarly, Mrs. Will stated that

> I print morning messages everyday. I think that is very helpful as well. I always write in the same way, such as the date, Dear children, and at the end, I always sign off, "Have fun" "With love". We speak it every day. This is a good way to start as well. I think routines help them, and (so does the) repetition of sentences. And the way we do the calendar: we do it the same way, and repeat it day after day.

After reading the morning message, Mrs. Will always asked "what happened today?" and

every child was given an opportunity to participate and tell what they were going to do

each school day. Star, a fluent reader at his grade level, often actively contributed.

I include an example of the morning messages below to show that teachers create

every chance for children to read aloud and practice their literacy which has been put in

an interactive context:

> Monday, November 19, 2007. Day 2
> Good morning, everyone.
> It is a cloudy day. Did you have a nice weekend?
> Please tell me about it in your journal this morning.
> We have library before lunch today and music
> right after lunch. This week we learn about
> our sense of taste. Have a good day!
> Love,
>   Mrs. Holly.

It is not difficult to notice the different sentence patterns in Mrs. Holly's morning

message, such as a statement, a question, a request as well as different tenses (present,

past and future tenses) in one morning message. Mrs. Holly usually began the morning

message by talking about the weather, and she wrote "Love, Mrs. Holly" at the end of the

message because she believed that "Every one in the class is special". From the above

discussion, it is clear to see that the morning message is a good way to start daily literacy

practices that engage children to participate while sending children the message that they are capable and fluent readers.

Discussing the calendar and days and months of the year was another daily routine (which usually took place right after morning recess) where children could actively participate in reading, counting, and speaking. Mrs. Holly would start by asking children the month of the year and days of a week, while Mrs. Will started with singing the Calendar song. Children can build their vocabulary of year, month, week, and days by actively participating in the calendar activity.

Teachers had at least two periods of Read Aloud story time every day. Teachers would read a variety of well-chosen books with the children. Usually, teachers would choose stories that were consistent with the theme of the month such as fall and winter. Teachers would hold the book facing children, read with great expression and sometimes they would stop at certain points to show children interesting pictures or discuss a funny plot element or characters in the story. It was not only about reading or listening but also about word recognition or building up children's vocabulary, reading comprehension and engaging children in further discussions on, for example the title, cover page pictures; predictions as to what would happen next, how characters might react in certain scene, and what children could learn from the story.

Besides promoting reading at school, teachers also created many visual tools to help children to learn vocabulary in a contextualized way such as building a Word Wall and a

picture Word dictionary for festivals, seasons and social science. Furthermore, teachers

sent Home Reading Books (all books were leveled) to parents at home at least once a

week. In Mrs. Holly's class, each child had a green folder for the Home reading program

in which they recorded the books children had read and parents' comments on children's

reading. Mrs. Holly believed that it was a good way to get parental involvement to

support children's literacy development. Usually, it was volunteers who sat with children

in the library and listened to children reading their books, and then reported to teachers

on children's reading process. Teachers would give children new leveled books in

January depending on children's reading progress. In addition to the Home reading

program, Mrs. Will also sent home the 100 most important words in English to help

children to improve their reading. She stated:

> The parents received twice the 100 most important words in the English language,
> that are the words used in English most frequently, such as, the, by and at. If children
> know these words by the end of Grade one, which is a good thing for their English
> literacy development. I send the sheet twice and hope parents will work with children
> on that.

According to the two participating teachers, the Home Reading program was a good way

to invite parental support for children's literacy development as well as to engage

children in literacy learning, especially reading, enlarging vocabulary, and learning tense

and punctuation. There is a debate in literacy studies on whether leveled books can truly

reflect children's reading level as well as the issue of actively engaging children in

reading the books they like. If children just consider reading leveled books as completing

part of homework and do not like the books at all, these leveled books may not truly help

children in building their reading interest or improving their reading development. It is important for teachers to choose books that are of specific relevance to bilingual children.

2. Shared Reading

Literacy Groups was a program at this public school that took place every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 9:30 until morning recess from the beginning of November to the middle of December. In Literacy Groups, all children in primary grades (Grade 1, 2 and 3) as well as some kindergarten children (those who had higher literacy levels) were assigned to different teachers to do literacy activities based on their literacy levels. Mrs. Will said that

> We have been doing the Literacy program for five years at this school, and everybody worked hard to get it going. It worked for this school because we group children according to their abilities in reading and writing, which is supposed to benefit the children. Not many schools are doing what we do, our school seems to be a model school, and some teachers have come to our school to see the literacy program.

According to Mrs. Will, Literacy Groups was based on the idea that children could learn English literacy better with children at the same the level.

There is an example of shared reading activity from the story *The Best Pet* in Mrs. Holly's Literacy Groups. All children read the title aloud *The Best Pet*, and every time after Mrs. Holly read "Every day you could hear the class say", children would read together "Mrs. Lane, Mrs. Lane, we want a pet—Not a fish, Not a dog, Not a bird, Not a cat, Something different, Something fun, To feed and love when our work is done". Both teachers and children participated in the story reading, this could help children to build

their confidence in being proficient readers in the reading activities. Based on the observed sessions, most shared-reading was done in the Literacy Groups Program rather than in the primary grade classrooms.

Book Buddies was another literacy program at this school. Grade one and grade two children were paired up with grade three and grade four children once a week for about thirty minutes in the afternoon from the beginning of October to the middle of December. Children went to the library, selected books, read and discussed together, chose and typed out their favorite part of the story in the computer lab. Sometimes grade ones and grade twos also drew pictures about their favorite part of a story. For example, a book buddy I will call Dk was reading a long story of *The magic bus* with Sky. He liked to engage Sky in story reading by asking his ideas on certain characters or plots in the story and asked him to read part of the story. Dk engaged Sky in reading in which both of them were readers and listeners. Sky was given chances to practice reading and learning from Dk on vocabulary, tenses and punctuation. Book Buddies provided opportunities for children at different grades to read together, promoting teamwork, cooperation and learning together. Teachers believed that Book Buddies was a good way to engage younger children in English literacy by learning from or with older children who might have similar reading interests and understandings about reading. Therefore, children working together could better facilitate their vocabulary building and better understandings of a text and certain language elements such as tense that teachers might not explicitly teach in the classroom.

3. Independent Reading

In Literacy Groups, children were given opportunities to read independently. For example, when Mrs. Holly finished reading the book *Alphabeasts*, she asked children to read *I am scared* at their table and then retell the story on a piece of paper in which children needed to fill in blanks and draw pictures. In summary, children read the book by themselves and used all reading and literary skills they had in order to find out the missing information. To some degree, it could be a reflective process for children to apply what they learned into practice and transfer teacher-taught knowledge to self-use knowledge, which is a highly complex process for young children.

In addition to the dependent reading in Literacy Groups, children also had opportunities to do independent reading in the classroom. For example, every day, when children finished their tasks (like journal writing and math), they could choose a book to read by themselves in the classroom that was a resource center full of various genres of books. There were many opportunities at school for children to read books independently and choose the books that they really liked. Most books in the classroom libraries were relevant to monolingual English-speaking children's world or life and might not afford bilingual children the identity option.

Writing Activities:

1. Interactive Write Aloud and Shared Writing

According to Mrs. Holly, There were lots of writing activities. She stated,

We do a number of shared writing activities. Sometimes children telling me what to write and they are watching and I am doing the writing; other times I am encouraging them to help me spell words or even handing them the marker to come up and print

the words as well. In this way, you are reaching everybody at their level and hope they all end up with the same level.

For example, Mrs. Holly would do a Character Web on *The Paper bag princess* with children. She asked children about the names of main characters and to use words to describe their personality. Children actively contributed their ideas and Mrs. Holly used different colors to represent each character and wrote children's ideas. A replica of the chart she used is below:

Princess	Prince	Dragon
Elizabeth	Ronald	-fire breathing
-pretty	- picky	-fast flyer
-brave	- crown, nice clothes	-gigantic
-smart	- bum	-capture people

In the shared-writing activities, teacher and children worked together to analyze the main characters' personality in the story. Children actively participated and contributed their ideas. Children's ideas were acknowledged and valued and this could help children to further build their confidence in their writing ability.

Mrs. Will did a similar interactive writing activity. She did a Story Map (example below) in which she and the children worked on characters and plots in the story. Children contributed their ideas and Mrs. Will wrote them down in the Story Map. Then children wrote on their own page in which they could choose to print the information or draw a picture to illustrate the story.

Story Map

Characters	Story Title	Setting
Lacey Mum	No clean clothes	Where: house, outside, walks
Bear teacher	**Author**	to school
Dog cat boy	Robert Munsch	When: morning, before school
Beginning	**Middle**	**End**
In the bedroom, no clean clothes.	Lacey meets animals who kiss her.	Lacey is kissed by a bear. All the children get T-shirts. All the animals want to kiss them.

In addition to printing the information of the chart, Star drew a picture of Lacey in yellow pajamas and a brown dress closet in the beginning part. He drew a cat kissing Lacey in the middle part. Lacey was kissed by a bear in the end part. He worked on the story map independently and did nice printing and coloring. He always completed tasks quickly and well (see Appendix I).

In summary, in the interactive writing activity, children were given opportunities to contribute their understandings and print out their ideas. And this would help children to build their confidence in writing and make them feel that they are or can be good writers and thinkers. Teachers also provided interactive writing and shared writing opportunities for children in the mathematics and social science classes. For example, children were asked what words they used to describe the size or shape of objects and what adjective words they would like to choose to describe certain seasons. Therefore, there were thinking aloud and interactive writing aloud in observed classrooms to facilitate

children's writing development.

2. Independent Writing

Every Monday morning children would sit in a circle to share their weekend news.

Then, they would bring their journal book to their tables and had ideas in mind and

worked independently on their journal writing. Usually they started with "On the

weekend," and sometimes they could choose from "On the long weekend," or "On the

holiday". There are also other independent writing activities such as tracing Thanksgiving

related words, filling in missing words in a Thanksgiving text, working on Christmas

crosswords, writing about My friends and I, printing the Alphabet and words with 'ss'

sounds, etc. (see Appendix J). Every week, teachers also sent children one-page of Home

Printing work to practice their writing. Grade ones would print the Alphabet such as A, a,

apple, and grade two's would work on a more difficult exercise such as reader response

and writing about your favorite book or TV shows.

In addition, children would also participate in independent reading activities in

Literacy Groups. For example, Xinxin and Sky worked on designing a lost cat poster

including drawing a picture of the cat, writing a contact phone number, and a title "I

found this cat, come and get the cat". They also worked independently on answering

reading comprehension questions on the story *A new friend*:

1. Why was Kevin so sad? (The teacher told them the sentence pattern should be "He
was sad because...") 2. Why didn't Kevin see the cat at first? 3. What changed for
Kevin from the beginning to the end of the story? 4. Have you even moved away
from your friends or felt lonely. Write about your experience.

In addition, they also worked on making up a story on *Carl's Christmas* that was a special

book in that there were words only on the first two pages, and the rest of book was just

pictures. Children needed to use logical thinking, creativity and imagination in their story

making and print out the story. In summary, children engaged in a variety of literacy

activities.

4.3.3 Community Chinese School Literacy Environment

4.3.3.1 Teachers' Perception of Teaching Chinese in Canada

Ms. Zhang expressed her views on different literacy teaching practices in China and

Canada.

> In China, the language environment is Chinese. Teachers put great emphasis on each
> character and making a phrase or a sentence. At a very young age, children are
> required to write in Chinese. But if we directly transplant the teaching methods from
> China to Canada, this does not make sense and it is not suitable for children in North
> America. Since children are growing up in an English dominant language
> environment, they may just speak Chinese for an hour or two in a day. Some children
> may speak Chinese at home, if their parents care about Chinese; some may speak
> English at home. Different children have different Chinese learning levels; different
> parents have different ideas on Chinese literacy. So it is not possible or appropriate to
> directly transplant the teaching methods from China to Canada.

Ms. Zhang recalled that in China children at very young ages were required to write and

read in Chinese by repetition practices, which was not suitable for Chinese children in

North America. She further stated that

> I often compare traditional Chinese literacy teaching methods with western English
> literacy instruction in Canada. Most of the time, it is a matter of appropriate
> combination of Chinese and Canadian pedagogy that works well for children in
> Canada. I firmly believe that Chinese children should be proud of being Chinese and
> learning Chinese language and culture.

> She thought that it was important for children to be interested in learning Chinese

and not forcing children to learn Chinese.

> My idea of teaching Chinese is to let children be in touch with Chinese culture, know basic Chinese language rules and skills in listening, speaking and reading and writing such as how to write Pinyin and Chinese characters. The most important thing is to let children keep or maintain their interest in learning Chinese.

Ms. Zhang also thought that it was easy for children to lose their mother tongue at a young age in an English speaking environment. And if they did not learn their first language now, they might not want to learn or may not have time and energy to learn their first language when they grew up.

> Children at the ages of five to ten even twelve, it is easy for children to lose their mother tongue. If they do not learn, at this time, it will be difficult for them to learn later. If they learn Chinese at this age, they can still continue to learn Chinese based on their former experience. The aim of the Chinese school is to maintain interest in learning Chinese. From a political point of view, it is important to keep the Chinese identity, and there are many things can be learned in the thousand years of Chinese history and culture.

Ms. Zhang made Chinese literacy instructional decisions based on children's age and the fact that they were very young and learning Chinese in Canada. She also believed that it was of great significance for Chinese children to learn Chinese language, know about Chinese culture, and be proud of being Chinese and keep their Chinese identity.

4.3.3.2 Chinese Literacy Instructional Components

Ms. Zhang taught younger children (from Kindergarten to Grade 3) Mandarin at the community Chinese school. There were twenty children by January, 2008 who made up two small classes: children in Class one just entered the Chinese school in September 2007, and children in Class two have been learning Chinese for more than a year. There were two sessions: Session 1: from 4:00 to 4:40 in the afternoon for Mandarin learning especially reading and writing; Session 2: from 5:00 to 5:30 in the afternoon with a

variety of Mandarin related literacy activities, such as reading journals, listening to stories, singing Chinese songs, practicing Chinese nursery rhymes, and making artifacts.

Generally speaking, Session 1 mainly involved teaching the Mandarin language including three steps: review, new lesson and exercise or practice. The first part focused on review. As the old Chinese saying goes, "gaining new insights is through reviewing old material". At the beginning of September 2007, it was Ms. Zhang who led Class one children to read Chinese characters and texts that they learned, then asked some children to come to the front and read those Chinese characters and texts; sometimes they would use body language and let other children guess what Chinese character it was. And at the same time, she asked class two children to write the learned Chinese characters in their Tian Ge Ben or exercise book (See Appendix K) or read the learned texts by themselves. When class one children learned some Chinese characters and several texts, Ms. Zhang made several reading cards (See Appendix K) and chose one reading leader each day to take charge of review time. For example, once Sky was chosen by Ms. Zhang to be the reading leader who would decide which children came to front to read: first, he led children to read 我的家 (Wo de jia) p.16. (My family). Then, he chose Tom to read 数字歌(Shu zi ge) p.11. (Numbers), followed by TU who read 字(Zi) p.5-6 (Chinese Characters), AX read 山村(Shan chun) p.12 (A village), TT read 船(Chuan) p.22 (Boat), and KK read 学写字 (Xue xie zi) p.8 (Learning to write).When children in Class One finished reading all the reading cards, Ms. Zhang would give positive comments on their

work such as in Chinese "非常好" (Fei chang hao) and sometimes in English "Excellent" or "very good". Then Ms. Zhang led children to read the Chinese characters in the newly-learned text 太阳 (Tai yang) (The sun) several times (See Appendix K) and then she asked children to read it. For children who were hesitant to try, she would encourage and help them to try to read aloud. Ms, Zhang was trying to make sure that everyone in the class had tried or had a turn.

In the review part of the class, both teachers and children were involved in reading and writing to be familiar with what they had already learned in different ways through interactive and shared reading: children read after the teacher, engaged in role-play reading; for independent reading: children read at the front, some acting as reading leaders; independent writing: class two children copied Chinese characters, and words or phrases and sentences and did literacy exercise from the text books (such as making up a word phrase or a sentence, and matching words with their consistent meanings).

Second, after review, it was time for a new lesson (mainly about reading and writing). In general, Ms. Zhang first wrote new Chinese characters along with Pinyin equivalents, or word phrases with Pinyin or a (part of) the text on the blackboard while reading aloud (if it was a text, she would later underline the new words and add Pinyin equivalents); and then she led children to read after her several times and asked each child to read by themselves. Sometimes they would also do movement activities to learn simple Chinese characters like 日月水火土 (Pinyin: ri yue shui huo tu) (sun, moon, fire, water and earth) with children and at the same time read out the Chinese character. After children learned

how to read new Chinese characters or word phrases or a (part of a) text, Ms. Zhang

would choose several (3 to 5) Chinese characters and write them on the blackboard; then

she would write each Chinese character step by step on the blackboard at the same time,

while children were observing carefully. She asked children to follow her to write the

Chinese character in the air using their fingers step by step several times.

In the teaching process, there was a large amount of repetition or verbatim copying

that is a traditional part of teaching Chinese writing. Ms. Zhang believed that children

learn better by repetition at this young age.

Third, after children learned to read and write several Chinese characters or part of a

text, it was time for them to practice how to write those Chinese characters. Most of the

time, Ms. Zhang would ask children to write 3 to 5 Chinese characters with Pinyin ten

times/one line in their exercise book. Later, she would check out children's writing and

marked their writing with simple ticks and scores (such as 90 or 100) or stars (3 or 5

stars). If there was still time, she would ask children to draw a picture of each word on

the opposite side of the paper, and later checked out the drawing and gave positive

comments such as "做得好" (Zuo de hao) (good job), "画得真漂亮" (Hua de zhen piao

liang) (Your drawing is so beautiful).

In summary, in the whole teaching process, Ms. Zhang was the director giving

instructions, and children did a lot of responding echoing the teacher. This might reflect a

certain aspect of the traditional Chinese literacy teaching process in mainland China: the

teacher is the authority for knowledge and responsible for the instruction; all children

need to do is listen and follow what the teacher says. Still during the whole teaching

process, children did participate and contribute by being reading leaders or making new

words and phrase. Ms. Zhang always made positive comments on children's reading and

writing to motivate their interest to learn.

After recess, it was Session Two in which there were various Chinese literacy

activities. Monday was Weekly Journal Day. Children in Class two were required to write

journal once a week. They could write anything they liked and it did not matter whether it

happened on the weekend or not. Sometimes not all Class two children handed in their

journal on Monday, Ms. Zhang would ask them the reason why they did not hand it in

and encouraged them to write it on Monday night and hand it in on Tuesday so that they

could still be awarded stars and might win a better place on Prize day. Ms. Zhang not

only read all the journals, but also liked to ask questions related to the content of each

journal in order to check whether children had listened carefully and fully understood

what they had heard; she also underlined good sentences and wrote or orally gave the

children positive comments. For example, once Ms. Zhang read Star's journal about his

favorite Chinese poem and asked related questions such as what's the name of his

favorite poem? Who is the author? What's the poem about? Did anyone else know the

poem? Can you recite the poem for us? Ms. Zhang also asked for children's comments.

(A boy I will call) TT said "太棒了!" (Tai bang le) (Excellent!) and that was also written

in Star's journal by Ms. Zhang. In a word, it is a process including reading journals,

asking questions about journals, making positive comments and marking journals.

Children were given an opportunity to practice their writing and sharing ideas, as well as

learn from each other and learn to be a good reader and thinker.

On Tuesday, children would listen to stories or make crafts. Ms. Zhang brought

several tapes or cassettes of children stories (in Mandarin).Usually, they would listen to

two or three stories depending on the length of each story. For example, once children

listened to *Xiao Ma Guo He* (A pony crosses the river)" and *San Zhi Yang* (Three sheep)".

All children listened carefully. After each story, Ms. Zhang would ask several questions

about the story such as did the pony successfully cross the river? Why or why not? What

did you learn from the story? Some children said "Do not listen to others and try it by

yourself". Ms. Zhang asked children what they learned from *San Zhi Yang*, and Xinxin

and Laurie talked about the importance of teamwork and cooperation. Ms. Zhang praised

them for their good answers. In summary, children not only listened to stories but also

thought about the meaning of stories. Children could also enlarge their vocabulary and

broaden their view. Besides listening to stories on Tuesday, at the end of fall term, they

also learned Chinese nursery rhymes such as 小白兔 (Xiao bai tu) (Little rabbit) as well

as learned nursery rhymes in English and then translated it into Chinese such as What is

under the carpet? 什么藏在地毯里? (Shen me cang zai di tan li), Mr. Alligator 鳄鱼先

生 (E yu xian sheng), Five monkeys 五只小猴子 (Wu zhi xiao hou zi) and Five little

snowmen 五个小雪人 (Wu ge xiao xue ren). Based on these nursery rhymes, children

did crafts making figures from their readings such as a little rabbit and a ladybug (See

Appendix K).Ms. Zhang noted that making crafts was an interesting hands-on activity

which could also motivate children's learning interest in Mandarin as well as help them to better understand and remember the nursery rhymes they had learned.

On Wednesday, some children would tell stories, or Ms. Zhang read stories to them, or they learned to sing some Chinese songs. It was not the teacher who decided which children would tell stories, but the children themselves who voluntary participated. When all children completed their turns to tell stories, Ms. Zhang would read stories to all children. She brought children's literature books herself. As usual, after reading each story, she would ask children some related questions about the story to check their comprehension. In the fall term, children learned to sing four Chinese songs. They were not simply learning to sing songs, but also learning to recognize more Chinese characters and learn about culture. In brief, Ms. Zhang focused on their communicative skills in spoken Mandarin by telling stories, enlarging children's vocabulary by reading aloud a great variety of Chinese stories, and engaging children in learning about Chinese culture by singing and acting out Chinese songs.

Thursday was Show and Tell. Children would bring particular things that they loved such as toys, cards, clothes, pencils and etc. They took turns talking about the item they brought such as what it was, where they got it, and why they wanted to bring it to school. Other children could also ask questions about the item. In this activity, children learned to be fluent speakers, good listeners, and logical thinkers; and they practiced their spoken Mandarin. It was also a good opportunity for teachers and children to learn about each other and enhance effective communication and better understandings.

Friday was "Mysterious Jar" and "Prize Day". Ms. Zhang prepared a plastic container. Every Friday a child brought a container with a number of items in it, and the other children guessed how many items were in the container. The winner would be the next person to bring "mysterious" things. Counting in Mandarin was the major task in this activity. In addition, Friday was also "Prize Day" that every child was excited about. Every child would get a small prize (that was provided by the school). Children who had won more stars during the week would choose their prizes first. Ms. Zhang considered this to be a good way to encourage children to learn Mandarin. Ms. Zhang told children that if you worked hard at learning Mandarin, you did well and got more stars for your work (such as daily writing, journal writing, reading, and quiz) and you could get more chances to be the first to choose prizes. Ms. Zhang used continuous praise or encouragement and small prizes to motivate children's interest in learning Mandarin.

In this community Chinese school, children not only learned the Chinese language (Mandarin) but also enhanced their sense of national pride as Chinese and learned about Chinese culture.

Every Monday, there was a ceremony of raising the Chinese flag, listening to and singing the Chinese anthem. Two children would be chosen to hold the Chinese flag; others stood straight and looked at the flag with great respect while listening to the Chinese anthem and then singing it. After the ceremony, Ms. Zhang sometimes reminded children of classroom rules, or made a teaching summary or introduced new students, or read news from a Chinese newspaper.

For example, Ms. Zhang once read an article from a Chinese newspaper about Chinese schools gaining popularity in the Greater Toronto area. A lot of Chinese parents sent their children to Chinese school. One public school in Scarborough started to provide a thirty-minute Chinese course every week. One Chinese school principal stated that if the government could support Chinese schools, schools would provide better education for children. After reading the news, Ms. Zhang discussed the main ideas of the article with the children and mentioned the popularity of Chinese schools. The children had a great discussion [in Chinese]. Some said that "the Chinese language is popular, Chinese is beautiful". Others said that "many Chinese immigrants come to Canada every year and parents want their children to learn Chinese". Ms. Zhang told the class that the article said that the Chinese economy was developing very fast, the status of the People's Republic of China has improved a lot, and the P.R.C. plays an important role on the international stage. Ms. Zhang also stated that "We should be proud that we can go to Chinese school and learn Mandarin." Ms. Zhang read this article to help children to enhance their national pride of being Chinese, thank their parents for sending them to Chinese school, and cherish the opportunity to learn Chinese.

On Mid-autumn Day in 2007, during recess Ms. Zhang wrote the Tang poem 静夜诗 (Jing ye shi), which is about missing one's hometown. She drew a picture including a house, a full moon, a mountain and trees on the blackboard. After recess, Ms. Zhang asked children the reason why today was special for Chinese people. Several children

answered that "今天是中秋节" (Jin tian shi zhong qiu jie) (Today is Mid-autumn Day).

Ms. Zhang smiled and said "It is the Moon Festival". Then they read the poem together.

Besides reading the poem, Ms. Zhang also brought moon cakes for each child. Children

appreciated the Chinese poem and enjoyed the moon cakes. Mid-Autumn festival is a

traditional Chinese festival and is an important part of five-thousand years of Chinese

history and rich Chinese culture. This festival is similar to Thanksgiving in Canada. It

involves family get-togethers, enjoying the bright moon, tasting moon cakes and grapes,

and talking about ancient poems. (Nowadays, most Chinese people prefer to watch the

CCTV Mid-Autumn special celebration program at home rather than appreciating poems).

Ms. Zhang said that children had a meaningful Mid-autumn Festival celebration by

appreciating one example of the Tang dynasty poem by Li Bai and enjoying the moon

cakes to celebrate at the community Chinese school.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, I presented and discussed my data gathered during classroom

observations, interviews with teachers, parents and children and children's artifacts at

home and school. I introduced my case including two participating schools, three teachers

and five Chinese families. I described three literacy learning environments, namely, home

literacy environment, public school literacy environment, and community Chinese school

literacy environment. In each literacy environment, I further discussed different aspects

that could influence children's literacy development such as parents' attitude and levels of

expectation toward English and Mandarin, school culture, teachers' perceptions of

bilingual literacy, teachers' instructional decision making and literacy teaching

components. In the next chapter, I will critically discuss the data in relation to research

findings presented in my literature review and draw some implications for teachers,

parents and educational policy makers.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of the Study

My study has examined three literacy environments of practices in which young

Chinese immigrant children are becoming biliterate. As stated earlier, my major research

question was: **What literacy practices do young Chinese immigrant children engage**

in at home, in public school and community school? And my sub-questions included:

For primary grade Chinese immigrant children studying in southwestern Ontario

Canada, what are some similarities and differences among the observed language

and literacy practices in the three literacy environments? What are the perceptions

of the children's parents about their children's English literacy learning and their

first language (Mandarin) development? The purpose of the qualitative case study is to

give a rich and thick description of Chinese children's bilingual literacy practices at home

and school and better understand their bilingual literacy development in an

English-speaking society.

In this final chapter of the thesis, I will summarize findings as presented in chapter

four and critically reflect on my findings. In particular, I discuss the implications of the

home and school literacy learning environments and make recommendations for school

administrators, teachers, parents and educational policy makers. I then make suggestions

for my future research.

5.2 Summary, Discussions of the Findings and Conclusion

5.2.1 Summary of the Findings

My data indicate that some support existed for bilingual literacy development for the five Chinese immigrant children who participated in my study, namely, in formal public school education, through the supportive heritage language school in the community and in the children's home literacy environments. The public school reflected a democratic multilingual and multicultural school culture where minority cultures and languages were valued and respected. At the community Chinese school, Mandarin was taught with a combination of Chinese teaching methods and contextual learning, through direct teaching and play. A variety of resources supported children's bilingual literacy development at home.

The five Chinese immigrant children who participated in my study learned English by being immersed in an English language environment at the public school. They learned Mandarin through verbatim repetition, and some contextualized literacy activities at the community Chinese school. They learned bilingual literacy at home with varying amounts and kinds of parental support. The data suggest that all parents preferred Canadian pedagogy to traditional Chinese skills-based and teacher-centred pedagogy, that is to say they preferred contextualized and child-centred learning. However, they also noted that children began to lose fluency in their first language once they started daycare and kindergarten. In order to help them maintain their first language parents sent their children to the Chinese community school.

5.2.2 Discussion of the Findings

5.2.2.1 Home Literacy Environments

Home literacy environments greatly influence children's literacy development

(Leichter, 1984; Li, 2006; Anderson, Li, Ku, Shu, & Yue, 2002) and rich home literacy

environments can further facilitate children's literacy development (Taylor, 1983;

Sulzby& Edwards, 1993). Home literacy materials (Taylor, 1983; Leichter, 1984) or

resources (Anderson, Li, Ku, etc., 2002) are an important part of home literacy

environments. In all five participating Chinese immigrant families, there were diverse

literacy recourses for children to practice their literacy skills, such as children's literature

books, parents' reference books, academic papers and manual books, as well as stationary

supplies.

A home literacy environment reflects the parents' emphasis on children's literacy

cultivation and attitudes toward the first language. This was demonstrated by the actions

of the families who participated in my study. Sky's family came to Canada in 1995 when

there were not many Chinese immigrants and job opportunities were limited for Chinese

immigrants. English was their second language which added to their difficulties in

achieving career success. Since Sky's elder brother struggled at first to succeed in the

Canadian education system, Sky's parents decided to promote Sky's English literacy

development perhaps to the detriment of his Chinese language retention.

This study did not find a close relationship between family status or family

socio-economic situations and parents' support of children's literacy development as

Anderson, Li, Ku, et al., (2002), Li, (2006b) or Teale (1986) did. In Xinxin's family, her

father was completing his doctoral studies at the university while her mother stayed at

home to take care of the children. Xinxin's parents' indeed fully supported her Mandarin

and English literacy development as well as extracurricular activities such as swimming,

skating, dancing, and drawing. To some degree, Xinxin's family supported her

well-rounded education. Based on my study, I found the amount of parental literacy

support does not closely or directly relate to a family's socio-economic situation, but

parents' education could affect their support of their children's literacy learning.

The findings of this study are consistent with studies on the influence of parents'

attitude toward parental support of children's literacy development or literacy events at

home (Leichter, 1984; Kenner, 2004; Li, 2006a and Harding-Esch &Riley, 2003). This

means positive or balanced parental attitudes toward English and Chinese will cultivate

balanced parental support of children's bilingual literacy development. In this study,

Lingling's, Xinxin's, Laurie's and Star's parents have balanced attitudes towards the two

languages, English and Mandarin, and they actively engaged their children in a great

variety of bilingual literacy events at home.

Star's parents insisted upon speaking Mandarin at home to facilitate his first

language maintenance, as well as English literacy development such as tutoring his

English reading and writing by reading with or to him and supporting his writing activity.

Conversely, Sky's parents thought that English was the "high prestige language" in

Canadian society; they preferred to spend more time and energy supporting Sky's English

literacy development at home instead. This implies that the status of certain languages has a great effect on parents' decisions to support certain kinds of children's literacy development (Harding-Esch & Riley, 2003, p.85).

In addition to parents' attitudes toward English and Mandarin, parental expectations are closely related to the efforts that children make as well as their literacy progress. For example, in this study, Sky's parents had lower expectations for his Mandarin learning, that is, they just wanted him not to forget Mandarin and at least speak Mandarin. It is worth noting that Sky did not try as hard as he could to do well at the community Chinese school. It is suggested that an appropriate degree of expectation is helpful to further children's improvement in literacy learning.

Choosing whether or not their child should use their Chinese names at the public school is not an easy choice for Chinese immigrant parents. Some thought using English names were better for children to be accepted and immersed in the Canadian culture of the public school. Other parents wanted to keep their children's Chinese names at the public school but expressed interest in combining the family name or part of children's first names in Chinese with English to create an English name still maintaining Chinese cultural elements. Only a few Chinese immigrant parents insisted upon using Chinese names for their children at the public school.

In summary, home literacy environments plays a significant role in children's balanced bilingual literacy development. My data contain numerous examples of practices that contribute to children's bilingual literacy development. These include

keeping diverse and rich literacy resources in the home, parents' English fluency, parents' appropriate expectation levels, parents' positive and balanced attitude toward English and Chinese literacy learning, and parents' commitment to children's balanced bilingual literacy development. This study did not find a close relationship between parents' support of children's literacy development and family status or family socio-economic situation, as well as parents' literacy experiences and educational background. However, the home literacy environments analyzed in this study reflect the traditional Chinese culture where the child's education in a family is most important, and where parents make great sacrifices to fully support children's educational development.

5.2.2.2 Public School Literacy Environment

In North America, the public school as an essential part of formal education plays a significant role in facilitating children's English literacy development. In addition, research studies indicate that some schools play an important role in maintaining minority children's first languages. The public school observed in this study is a multicultural and multilingual public school, which provides a democratic school culture or climate to meet the needs of children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As in the study of Schecter & Cummins (2003), the public school in the study has established an inclusive, democratic and friendly climate for all students, respects and highly values students' diverse cultural backgrounds, uses multilingual and multicultural approaches in teaching and learning, provides opportunities for minority students to express themselves, and actively builds effective communication with parents and the community. The friendly

staff and teachers make parents and children feel welcome. The multicultural exhibition cupboard allows children to feel proud of their cultures. Children do not feel restricted from speaking their first languages and they are given opportunities to express themselves in various activities such as talent shows. The children's families are integrated into school life, through activities such as "meet your teacher" night and multicultural dinner night that make parents feel that they are well connected with the school, while the parents' council make parents feel that they are an important part of school and that their ideas are valued by the school as well. In my study, the five participating children's parents did participate in the activities such as "meet your teacher" night and multicultural dinner night, but their intention was to discuss their children's academic performance more than to socialize with teachers at the school.

In addition to a democratic school culture, the teachers' positive perception of the importance of first language maintenance and multicultural contexts as well as their English literacy teaching pedagogy also deeply influence children's bilingual literacy development (Gibbons, 2002; Ariza, 2006). In this study, the two public primary classroom teachers highly respected and valued their students' home cultures and first languages and helped them to negotiate the mainstream culture.

In the two observed primary grade classrooms at the public school, teachers valued children's first languages and home cultures and they also employed contextualized literacy teaching pedagogies, which facilitated children's English literacy development in their classrooms. The two teachers created an active, child-centred and supportive

teacher-guided learning environment, in which the teachers tried to learn more about children in their classes through well-designed activities such as All About Me and Special Me, acknowledged the literacy knowledge children brought to school by inviting children to talk about their culture traditions, met different children's needs and interests by applying level appropriate literacy instructions and providing appropriate support, encouraged English literacy explorations, and celebrated children's literacy progress.

The authentic and dynamic English literacy environment was helpful to children in that the daily routines helped children to develop their English literacy. The morning message gives teachers a good opportunity to explain "the day's activities for students" (Ariza, 2006, p.121). The Morning Message also "models the organizational function of writing (left to right, letter-by-letter sequence corresponding to the spoken word", punctuation, variety of sentence structure, and vocabulary building (Ariza, 2006, p.121). In summary, the two teachers in the study situated their English literacy teaching in contexts in which children actively participated in authentic English literacy activities, and they were both active learners and productive contributors. Moreover, if teachers could provide bilingual literacy texts such as setting up a bilingual or multilingual word wall as a visual tool, reading dual language books to children as audio tools, this would help children make stronger connections between their first and second languages at school. In the two observed classrooms at the public school, there was a multilingual New Year's greeting sign and several cultural artifacts that children brought to school, while more multilingual visual and audio literacy instruments can be presented and

applied in the classrooms in order to further facilitate children's literacy learning.

Finally, I would like to discuss the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and leveled books used by the two participating public school primary grade teachers in the study. At the beginning of school, the two teachers carried out DRAs to assess children's reading performance and they could get "the first set of 'just-right' books for their book bags" or specifically, for the Home Reading program (Taberski, 2000, p.37). According to Taberski (2000), these kinds of reading assessments or reading conferences should continue throughout the year (p. 37), at least twice a term, to fully evaluate children's reading performance and record their reading progress.

In addition to DRA, teachers also need to design or have their own assessments of children's literacy learning process (children as readers and writers) at different time of a school year, in order to "enhance the necessarily limited information provided by the tests" (Whitehead, 2007, p.104). Furthermore, besides teachers asking children to have a reading conference or reading assessment, children should also be given opportunities to choose to have a reading conference with teachers. In my study, I observed Sky was not interested in the leveled books, because most of the leveled books he read were out of date and not relevant to his reading interests (fiction and science) and Lingling just read leveled books as a part of homework; while Laurie and Xinxin enjoyed reading their leveled books.

Grouping strategies were employed by the two teachers to facilitate children's English literacy development. The findings from the observed classrooms revealed

children with both similar and different literacy skills and levels were paired up in small

groups to promote interaction and learning together. Changing of the groups was made

based on students' literacy level and learning needs. In addition to small groups, the

whole-group was also used in the two observed classrooms, most of time for read-aloud

and guided and shared writing. If teachers apply grouping strategies only based on the

result of DRA, English language learners (ELLS) may end up in the wrong group. DRA

groups children according to reading development levels for monolingual English

speakers and early levels of DRA reflect phonics knowledge, and may not be appropriate

for ELLS, for example, Chinese children may be grouped in the wrong group. There is a

lack of concern for children's first languages that may be greatly different from English.

When Chinese children are learning to read and write Chinese, they need to grasp the

language specific orthographic skills. And morphological awareness is more important in

Chinese learning (Chinese is a logographic language) while phonological awareness is

more important in English learning (English is an alphabetic language). Therefore,

learning to read and write Chinese is not exactly like learning to read and write English.

Teachers need to pay attention to the grouping strategies for ELLs in literacy instruction.

In summary, there is a cultural democratic school climate and multicultural and

multilingual school culture in the observed public school. The school respects, values and

celebrates children's diverse cultural backgrounds and first languages. Children are

regarded as active learners and productive contributors at school. Teachers seek to

understand and know about their students in class and carry out balanced literacy

instruction. The literacy instruction is presented in authentic contexts such as the morning message and the read aloud activities. Children can actively participate by using their prior knowledge and contributing to literacy explorations. The two primary grade teachers who participated in the study were aware of the benefits for children who maintain their first languages, however, as literacy instructors they tended to promote monolingual English literacy practices that may reflect the curriculum they applied as well their teaching perceptions. While there are still extensive debates on DRA, it is not easy to come to a conclusion about whether or not DRA is effective enough to help teachers to determine children's reading levels and whether using leveled books is helpful to improve children's reading at school. Since the leveled books are not sensitive to ELLs vocabulary needs, teachers cannot fully rely on the leveled books to help ELLs' literacy learning. In the study, the two participating teachers did not simply rely on DRA, but they also listened to other teachers' comments and conducted diverse reading activities to facilitate children's reading development.

5.2.2.3 Community Chinese School Literacy Environment

According to the parents' council and the principal, the community Chinese school in the study is an informal and nonpolitical education organization that serves Chinese families in the community. It is a non-profit school focused facilitating maintenance of the students' mother tongue (Mandarin) and development of Chinese culture in a dominant English speaking and Canadian cultural society.

The community Chinese school in this study is an example of teaching for

Mandarin language and Chinese culture maintenance. Children not only enjoy learning the Chinese language (Mandarin), but also develop or cultivate Chinese culture. Mandarin is taught with a combination of traditional Chinese teaching methods (skill-oriented and practice-based) and progressive North-American pedagogy (context learning and learning through play). There is no perfect model to follow when teaching the Chinese language to children outside mainland China. Teachers in the community Chinese school of this study, based on their own geographic situation and children's background, prepare and create their unique ways of teaching Mandarin in the multicultural and multilingual community. Their teaching methods are meaningful, helpful and effective, and indeed facilitate children's Mandarin literacy maintenance and development. Chinese immigrant parents are satisfied and impressed with the school's management and teaching quality, and their children benefit from attending the school and enjoy and love this school. In my opinion, it is a successful example of a heritage language school.

5.2.3 Similarities and Differences of the Literacy Instruction between the Public School and the Community Chinese School

The major difference in literacy instruction between English at public school and Chinese at community school lies in the first period of teaching Mandarin at Chinese school, repeating verbatim what the teacher said and copying Chinese characters. To some extent, literacy teaching in this part of the class was not situated in contexts, but simply focused on teaching basic literacy skills. Chinese characters are indeed more

complicated than English letters in many ways. Chinese is a logographic language,

children at first learn to read Chinese characters through Pinyin, and they learn to write

Chinese characters by applying visual strategies to memorize the structure of each

Chinese character. English is an alphabetic language, children learn to read and write with

phonetic knowledge and recognize the twenty-six alphabetic letters. To some degree,

more visual strategies are employed in Chinese learning and audio strategies are

employed in English learning. That is to say, morphological awareness is more important

in Chinese and phonological awareness is more important in English (Anderson, et al.,

2002, p.90). Therefore, it is not easy to conclude whether the process of repetition to

learn to write Chinese characters is good and sufficient or boring and ineffective.

Generally speaking, the community Chinese school teacher as well as Chinese parents

who participated in the study indicated that repetition was a necessary part of Chinese

learning and they believed "practice makes prefect". In the study, the five participating

children explicitly said they liked to go to the community Chinese school, and they did

indicate that they liked the prize day, making crafts and practicing nursery rhymes better

than repetitively writing Chinese characters and reading Chinese texts.

5.2.4 Conclusions

Language and literacy learning is a socio-cultural phenomenon that varies from

context to context (Perez, 1993; Harding-Esch, & Riley, 2003; Li, 2006; Gee, 1992).

Literacy is more than learning to grasp literacy basic skills but involves many

perspectives of practices in the private and public domains (Scribner & Cole, 1981; Pahl

& Rowsell, 2006). There are many definitions of biliteracy, but in this study it specifically refers to the communicative use of Mandarin Chinese and English in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in different contexts, mainly in the three literacy environments (home, the public school and the community Chinese school). All five Chinese immigrant children are capable English and Mandarin listeners, speakers, readers and writers at different literacy levels. All of them have no problem in daily bilingual communication and understanding school instructions. Some (Xinxin, Laurie and Star) may have higher reading and writing proficiency because of their age difference and different pre-school experiences. Others (Lingling and Sky) are doing well and making continual progress in bilingual reading and writing in the three literacy environments. In conclusion, in the study, the three literacy environments complement each other, but could be connected with each other in a dynamic way. And to a certain degree, all five participating Chinese immigrant children can be called bilingual learners at the beginning level. It is true that different parents have different perceptions of Mandarin and English and they provide different degrees of literacy support for their children's bilingual development; this has greatly influenced their children's way of thinking and actual efforts in learning Mandarin and English.

5.3 Recommendations and Implications

5.3.1 Implications for Primary Grade Classroom Teachers in Public Schools

5.3.1.1 Understanding Linguistically, Culturally and Ethnically Diverse Students

Due to the demographic situation in Canada, it is not unusual in urban centres to see

a mainstream classroom full of children from different cultural and linguistic

backgrounds. "Students come from a diverse range of educational, literacy and

socioeconomic backgrounds, and all have their own history and education continuity"

(Ariza, 2006, p.3). Therefore, teachers need to learn more about the students in class and

their different learning styles so that they can teach effectively, and to some extent,

"teachers [may] have to reconcile these differences with their personal approach to

instruction" (Ariza, 2006, p.3).

Teachers can also create many fun activities to learn more about their students in class

depending on their classroom structure, student population and their own teaching

background, pedagogy and experience. Getting to know as much as possible about their

students can be very beneficial to teachers (and students) in highly diverse classes.

Getting to know bilingual or multilingual children is more than to know about what

language they speak at home. Teachers need to know more about children's literacy

backgrounds including their literacy levels of their first languages, so that teachers can

conduct effective literacy instruction to meet diverse children's needs and interests.

5.3.1.2 Scaffolding Language Learners in their English Literary Development and

Minority Language and Culture Maintenance

To being with, it is of great importance for primary grade classroom teachers to pay

attention to the layout or physical classroom environment. Teachers can try to create a

friendly and supportive classroom climate in which all children feel safe, comfortable and

ready to engage in meaningful learning. Classrooms can be created as effective learning

communities where teachers and students actively participate and contribute their understandings and ideas.

Furthermore, a student-centered and teacher-guided learning environment will facilitate students' effective learning in the classroom. Teachers can help students immerse themselves in authentic and supportive English language learning environments and provide appropriate scaffolding in order to facilitate students' English literacy development.

At the same time, teachers should also encourage students to maintain their mother tongue and home culture. As Mrs. Holly said, "it is adding another language learning experience," and Mrs. Will said, "you do not want to lose it, you will benefit from it in the future." Minority languages and cultures should be considered as meaningful resources, not as barriers in communication or literacy development. It is significant for teachers to respect and value minority students' languages and cultures. Teachers can also make use of these resources in their instruction planning to facilitate children's effective literacy learning in class. Whitehead (2007) provides valuable and practical suggestions for teachers to help young bilinguals in their classes including respecting the languages young bilinguals speak, making appropriate use of the curriculum, establishing appropriate early learning settings, updating professional strategies such as "the visual and oral nature of the curriculum", conducting first language support teaching, considering children as language tutors, inviting and involving community language tutors to the class in order to support young emerging bilinguals (p.21-28). Whitehead

(2007) argues that

> a curriculum is not just the subjects taught in schools. It is all the learning
>
> opportunities we provide for children; all the behaviours we encourage, or discourage;
>
> as well as all the routines we set up in group settings and the way in which adults
>
> regularly interact with people. (p.22)

The curriculum is dynamic. Teachers need to appropriately employ the curriculum and

provide many opportunities to help young bilinguals' literacy development. Teachers

need to immerse young bilinguals in "genuine contexts" of literacy learning (p. 23) and

provide visual tools and emphasize oral communication in the curriculum. Teachers need

to "use all ingenuity to create early years settings and classrooms which do not require

children 'to case off the language and culture of the home' as children cross the

threshold" (p. 26). Teachers can encourage young bilinguals to be interpreters and

translators to enhance new ELLs' literacy learning and "young bilinguals can be teachers

and enrich early years settings by sharing their songs, rhymes, legends, and dances, as

well as many other aspects of their lives, with caring and interested adults and other

children" (p.27). Teachers can invite and work with children's parents and local

community members to support and enrich children's bilingual literacy development at

school such as inviting them to tell stories, help children write messages and stories,

make books, record rhymes, and teach songs and dances (p.27-28). In summary, "all early

years practitioners can support young emerging bilinguals by valuing the individual child,

by valuing talk and by valuing human diversity" (Whitehead, 2007, p.28).

5.3.2 The Importance of Creating a Democratic School Climate

5.3.2.1 Implications for Public School Administrators

The pubic school in this study sets an example of creating a democratic school climate in which minority students' first languages and cultures are embraced and valued and they also learn to negotiate the larger mainstream Canadian culture.

If a public school strives to promote multilingualism and multiculturalism, some policies need to be implemented to create cultural democracy. They include demonstrating respect for minority students and their families, valuing their languages and cultures through a multicultural dinner, artifact exhibitions, and displays of artwork. Effective literacy programs include literacy groups, book buddies and library time. This can help students succeed in English; furthermore, allowing minority students to speak their first languages at school promotes effective communication and better understanding of classroom instruction.

5.3.2.2 Implications for Curriculum Developers and Education Policy Makers

In Canada, the education of children is a provincial responsibility. An ideal situation is that education policy makers and curriculum developers in the provincial government should fully understand minority students' backgrounds and clearly understand the education system and education process. Policy- and curriculum-makers also need to know exactly what teachers and students need at different grade levels, provide effective and appropriate guidelines and specific programs for teachers and students with different needs. It is important to include the promotion of multiculturalism in the curriculum and

allow foreign languages besides French, to be taught in primary schools. In 2007, some primary schools in the Greater Toronto Area opened foreign language classes such as Mandarin based on the needs and requests of both students and parents. If other schools can also provide similar classes based on their particular student population and available resources, more minority students will benefit from such language programs and be able to maintain their first languages and home cultures. This will also benefit Canadian students to be able to deal with the global world in the future.

5.3.3 Implications for Administrators and Teachers at Chinese Schools in Canada

5.3.3.1 Implications for Chinese School Administrators

Different people or organizations have different goals or aims to establish Chinese schools. Most Chinese parents believe that it is of great necessity and significance for their children to learn and maintain their Chinese identity by learning Chinese language and culture. It is argued that heritage language programs should be affordable for Chinese parents and meaningful for Chinese children. The Chinese community school in this study put in place practices known to support the maintenance of the Chinese language and culture.

5.3.3.2 Implications for Chinese School Teachers

To begin with, Chinese language teachers in Canada need to be fully aware that they are teaching Chinese out of context, that is, not in China. This means that the traditional Chinese teaching pedagogy cannot be directly transferred to teaching Chinese in Canada. Just as for Canadian teachers in diverse classrooms, it is imperative for teachers in

Chinese schools in Canada to reconsider the context, the students' background and their

own teaching philology or pedagogy. Because of limited resources, Chinese teachers in

Canada will probably have to create their own informal assessment to find out the various

literacy levels of their students, as well as make full use of different grade level Chinese

text books to meet the needs of children at different language levels.

Furthermore, the choice of text book depends on different teachers' backgrounds

including teaching experiences and teaching methods, as well as available resources. The

Chinese community school in this study chose the standard Chinese subject textbook

published by Beijing Normal University, which is believed to be suitable for children

learning Mandarin abroad. Different Chinese schools have different situations. In any

case, no matter which Chinese text books are chosen, they should be appropriate for

children learning Chinese at that particular school.

In addition to knowing about students in the class and text book selection, effective

literacy planning and instruction are central to facilitating children's Chinese literacy

development. The primary grade Chinese teacher in this study advocated teaching

practices that motivate children to learn Mandarin. In the Chinese classes I observed,

besides many fun literacy activities, continuous encouragement, praise and motivation

were also important parts of effective instruction. Teachers need to acknowledge

children's improvement and progress by continually giving positive comments and praise

to motivate and encourage them to make further progress. It is important for teachers to

let children know that they are capable of becoming fluent in Mandarin. Last but not least,

teachers should work cooperatively with parents, inform parents of their children's

performance at school and invite parents to come to class to see the achievement of their

children for themselves. This may also help to build parents' confidence and commitment

to their children's Mandarin literacy development and Chinese cultural heritage.

In summary, teachers need to have appropriate teaching perceptions of teaching

Chinese languages in Canada, especially in terms of their own teaching philosophy or

pedagogies of teaching. Teachers need to make an effort to get to know more about their

students, create well-prepared lessons plans, and give effective (meaningful but not

boring) Mandarin literacy instructions both in a student-centered, and teacher-led

supportive learning environment.

5.3.4 Implications for Chinese Parents and Children in Southwestern Ontario Canada

Parents play a pivotal role in their children's development including education,

literacy development, as well as further language choice. Parents' attitudes, behaviours

and practices at home and in public places greatly affect children's perceptions and the

formation of cultural values and life philosophies. In brief, what parents think, do, and

say will influence their children's growth and development. Most Chinese parents

sacrifice both physical and mental energy to fully support their children's education in

Canada, hoping that they will have a much brighter future than they themselves had. They

believe that high grades bring pride and honor to the family. As the findings in this study

indicated, no matter how busy and how much working and living pressure they had, the

parents still spent large amounts of time tutoring their children's English literacy

development by reading with them, supervising their homework, and going to libraries.

But how do we cultivate balanced biculturalism and bilingualism in Canada? To begin with, Chinese immigrant parents need to have a balanced view of learning English and Chinese. They need to explicitly tell children that they highly value Chinese culture and language as well as English learning and Canadian culture. They can inform children that there is no harm in being proud to be Chinese, to learn Chinese and appreciate Chinese culture. With the rapid development of the People's Republic of China in the past twenty years and its growing significance on the international stage, it is beneficial to know the Chinese language and culture. Also, parents should encourage children to go back to China to visit their grandparents and family members during holidays and emphasize that when in China, knowledge of Chinese is helpful and effective for communication.

In addition to advocating for the Chinese heritage, parents also need to devote themselves to bilingual literacy and bicultural development support. This means that parents should, on one hand, pay attention to their children's English literacy development; on the other hand, not forget to support children's Chinese language learning and cultural maintenance.

The cultivation of interest in learning Chinese plays a significant role in children's Chinese literacy development and culture maintenance. Children at a young age need a lot of attention, praise, encouragement and motivation. Breaking ideas or situations into little parts and step-by-step instruction mean a lot to young children. Parents can spend

time reading with children, listening to them reading Chinese texts, reciting poems and nursery rhymes, and singing Chinese songs, supporting their journal writing, translating English nursery rhymes and making crafts. All these activities should be accompanied by high praise and great encouragement. This will help to increase interest, will build their confidence and motivate them to continue to learn. In brief, parents need to create a warm, caring, supportive and rich bilingual and bicultural environment for children to develop balanced bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Bilingualism or bilingual literacy is not a new area of research but the study of Chinese immigrant children's bilingual literacy in Canada is fairly new. With large numbers of Chinese immigrants coming to Canada every year and more research focus, there will be further understanding of this area.

In a future study, it would be a good idea to conduct longitudinal research studies seeking to gain further understanding of children's bilingual literacy practices in different literacy environments as well as putting the research on Chinese immigrant children's bilingual literacy learning practices in a wider community as a context for the language learning and culture development. It may also be of use to take the gender variable into consideration for children's literacy levels. I am curious about whether gender plays a significant part in children's literacy performance at school, and if it is true that girls do better in literacy in primary grades while boys do better in mathematics in junior grades, as well as whether classroom teachers take boys' psychological and growth differences

into consideration while planning literacy lessons and while carrying out literacy

instructions.

In addition to learning their first language at the community language school, some

immigrant parents have also decided to send their children to French immersion schools.

There is much to be explored regarding immigrant children's trilingual literacy or

multilingual literacy development in various literacy environments. It would be

interesting to study whether immigrant children in French immersion have balanced

multilingual literacy learning experiences.

In the study, although I observed children's bilingual literacy learning at home and

school, my lens was pointed toward teaching practices rather than children's coping

strategies in the three literacy environments. In the further study, I would like to conduct

a longitudinal study focusing on children's bilingual literacy learning process including

their literacy learning strategies. In addition, my Chinese cultural background did

influence my interpretation and triangulation of the data collected in the study as well as

the thesis writing. For example, I was taught to respect teachers, consider them as the

knowledge authority and only listen to them, not to question them. Therefore, the study is

culturally-based, that is, I may not be as critical as other western researchers. In future

studies, I will work on being critical or make further critiques of the studied phenomenon.

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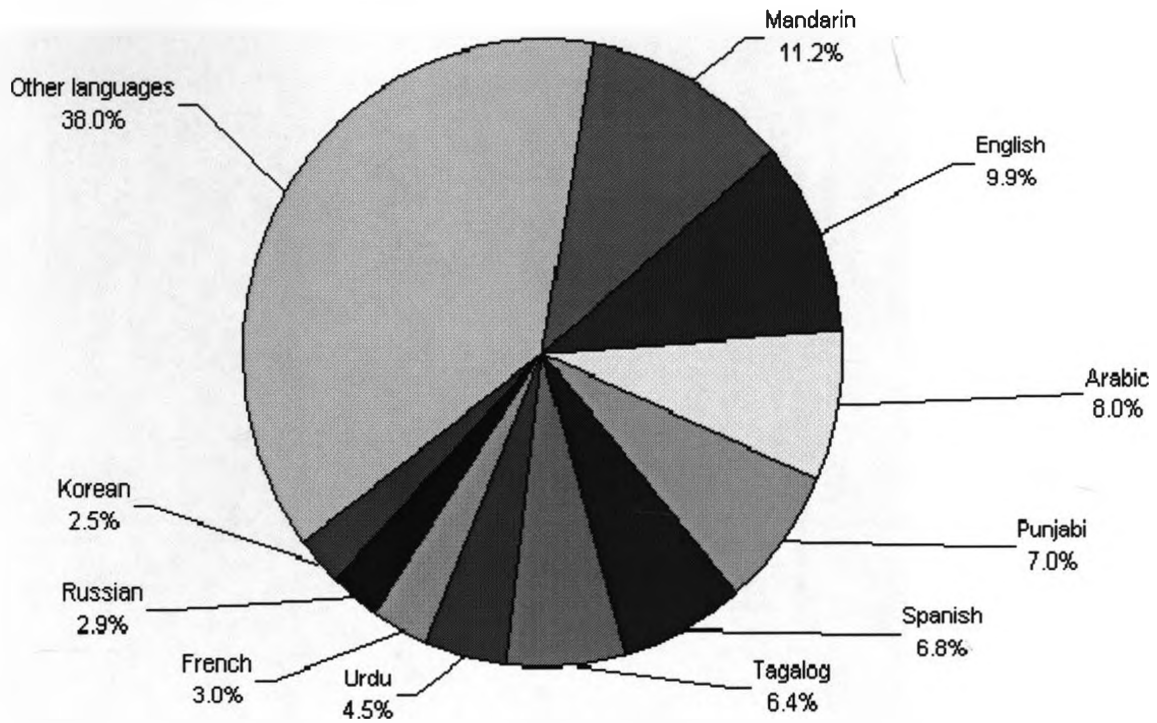London, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

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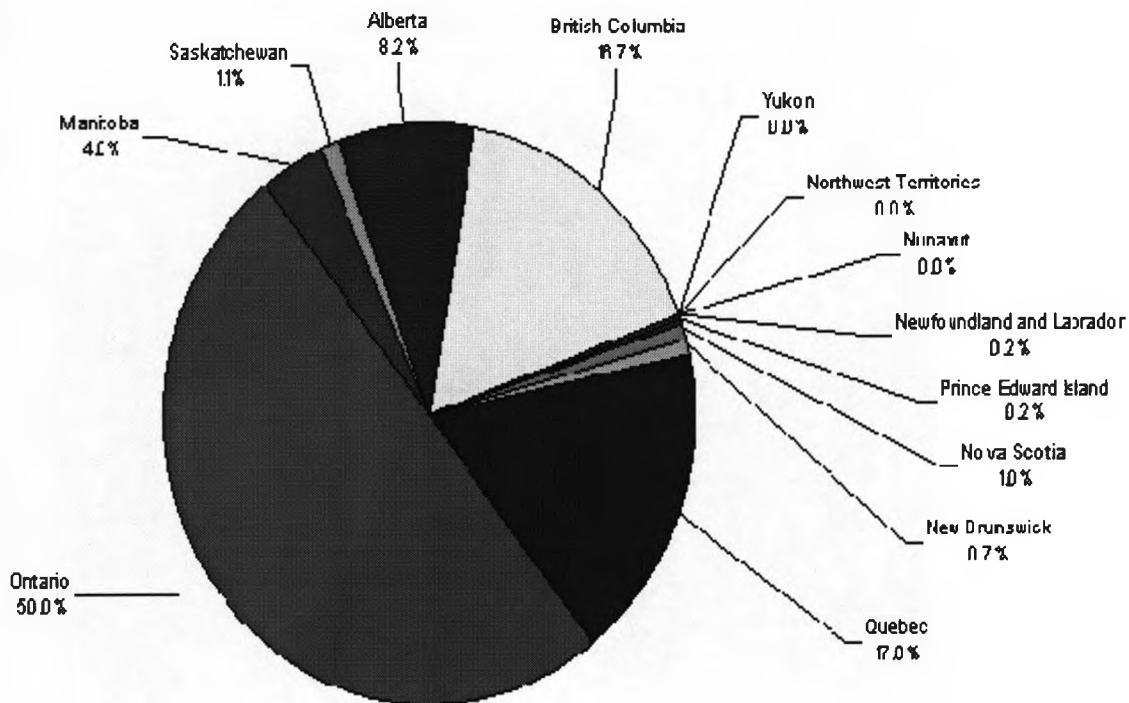*world of education: A case study reader* (pp.379-398). London: Sage Publications.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Canada – Permanent Residents by Top Source Countries, 2006

Source countries	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
					Number					
China, People's Republic of	18,526	19,790	29,148	36,750	40,365	33,307	36,256	36,429	42,292	33,080
India	19,615	15,375	17,457	26,123	27,904	28,838	24,593	25,575	33,148	30,753
Philippines	10,872	8,184	9,205	10,119	12,928	11,011	11,989	13,303	17,525	17,717
Pakistan	11,239	8,089	9,303	14,201	15,354	14,173	12,351	12,795	13,575	12,332
United States	5,030	4,776	5,533	5,828	5,911	5,294	6,013	7,507	9,262	10,943
Iran	7,486	6,775	5,909	5,617	5,746	7,889	5,651	6,063	5,502	7,073
United Kingdom	4,657	3,899	4,478	4,649	5,360	4,725	5,199	6,062	5,865	6,542
Korea, Republic of	4,001	4,917	7,217	7,639	9,608	7,334	7,089	5,337	5,819	6,178
Colombia	571	922	1,296	2,228	2,967	3,226	4,273	4,438	6,031	5,813
France	2,858	3,867	3,923	4,345	4,428	3,963	4,127	5,028	5,430	4,915
Sri Lanka	5,071	3,329	4,728	5,849	5,520	4,968	4,448	4,135	4,690	4,490
Romania	3,916	2,976	3,468	4,431	5,589	5,689	5,466	5,658	4,964	4,393
Russia	3,735	4,304	3,782	3,523	4,073	3,677	3,520	3,685	3,607	2,851
Taiwan	13,324	7,193	5,483	3,535	3,114	2,910	2,126	1,992	3,092	2,823
Hong Kong	22,250	8,087	3,672	2,865	1,965	1,541	1,472	1,547	1,783	1,489
Yugoslavia (former)	1,384	1,172	1,492	4,745	2,803	1,623	941	708	272	126
Top 10 source countries	118,070	87,490	98,461	121,520	134,285	123,228	119,055	123,757	144,449	135,346
Other countries	97,968	86,705	91,496	105,939	116,356	105,823	102,296	112,067	117,790	116,303
Total	216,038	174,195	189,957	227,459	250,641	229,051	221,351	235,824	262,239	251,649

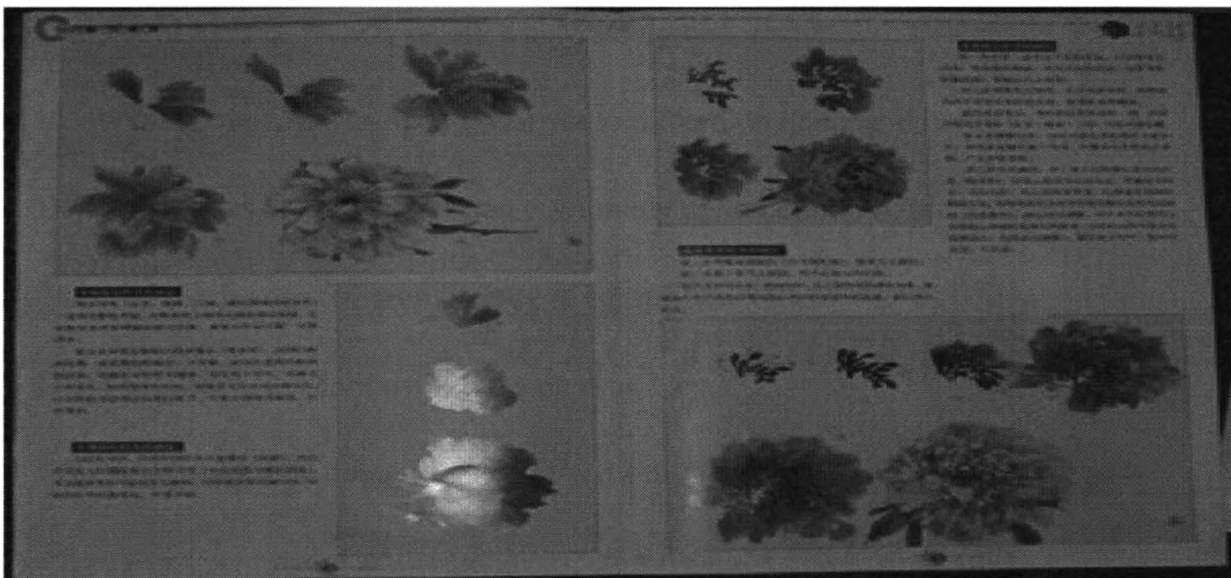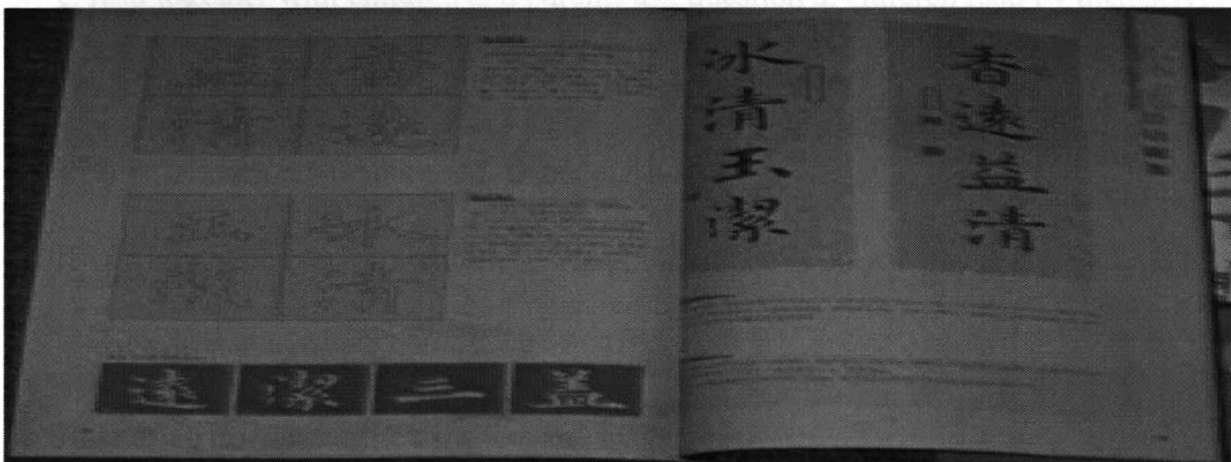## Canada – Permanent Residents by Top Ten Mother Tongues, 2006

Mandarin 11.2%
English 9.9%
Arabic 8.0%
Punjabi 7.0%
Spanish 6.8%
Tagalog 6.4%
Urdu 4.5%
French 3.0%
Russian 2.9%
Korean 2.5%
Other languages 38.0%

Canada – Permanent Residents by Province or Territory, 2006

Alberta 8.2%
British Columbia 18.7%
Saskatchewan 1.1%
Manitoba 4.5%
Yukon 0.0%
Northwest Territories 0.0%
Nunavut 0.0%
Newfoundland and Labrador 0.2%
Prince Edward Island 0.2%
Nova Scotia 1.0%
New Brunswick 0.7%
Quebec 17.0%
Ontario 50.0%

Appendix B: Chinese Calligraphy at Laurie's Home

Books on Traditional Chinese Painting and Writing at Laurie's Home

Appendix C: Interview Questions and Answers on Parents' and Children's English

Literacy Perceptions and Practices at Home

Questions for parents:

1. When did you begin to read to your children?

   Children's age: a. 0-1 b. 1-2 c. 2-3, d. 3-4, e. 4-5, f. after 5 (years old)

2. In what ways do you read to your children before and after they go to school?

   a. parents read b. read together with children and children ask questions

   c. read together with children and parents ask question d. children read by themselves

3. Do you often take your children to libraries or book stores?

a. Never b. Seldom c. Sometimes d. Often e. Always

4. If you buy books for your children, what kind of books do you buy and what kind of

   books do they prefer?

5. How often do you buy newspapers and magazines?

a. Daily or always b. Weekly or often c. Monthly or sometimes d. It depends.

6. How much time do you spend with your children on reading at home?

a. Daily or always b. Weekly or often c. Monthly or sometimes d. It depends.

7. Do you teach your children literacy at home?

a. Daily b. Weekly c. Monthly d. It depends. e. Never.

8. Do you spend time doing literacy related activities with your children at home?

(such as word card, word toy, word guess, etc.)

a. Always b. Often c. Sometimes d. It depends. e. Never.

9. How often do you tutor your children's reading or/and writing?

a. Daily b. Weekly c. Monthly d. It depends. e. Never.

Questions for children:

1. Do you often read at home?

a. Daily b. Weekly c. Monthly d. It depends. e. Never.

2. Do you like to write at home?

a. names b. simple words or phrases c. short paragraphs d. simple journal or letters

3. How much time do you spend on watching TV everyday?

a. 0   b. 0.5 c. 0.5-1 d. 1-2   e. 2-3   f. >3   Hour(s)

4. How much time do you spend on playing computer games every week?

a. 0   b. 0.5 c. 0.5-1 d. 1-2   e. 2-3   f. >3   Hour(s)

5. What do you do when surfing on the Internet except playing games?

(Adapted from Anderson, Li, Ku, Shu, & Yue, 2002, p.221-223)

The chart of answers to the above interview questions

Q \ A	Xinxin's F	Lingling's F	Star's F	Sky's F	Laurie's F
P 1.	a. since birth	a. 1 year-old	a. 1 year-old	c.2-3 year-old	a. 1 year-old
P 2.	a.b.c.d	a.b.d	a.b.d	a.b.d	a.b.d
P 3.	e. Always	c.Sometimes	e. Always	e. Always	d. Often
P 4.	P: Children's	P: Story	P: Story and	P: Science and	P: Children's

	literature books C: Non-fiction	books C: Fiction Non-fic tion	Sports books C: Fiction Encyclopedia	story books C: Fiction and science books	literature books C:Non-fiction
P 5.	d. It depends	c.Sometimes	c. Sometimes	c. Sometimes	d. It depends
P 6.	a. Daily	b. Weekly	a. Daily	a. Daily	b. Weekly
P 7.	b. Weekly	b. Weekly	b. Weekly	b. Weekly	b. Weekly
P 8.	c. Sometimes	c.Sometimes	c. Sometimes	c. Sometimes	c. Sometimes
P 9.	a. Daily	b. Weekly	a. Daily	b. Weekly	b. Weekly
C 1.	a. Daily	a.Daily	a.Daily	a. Daily	a. Daily
C 2.	d. Journals and letters	b. Words and phrases	b. and d.	b. Words and phrases	d. Journals and letters
C 3.	d. 1-2 hours	e.2-3 hours	d. 1-2 hours	e.2-3 hours	d. 1-2 hours
C 4.	a. 0 hour	a. 0 hour (No games)	b. 0.5 hour (Sunda)	d.1-2 hours (Weeken)	a. 0 hour
C 5.	N/A	N/A	Writing	On-line search	N/A

(Note: Q means questions, A means answers, F means family, P means parents, and C means children.)

Appendix D: Multicultural Public School Environment

Multicultural Cupboard Exhibition

Students' Artwork

Students' Artwork from the Gifted Program

Grade 3 Students Artwork

Framed Paintings

Friends come in all shapes and sizes
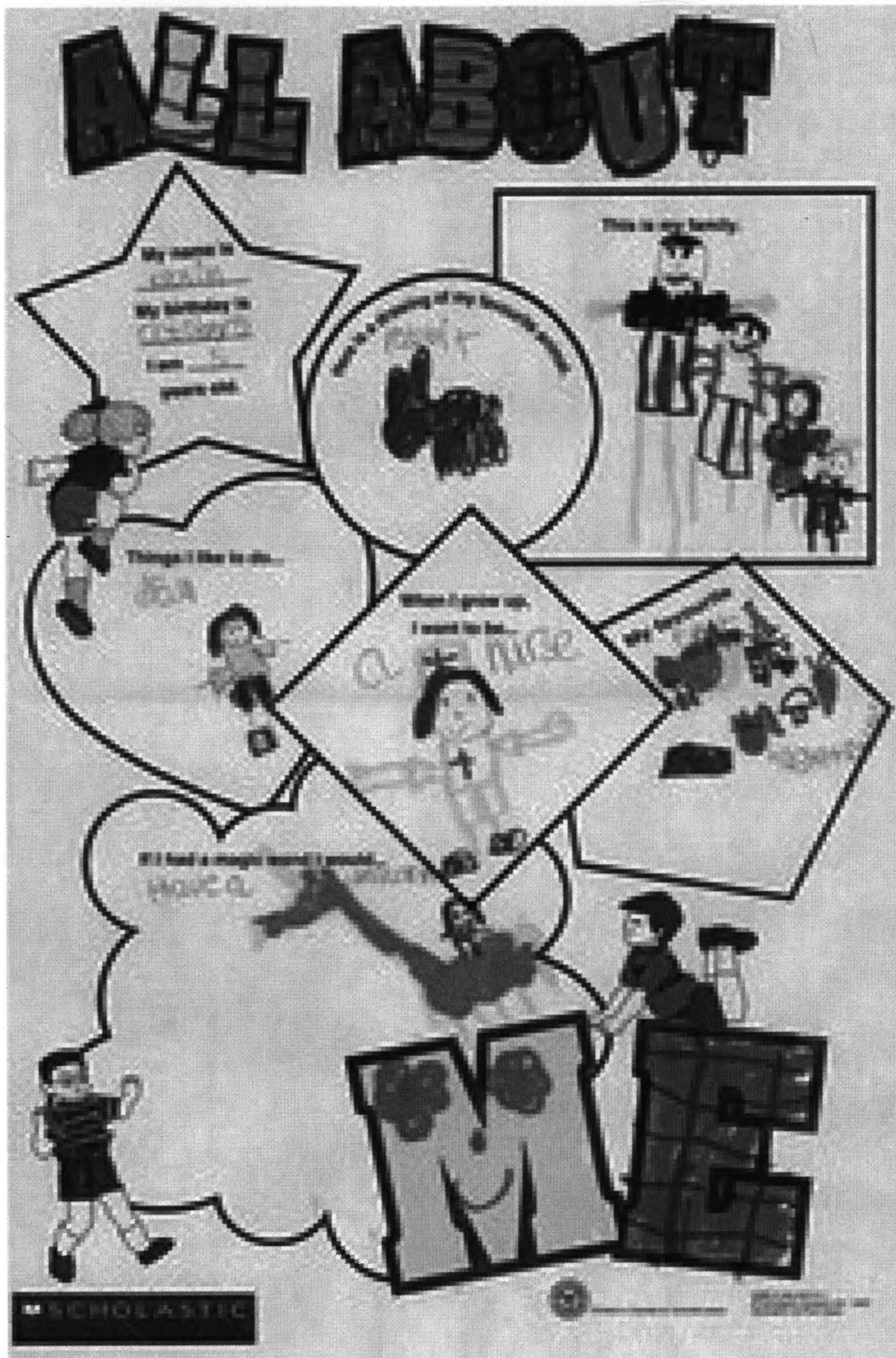

The earth is a house that belongs to us all

Children love the world-children love each other
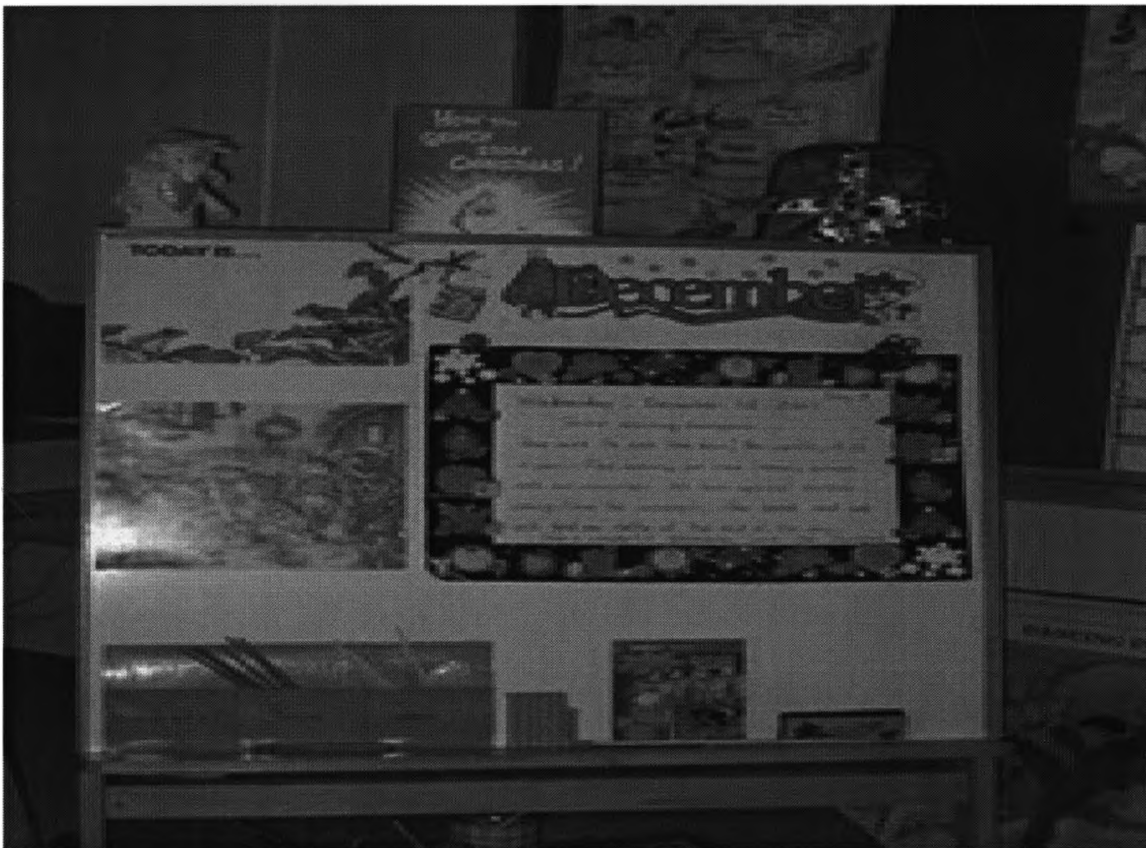

Wall Painting: *we are the key to the future*
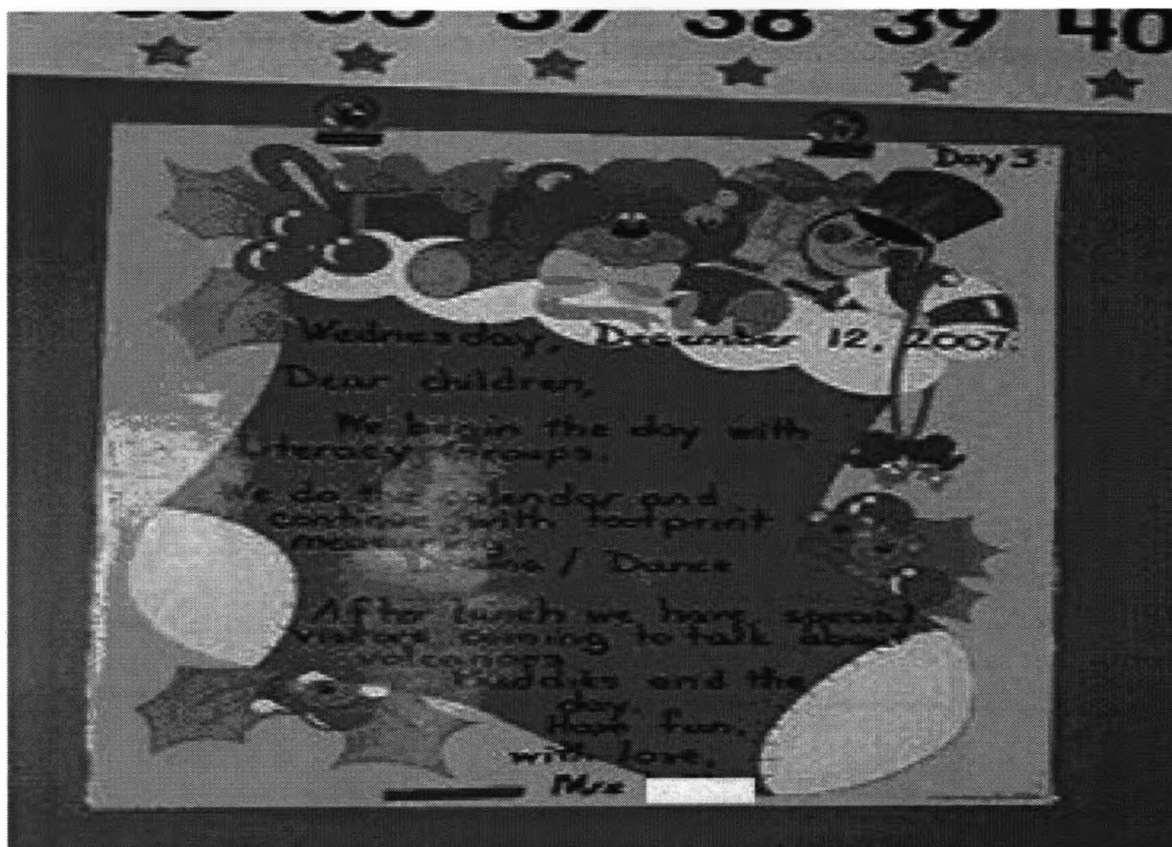
Appendix E: Xinxin's All About Me

Appendix F: Special Me at Mrs. Will's Grade One Class

Appendix G: Morning Message Poster and Calendar Poster at Mrs. Holly's Class

Appendix H: Morning Message Poster and Calendar Poster at Mrs. Will's Class

Appendix I: Star's Story Map

Story Map

Characters: Marri, Lacey, teacher, bear, boy, Eagle

Story Title: no clean clothes

Author: Robert Munsch

Setting:
Where: house walks to school

When: morning. before school

Beginning:

Middle: a cat kiss me

End: everyone is being kissed by the animals.

Connection: This story reminds me of... my Mom buying me a shirt

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Appendix J: Sky's Literacy Texts
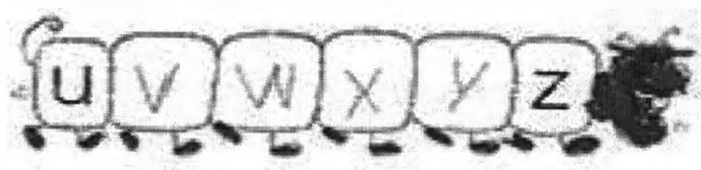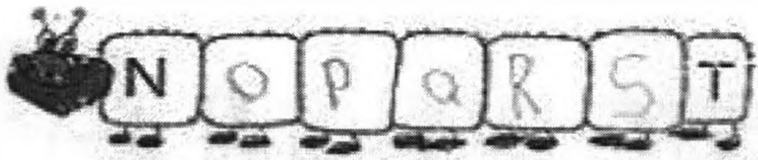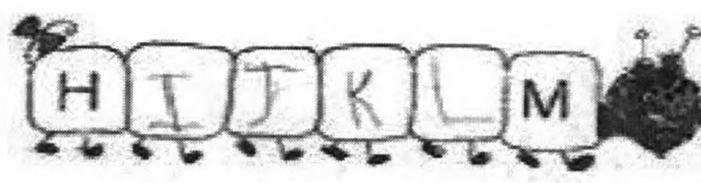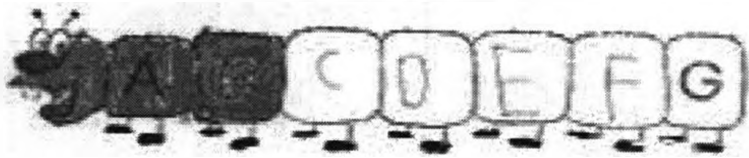
What I Like About My Friend

Worksheet 1

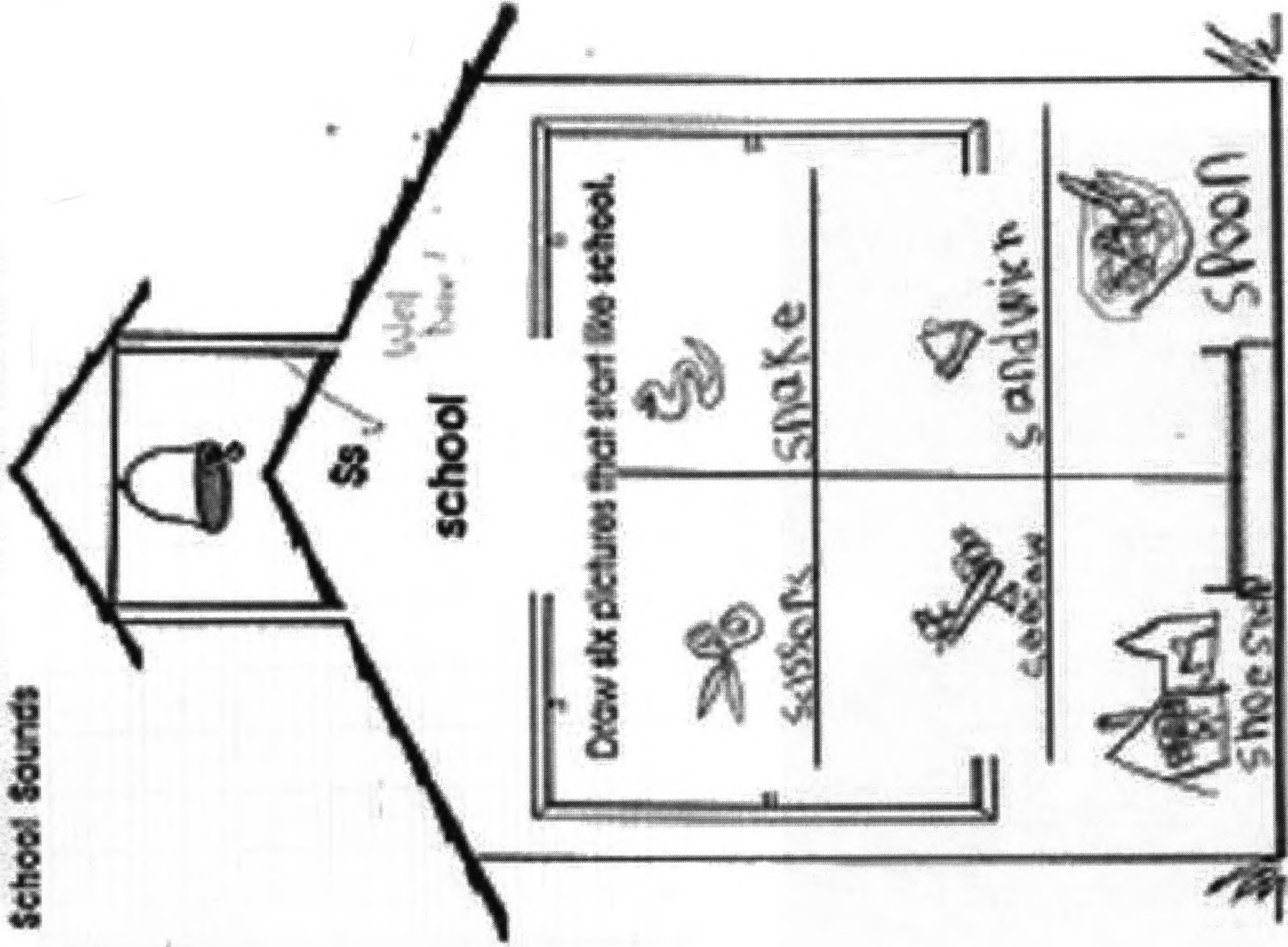Draw a picture of a friend of yours. On the lines below the picture, write what you like best about this friend.

I like Robert because he plays so nice with me

Finish the alphabet

A B C D E F G

H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T

U V W X Y Z

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school

Ss
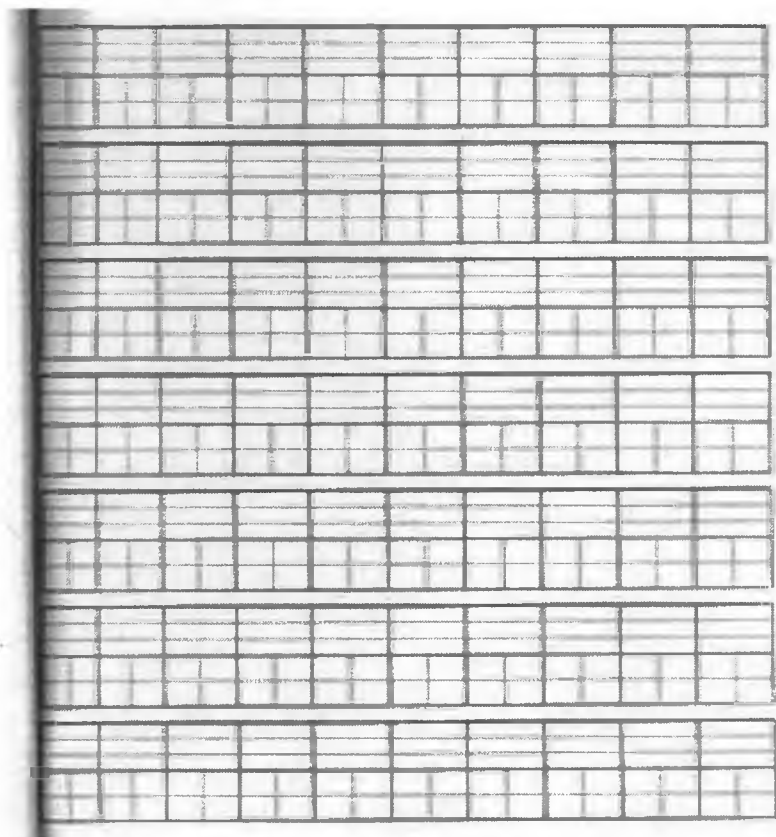
Draw six pictures that start like school.
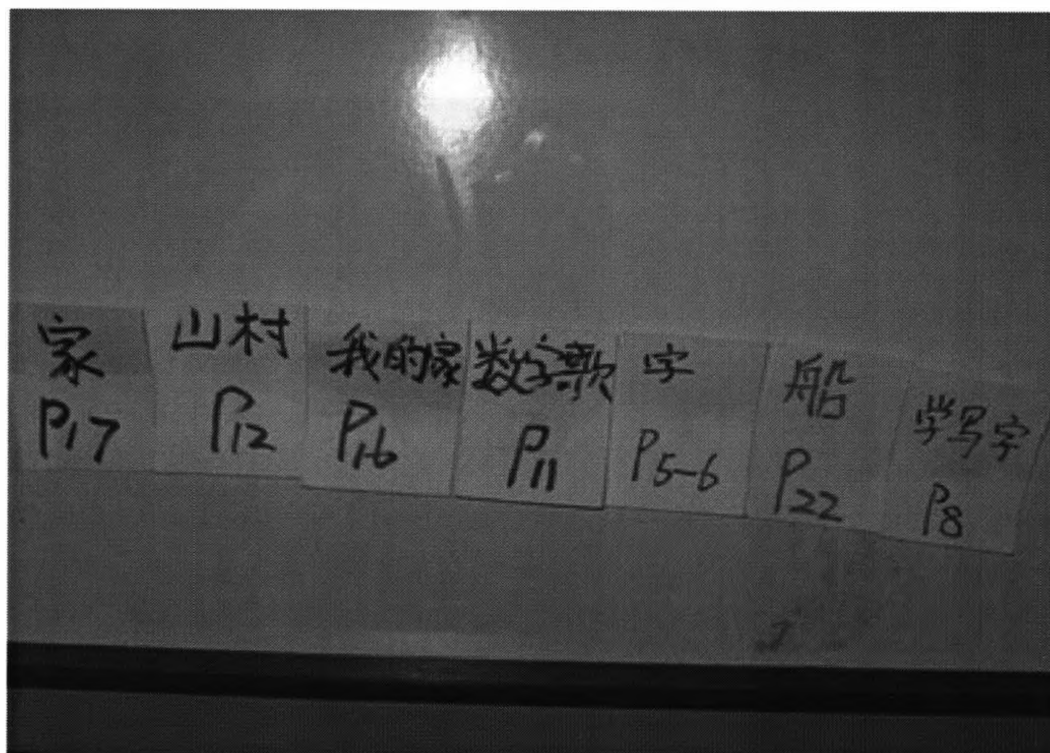
scissors

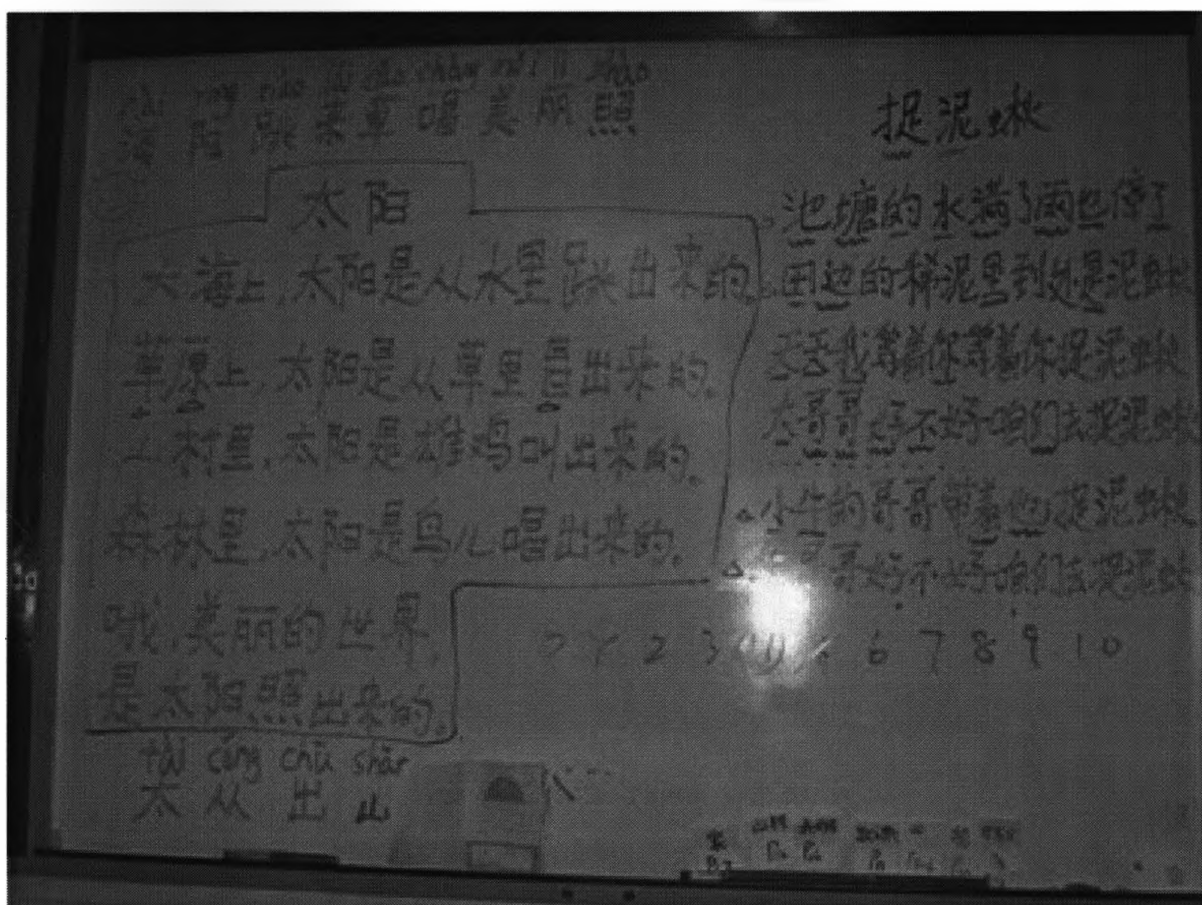snake

sandwich

shoes

spoon

Appendix K: Community Chinese School Texts: One page of TianGeBen
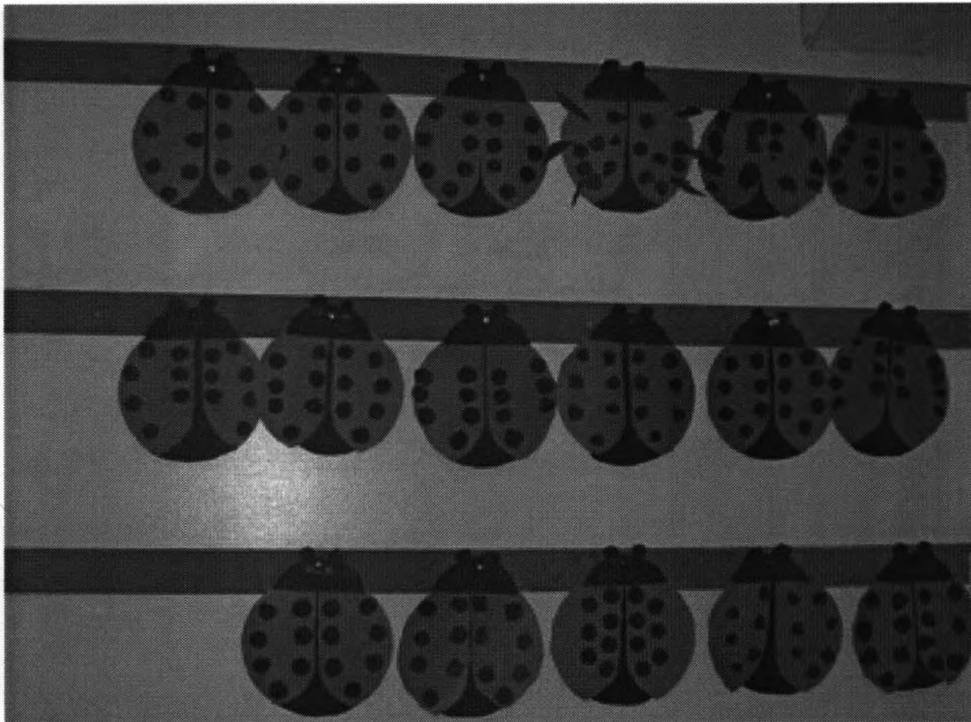

Reading Cards

Blackboard: Text (The Sun) and a Chinese Song (Catching the Loach)

Making Crafts: a little rabbit
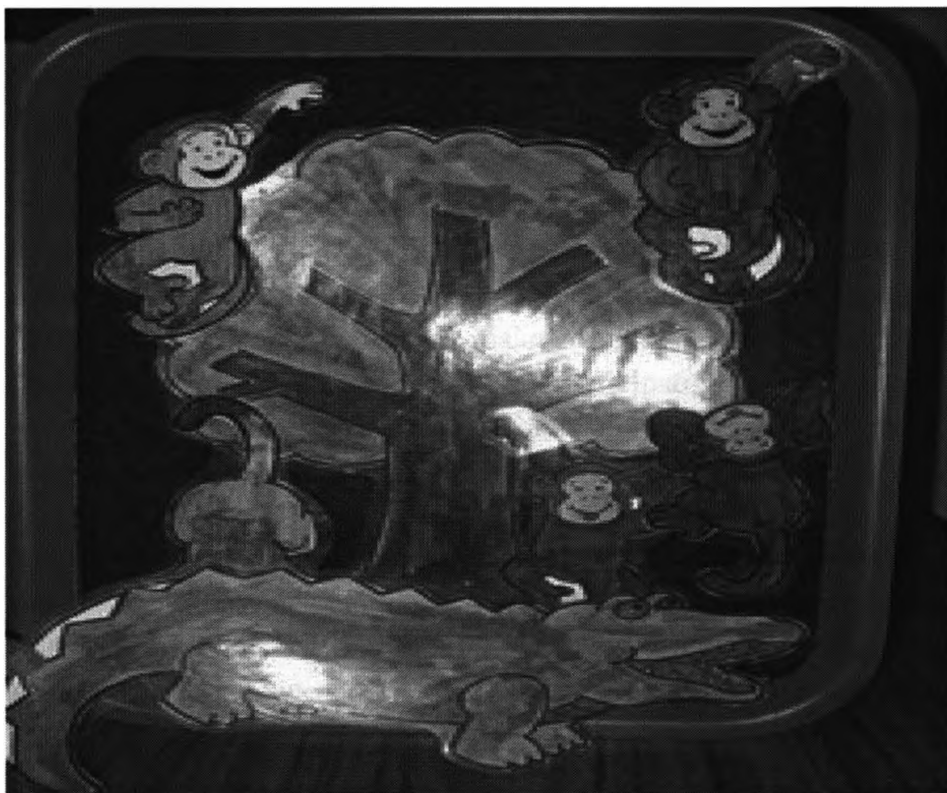
Making Crafts: ladybug

Making Crafts: Thank-you cards

Practicing Nursery Rhymes: Five Little Monkeys

Practicing Nursery Rhymes: Mr. Alligator

Appendix L: Letters of Information to Participants

Case study on Chinese-Canadian children's biliteracy development at home, school and community language school in southern Ontario, Canada

LETTER OF INFORMATION (For teachers)

My name is Xiaoxiao Du and I am a Graduate student at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into Chinese and English biliteracy development of Chinese immigrant children in Canada and I would like to invite you to participate in this research.

The aim of this study is to better understand Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy development in Canada where English-speaking is the dominant language environment, to describe and interpret Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy development at school and in home, to find possible ways to help Chinese immigrant children to have a balanced biliteracy learning experience.

Information for this study will be collected by means of observing literacy practices, by collecting students' literacy work, by interviewing teachers and students who directly participate in the study.

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview. Topics will include minimal demographic information about you such as length of time teaching, and your literacy teaching practices in class. The interview will take about forty minutes in a mutually agreed upon location. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed into written format. You will be given a copy of the transcript to review and you may make corrections or deletions to it. I will also observe your interactions in the classroom with participating child(ren) and make notes on my observations. The observations will focus on literacy and will occur about four hours once a week in the period of three months (from September 4 to December 22, 2007).

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. All efforts will be made to protect your confidentiality. After completion of this study, all written records will be destroyed.

There are no known risks to participating in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw

from the study at any time with no effect on your employment status.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, the University of Western Ontario at 519-661-3036 or ethics@uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this study, please contact

Xiaoxiao Du   Suzanne Majhanovich
Masters student   Professor of Education
Faculty of Education   Faculty of Education
The University of Western Ontario   The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, N6H 1G7   London, Ontario, N6H 1G7

Thank you,
Xiaoxiao Du

Case study on Chinese-Canadian children's biliteracy development at home, school and community language school in southern Ontario, Canada

LETTER OF INFORMATION (For students and their parents)

My name is Xiaoxiao Du and I am a Graduate student at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into Chinese and English biliteracy (the use of two languages) development of Chinese immigrant children in Canada and I would like to invite you to participate in this research.

The aim of this study is to better understand Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy development in Canada where English-speaking is the dominant language environment, to describe and interpret Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy development at school and in home, to find possible ways to help Chinese immigrant children to have a balanced biliteracy learning experience. Information for this study will be collected by means of observing literacy practices, by collecting students' literacy work, by interviewing parents and children who directly participate in the study.

If you agree to participate in this study, you and your child will take part in a semi-structured interview. Topics discussed in the interview will include minimal demographic information about you such as education experience, and literacy practices at home. The interview will take about forty minutes in a mutually agreed upon location. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed into written format. You will be given a copy of the transcript to review and you may make corrections or deletions to it. I

will also observe your child's interactions in the classroom with the teacher and make notes on my observations. The observations will focus on literacy and will occur once a week in three months. I am also asking for your consent to obtain copies of your child's literacy work from the teacher at school and in home. With your permission, I will come to your home, talk with you and your child to observe your children's literacy learning at home about two hours twice a month in the period of three months (from September 4 to December 21 2007).

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. All efforts will be made to protect your confidentiality. After completion of this study, all written records will be destroyed.

There are no known risks to participating in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary. You and/or your child may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your child's academic status or grades.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, the University of Western Ontario at 519-661-3036 or ethics@uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this study, please contact

Xiaoxiao Du
Masters student
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Thank you,
Xiaoxiao Du

Case study on Chinese-Canadian children's biliteracy development at home, school and community language school in southern Ontario, Canada

LETTER OF INFORMATION (For principal)

My name is Xiaoxiao Du and I am a Graduate student at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into Chinese and

English biliteracy development of Chinese immigrant children in Canada. And I would like to have your permission to conduct this study and access teachers and students at your school.

The aim of this study is to better understand Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy development in Canada where English-speaking is the dominant language environment, to describe and interpret Chinese immigrant children's biliteracy development at school and in home, to find possible ways to help Chinese immigrant children to have a balanced biliteracy learning experience.

Information for this study will be collected by means of observing literacy practices, by collecting students' literacy work, by interviewing teachers and students who directly participant in the study. If the teachers agree to participate in a semi-structured interview, topics in the interview may include literacy practices and biliteracy understandings. The interview will take about forty minutes in a neutrally agreed upon location. The classroom observations focus on literacy including literacy teaching practices, and students' literacy interactions with teachers. The observations will occur about four hours once a week in the period of three months (from September 4 to December 22, 2007).

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither the school's name nor information which could identify the school will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. All efforts will be made to protect confidentiality. After completion of this study, all written records will be destroyed.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Teachers may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact

Xiaoxiao Du   Suzanne Majhanovich
Masters student   Professor of Education
Faculty of Education   Faculty of Education
The University of Western Ontario   The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, N6H 1G7   London, Ontario, N6H 1G7

Thank you,
Xiaoxiao Du

Appendix M: Consent Form

Case study on Chinese-Canadian children's biliteracy development at home, school and community language school in southern Ontario, Canada

CONSENT FORM (For teachers)

I have read the letter of information, the nature of the study has been explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction

_____

Name (Please print)

_____

Signature   Date

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____
Date: _____

Case study on Chinese-Canadian children's biliteracy development at home, school and community language school in southern Ontario, Canada

CONSENT FORM (For students and their parents)

I have read the letter of information, the nature of the study has been explained to me and I agree to participate. I also agree that my child may participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction

_____

Name of Student

_____   _____

Student's Signature   Date

_____

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

_____   _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature   Date

Case study on Chinese-Canadian children's biliteracy development at home, school and community language school in southern Ontario, Canada

CONSENT FORM (For principal)

I have read the letter of information, the nature of the study has been explained to me and I agree to allow the researcher to the study in the school. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

_____

Name (Please print)

_____

Signature   Date

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Date: _____

Appendix N: Ethics Approval Form

USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS – ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number:	0706-7
Applicant:	Xiaoxiao Du
Supervisor:	Dr. Suzanne Majhanovich
Title:	*Case study on Chinese-Canadian children's biliteracy development at home, school and community language school in southwestern Ontario, Canada.*
Expiry Date:	December 31, 2007
Type:	Med. Thesis
Ethics Approval Date:	July 10, 2007
Documents Reviewed &Approved:	UWO Protocol, Letters of Information & Consent

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

No deviations from, or changes to, the research project as described in this protocol may be initiated without prior written approval, except for minor administrative aspects. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information and consent documentation, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

2007-2008 Faculty of Education Research Ethics Sub-Committee

Dr. Alan Edmunds	Faculty (Chair 2007-2008)
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki	Faculty
Dr. Jacqueline Specht	Faculty
Dr. Wayne Martino	Faculty
Dr. J. Marshall Mangan	Faculty
Dr. Jason Brown	Faculty
Dr. Robert Macmillan	Assoc Dean, Graduate Programs & Research (*ex officio*)
Dr. Jerry Paquette	UWO Non-Medical Research Ethics Board(*ex officio*)

The Faculty of Education	Karen Kueneman, Research Officer
1137 Western Rd.	Room 1161B, Faculty of Education Building
London, ON N6G 1G7	