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Schools at Home: Parental Support for Learning Mandarin as a Second or Foreign Language

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Parental Support for Learning Mandarin
as a Second or Foreign Language

Yu-Chiao Chung

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Yu-Chiao Chung   4th March 2012

Abstract

This study examined how parents of various backgrounds supported their children learning Mandarin as a second or foreign language. It addresses two questions which have previously rarely been addressed in the literature. 1. Whether and if so in what ways do parents of different backgrounds support their children in learning Mandarin as a second or a foreign language? 2. How is this affected by social, cultural as well as the parents' own educational experience?

Here the most relevant socio-cultural theories of learning: prolepsis; guided participation; syncretism; synergy and funds of knowledge have been studied. Ethnographic research was conducted on six families chosen from three categories: families in which both parents had Chinese heritage; one parent had Chinese heritage and those in which neither parent had a Chinese background. Data were collected through participant observation and interviews.

The method of multi-layering was applied to analyze these data: the outer layer- social and cultural background, the middle layer- supporting strategies and the inner layer- the pedagogic methods used by the parents.

The results reveal that these parents were determined to assist their children's learning and employed different methods: both direct (teaching) and indirect (providing access to resources, cultural activities and events). All parents set aside time for formal, serious, regular (school-like) learning sessions. The support they provided was affected significantly by their social, cultural and educational background. All enhanced their children's motivation and learning achievement.

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost I offer my sincerest gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Eve Gregory and Dr. Jim Anderson, who have supported, encouraged and inspired me throughout my research with their patience and knowledge. Their advice, support and friendship have been invaluable on both an academic and a personal level, for which I am extremely grateful. One simply could not wish for better or friendlier supervisors.

I am also heartily thankful to all of the families which were involved in this study. Their enthusiasm and efforts benefited me academically and personally.

I am most grateful to my extended family in Taiwan, my grandparents, aunts and uncles, who support me in every possible way, financially, spiritually and physically. My gratitude also goes to my extended British family, who assists me and encourages me through these years.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for all their love and encouragement. I am grateful that my parents raised me with loads of love. They and my little sister have been a constant source of support, emotional, moral and financial, in all my pursuits. This thesis would certainly not have existed without them.

I would like to thank my two daughters, Lilly and Emilia, for their being entertaining and lovely.

Most of all, I would like to thank my loving, supportive, encouraging husband, Oliver, who has always been my pillar, my joy and my guiding light. Thank you.

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Chapter 1 Autobiography and the Origin of the Inquiry

1.1 Family Background and Early Childhood

I was born in Taiwan, a country which is not recognised as such by the majority of the world's governments. As its old name in Portuguese "Ilha Formosa" suggests, Taiwan is a very beautiful island. However, the life of Taiwanese people seems never to have been easy; they have, for the last few centuries, been involved in almost constant struggle. In the early 17th century, Dutch and Spanish settlers used Taiwan as a trading base for commerce with Japan and China. The first migrants from China arrived during the Dutch period (1624-1662). These were typically merchants or traders from the coastal Fujian Province of China who sought to purchase hunting licenses from the Dutch or to hide in Taiwanese aboriginal villages to escape the authorities of the Qing Dynasty. The Chinese (ruled by the Qing Dynasty) took the island by force from Dutch administration in 1662.

The most difficult period started (and events which directly impacted the world into which I was born) when China ceded Taiwan to Japan in 1895 as part of the settlement following their defeat in the Sino-Japanese war. The strict and inhuman governance of the Japanese imperialists plunged the Taiwanese people into the depths of suffering. In 1949, the National government of the Republic of China (R.O.C.) retreated from China and moved to Taiwan, while the Chinese communists set up a new government in mainland China – The People's Republic of China. The National government started a lot of construction in Taiwan and used it as a base in plans to regain the mainland by fighting the Chinese communists. With a lot of countries' recognition of the People's Republic, the R.O.C. successively broke off diplomatic

relations with these countries.   This has effectively orphaned Taiwan as in much of the world it has not been regarded as a real country.

I was born in 1974; it was the most difficult decade for Taiwan.   Taiwan was forced to secede from United Nations in 1971 with PRC's entering.   Without any political status and support in the world, the government and the people strived to find a way out of this predicament.   The only solution was to use the economic power to prove its existence to the world.   Therefore, around the period I was born, a very poor and harsh time, the government was putting a lot of effort to improve people's lives and Taiwanese people worked very hard to make their own livings.

PingTung, my hometown, is a small and relatively poor town located in southern Taiwan.   The majority of people living there at the time I was born were farmers, fishermen, or aboriginal hunters.   Compared with other Taiwanese (or indeed western) cities, the living conditions were relatively harsh.   Chinese people regard education as incredibly important.   Parents would try their best to support their children's education.   My mother's family is a good example.   My grandparents were farmers, they had seven children: 5 girls and 2 boys.   Their income was so low that there was not enough food for everyone everyday, let alone to afford their children's education.   In other families, the girls were often forced to drop out of school to work for the family and let the boys continue their schooling.   Fortunately, my grandparents insisted that all of their children should receive a proper education. In order to afford their living expense and tuition fees, they worked not only on the farm they rented from the government but also for other people in other fields.   All of the children needed to work in the early morning and after school.   Some of them helped people to herd cattle, some helped to cut sugar cane and other crops, others

helped to carry and deliver.   Still, my grandparents needed to borrow money from people when it was time to pay for their children's tuition fees.   Although the life was tough, none of the children dropped out of school.   My grandparents' support had a great influence on them.   My mother got a BA in Mathematics education and a MA in Special Education.   She worked as a maths teacher as well as in helping students with special needs.

My father obtained his BA in English and worked as a teacher in secondary school. My father was born into a much more economically privileged family.   My grandfather inherited several properties and held a public position; my grandmother was a very famous midwife working in a public hospital.   They owned a cinema and ran several businesses trading wood and other goods.   It was a very big and rich family.   However, my paternal grandfather knew nothing about doing business and the family's financial situation grew continually worse.   Moreover, some relatives and supposed-friends cast their covetous eyes on the family's fortune.   My grandfather was persuaded to lend a countless amount of money and gave people a lot of blank cheques.

Soon after I was born, my father's family was bankrupted having run up a huge debt. In the agricultural society, people didn't have sufficient legal knowledge to protect themselves; nor was the legal system sufficiently strong to protect people.   My father was not aware that his name had been used as an endorser of these cheques and that he was the person who needed to bear the responsibility.   The other family members were careless and indifferent.   While my parents' income was only one thousand dollars a month, the debt was at least four million dollars and there remained an unknown number of blank cheques held by other people.   This problem put my

parents in a very difficult situation; they had to try every means available to them to earn money.   In addition to their teaching jobs during the day, they taught privately in the evenings.   After these private lessons they went to look after other people's betel nut and fruit farms, which were a two hour journey from our home.   At night thieves would go to steal the valuable betel nuts, farmers hired people to safeguard their crops; my parents took it in turns to sleep while the other guarded the fields and simultaneously worked on yet another job- handicraft- such as cutting the threads on a machine made purse or bag from a local factory.   At the weekend they worked more: my father gave additional private lessons and when he was not teaching, he worked on a farm; my mother worked in a key making factory.   Under these circumstances, they didn't have time to look after me.   So when I was six months old, I was sent to live with my mother's parents, who lived in a small village outside PingTung.

My memories of early childhood are vivid.   I recall the adventures, games, the people I spent time with, the laughter and the tears of those days as if it were yesterday.   Being farmers, my grandparents needed to get up at three o'clock each morning to work in the bamboo fields.   They always left a bottle of milk beside me; the first thing I did when I woke up each day was to drink this milk and run to knock on my great grandmother's door.   She lived next door and although she was in her eighties at that time, she was my best friend.   She always took me for a walk and fed me simple but delicious food.   She told me a lot of stories and although some of them were very difficult for me to understand, I still enjoyed sitting next to her in the shadow of trees with breeze blowing between the leaves.

There were not many children in the neighbourhood and most of these were boys

playing wildly in the farms nearby.   I was too young to run with them, so most of the time, I played alone in my grandparents' backyard.   I didn't have any toys nor even a doll; I usually picked flowers and plants to prepare a small banquet hoping to invite my grandparents and parents to join in.   I was not like other children growing up in the cities with better financial situation who regularly were given fancy toys and books to read.   The toys of my childhood were unique.   I will never forget the excitement and happiness I felt when I got my first toy from my grandfather: a sparrow he had caught, slightly injured, in the paddy field.   He tied a string onto its leg for me so that I could take it for a walk.   The string was very long and I always let it fly as high as it could.   Sadly, one day, the little sparrow disappeared.   My grandmother told me it had gone back to its family.   I thought it must have missed its family a lot like I missed my parents.

My second toy was even more exciting; it was an old, small, red tricycle.   Riding on it, I could experience great adventures: I could go to see the sugar cane trains passing by; sometimes I loaded a bottle of cold water onto the back seat and carried it to my grandparents working out in the fields.   Sometimes I pedaled to the market with my great grandmother and helped her to carry her purchases back.   My childhood, without expensive toys and beautiful story books was, although a little bit lonely, very happy and content.

My parents were so busy that they could only come to see me during the weekends and even then not every weekend.   Nevertheless every weekend, I got up very early and sat in the front yard staring at the main road carefully waiting for them.   The main road, which was separated from our place by a big sugarcane field, was the only route connecting the small village with the outside world.   Sometimes I would ride

my tricycle to the main road to wait for them.   When I did so, I needed to ride back and forth between the main road and home just in case I had missed them. Sometimes, I was very disappointed; after waiting for the whole day, they didn't appear at all.   But when they came to see me, I was so happy that I didn't want to leave them for a second.   Every time, they brought me an apple, which was extremely expensive at that time, and some fruit juice in colourful cartons covered in images of cartoon characters.   I can still remember the pleasure of the taste of the apples my mother fed me.   My father would take me for a ride on his big Vespa.   I always stood on the footrest in front of him.   It was very pleasant and exciting to let the wind blow my hair and to move so quickly.   However, these happy times always seemed very short.   I could never understand when they always needed to leave before it got dark and I didn't understand why they couldn't take me with them.   I didn't want them to leave so I always rode my red tricycle to follow them.   I tried my best to catch up with them but no matter how hard I tried, I was still left behind. I would only stop when they disappeared from view, I would then turn around and ride slowly back home, crying sadly.

It was a happy but also a sad and confusing summer when I went back to live with my parents.   One morning, two months before I returned home, as usual I went to knock on my great grandmother's door.   She didn't open the door and stroke my head but I went into her room and saw her lying on the bed trembling all over.   No matter how hard I called her, she would not stop trembling and she was unable to recognize me.   From that time on, to my sadness, my great grandmother, my best friend, could no longer recognize who I was.   When I was on my father's Vespa waving goodbye to my grandparents and my great grandmother, I felt very sad to leave them and leave my playground.   I repeatedly asked my father why they were

not coming with us.   I turned around and waved to them until I couldn't see them any more.   That was the last time I saw my great grandmother.

1.2 Primary School

Life with my parents was a dramatic change for me.   We lived in PingTung city, which although very small and rural compared to other cities in Taiwan, was still different from the countryside.   I couldn't run and play in the fields any more and I had a "younger sister", three years younger than me, with whom I had to share everything.   I had seen my sister several times before when my parents had taken me to my paternal grandparents' house.   My sister stayed with them since my maternal grandparents couldn't look after both of us at the same time.   Our paternal grandparents' place was a strange world to me.   The people there spoke "Hakka", a dialect originally spoken in Canton province in China, while I had grown up so far speaking only "Fuken" (or Taiwanese), another dialect.   I didn't understand anything they said, especially the strange little girl- my sister.   When I didn't understand what she wanted, she cried out loudly and sometimes wanted to bite me.   Even though everyone told me that I should be a good elder sister and share things with her, I didn't really understand what a younger sister meant and why I needed to play with her.   My sister went back to stay with my parents two months after my return.   I still couldn't understand a word she said and she still wanted to bite me when she was not happy.   However, I realised she would always be there with me.

Before I went to primary school, the languages used in my family were very complicated.   My parents spoke Hakka to my sister and Taiwanese to me.   My father's Taiwanese is better than my mother's Hakka, so they communicated with

each other in Taiwanese.   But I had noticed that sometimes they used another language, which was neither Hakka nor Taiwanese.   In order to understand my sister and being exposed to her Hakka very often, I got a basic understanding of Hakka. Even though I couldn't really speak, I could understand.   The strange language, which I was sure was neither Taiwanese nor Hakka, occurred sometimes when I picked up the phone or when I watched television.   I was not sure what it was but it sounded to me foreign, another language that I didn't understand.

This became a problem as soon as I attended primary school.   In order to improve people's literacy rate, the government had banned the teaching and speaking of Taiwanese in schools and Japanese (throughout the island) since 1941.   In schools, Mandarin was the only language allowed and students got punished if they didn't speak Mandarin.   I was very shocked on my first day of school.   I had never seen so many children gathering in the same place.   There were fifty one students in my class and my form tutor was a very kind old lady.   My mother helped me to settle down and then she told me she was going to buy something and would come back to see me soon.   The arrangement of seats in Taiwanese classrooms is like in lecture rooms, all of the students facing the teacher and the blackboard.   In primary schools, two students sit together at the same table.   However, I was the tallest and strongest one in my class.   I was assigned to the last row and sat alone.   I didn't understand a word the teacher said nor did I understand my classmates.   Then, the teacher asked each student to go to the front.   She said something to the student and the student said something back.   I kept on looking nervously out of the windows wondering when my mother would come back to take me home.   Suddenly, all of the class turned around to look at me and the teacher gestured me to the front.   The teacher said something to me when I was standing on the stage.   I just stood there looking

at everyone without saying a word.   The teacher said something again; I could only reply by shaking my head.   Then some of my classmates shouted loudly at me and some of them tried to say the same thing slowly and loudly.   No matter how loudly and slowly they said the words, I still had no clue what they were saying.   I was very embarrassed and nervous.   In my mind, I wanted to tell them that I didn't have a hearing problem; I just didn't understand their language.   Finally, the teacher said something to the whole class and I went back to my seat at the last row.   I could feel that everybody was looking at me strangely.   My mother didn't come back as soon as she had promised; I thought she had left me in school as she left me in my grandparents' place.

Taiwan uses a catchment area system for primary and secondary schools.   Therefore, most of my classmates lived in the city and had been learning Mandarin since they went to kindergarten.   I was the single exception; I had not learnt Mandarin before nor had I attended a kindergarten.   Primary schools were supposed to teach phonetic symbols, "Bo Po Mo" to the students in the first year, these are used to help to pronounce and read Mandarin.   The textbooks for year 1 were written exclusively in "Bo Po Mo" without real Chinese characters in order to make it easier for young students.   However, in a school situated in a city, like the one I went to, teachers assumed that students had learned the phonetic symbols in their kindergartens.   This made my learning even more difficult.   I couldn't understand anything in the books and I didn't understand what my classmates said during break time.   I didn't even have a partner sitting next to me to talk to or to imitate.   I was totally isolated in this environment; I was very frustrated and refused to talk to people since I couldn't use the language I was able to speak.

It was my parents' efforts and support that helped me to overcome this difficulty. My parents discovered that I didn't like to go to school at all and realised the cause of the problem. They spoke to my teacher to let her know my situation and obtained information about the teaching in school. They noticed that the main problem was that the teacher had skipped teaching the phonetic symbols so that I didn't have a clue what was going on. Apart from having problem with "Mandarin", I couldn't communicate with other students and I had difficulties in all subjects, since all of the textbooks were in Mandarin. My mother started to teach me Mandarin every day from the basic phonetic symbols. My father bought my sister and me story books. We were very interested and excited when my mother told us these stories, showing us the pictures in the books. After repeating those stories many times, we could sometimes read alone with my mother and even say what would happen next. Additionally, my father also bought some videos and cassettes for us, including cartoons, songs and nursery rhymes. We enjoyed watching the cartoons very much and I really liked to listen to these songs and sing along. My parents spoke to us in Mandarin as much as possible but my Taiwanese was not banned at home, which made me relaxed and feel more comfortable. My mother also helped me with my school work every day. Although I couldn't yet catch up with other students, I soon felt much more confident and less worried than I had at the beginning. I was also very pleased that my sister and I could now communicate more simply by using this new common language.

During this difficult time, my parents' support gave me a lot of encouragement this was of great help. By using the various materials, they made Mandarin more accessible and interesting for me, not just a strange, difficult second language, which I needed to learn in order to survive. I became motivated and willing to learn this new

language.   Moreover, their attitude made me feel it was not wrong to use my first language; I just needed to learn another one and did not need to give up the one I could use already.   It took me almost six months to be as good as other students. My parents also bought me different types of books when I was able to read Mandarin. Afterwards, my Mandarin ability exceeded other students' both in speaking and writing.   I represented my class and my school in many speech contests as well as in many writing contests.   I was asked to give presentations in front the whole school in assemblies every month; I won first place in a national writing competition when I was in year 5 and my articles were published in both local and national newspapers several times.

1.3 Secondary School

In the Taiwanese education system, students need to take the joint (or nationwide) entrance examination to gain admission to a senior high school (for students aged between 15 and 17), and to go to a university.   These examinations were only held once a year and were very competitive; at around the time I attended junior high school, the admission rate was only 30 percent.   Therefore, the students in secondary schools (including junior high schools) were under a lot of pressure.

I chose to attend a junior high school specializing in dancing classes and which was not very close to my home.   One reason I chose to go there was that I did not want to go to the school at which my father taught and for which the catchment area covered my home.   I thought I would be looked on differently since my father was a teacher there.   Also, I hoped that the dancing class would be more interesting than common classes.   Fortunately, I passed several stages of exams to get into this school.   My

parents promised that as long as I could pass the admission exam, they would let me study there.   They honestly did not believe that there would be any chance of my passing this highly competitive exam for which there were 500 candidates for 30 places.   Most of the candidates had attended special classes for several years solely to prepare for this exam, which included dancing and physical related tests as well as intelligence tests.   I had only attended dancing classes and had no idea at all how hard this exam would be.   When I got the result of the exam, all of my family were very surprised, not least me.   The life in the dancing school was very happy and interesting.   Although my time at dancing school provided very pleasant learning experience, I faced another challenge at this stage.

In Taiwan English is taught, in secondary schools, as the first foreign language.   It is regarded as a very important subject not only because it is an international language but also because it is one of the main subjects tested in the joint high school entrance examinations.   According to the national curriculum, for Taiwanese secondary schools, students should have at least 12 hours of English classes per week.   As one Chinese proverb states: one should "never lose at the starting line", many also believed that it would be better to learn a foreign language while young.   With these in mind, most parents sent their children to learn English in private schools before they entered secondary school.   Indeed, some children started to learn English when they were two years old.

The first English class in my life was another embarrassing and frustrating experience. As soon as the English teacher walked into our classroom, she started with what must have been "Good morning, how are you today?" - in English.   Then she continued to talk to the whole class, who had all learnt some English before.   I was still very

confused about her opening words, when every classmate raised their hand, except for me.   Somehow the teacher did not see this missing hand amongst the sea of raised hands and she proceeded to spend about 5 minutes reading through A to Z, assuming everyone was very familiar with these letters.   Similarly, she spent another five minutes to read through the phonetic symbols.   The phonetic symbols were taught to help students to pronounce English words, such as /ˈæpəl/ for apple and /ˈkar/ for car.   I couldn't remember any of them, nor could I understand the difference between English letters and phonetic symbols.   I did not understand the relationship between these two systems.

The first lesson was "Good morning."   She read the text for us but some students raised their hands.   They said they had learnt English for many years; this was far too easy for them.   Therefore, the teacher stopped and started to ask questions in English.   To my surprise, a lot of students could speak English very well and were able to communicate with the teacher.   Afterwards, the teacher asked, in English, that each student introduce themselves using their English names.   I had no idea what was happening nor what she wanted us to do.   When it was my turn, I couldn't say a word.   The teacher repeated "what is your name?" in English slowly but I still couldn't understand.   Then the teacher translated it into Mandarin for me.   I answered "Yu-chiao."   The teacher said "No, your English name." I told her that I didn't have an English name.   She took out a list of names from A to Z and assigned me an English name "Angela."   She wrote it on the board for me.   Even though I didn't like it, I "drew" this word composed by strange symbols down in my notebook. During the rest of the class, my classmates tried their best to show the teacher how good their English was while I sat, without saying anything, feeling frustrated.   This experience reminded me of my first day in primary school.   Suddenly, the

excitement of gaining a place at dancing school had been replaced by great fear and worry.

After class, I told my classmates that I had never before learnt any English. They doubted me and questioned why, given my father was an English teacher, he had not taught me at home. I went back home and asked my father angrily as to why he had not taught me English before secondary school. My father smiled at me and explained that because I had a tough time learning Mandarin at the beginning, he didn't want to pressure me more with the learning of another new language so soon. He also assured me that there wouldn't be a problem for me to learn English from then on and he illustrated this with my former experience and achievement in learning Mandarin. I felt relieved but was still a little worried. My sister agreed with my father and said that she didn't want to learn English until she had to. She had not had such a hard time as I when learning Mandarin since she attended kindergarten. However, since we didn't live in a Hakka speaking area, she couldn't keep her Hakka but had needed to learn to speak Taiwanese instead.

After dinner that evening, my mother took out my English book and told me to sit down beside her. She turned to the page of English letters and started to teach me one-by-one. My mother asked me to use my imagination to think what those strange symbols looked like for me. I always liked to draw so it was very interesting to draw pictures using those letters as the basis. So I changed "A" into a ladder with a man standing on the top and "B" into a pair of glasses. I enjoyed it very much. And although it took me several days to learn from A to Z, I could finally recognise and write each letter correctly. However, I was still confused about the phonetic symbols. For example, the letter "u" is pronounced as "you" while the phonetic

symbol "u" is pronounced as "wu"; the letter "a" is pronounced as "eight" without "t" but is pronounced as "ah" when it is a phonetic symbol.   My mother told me to ignore the phonetic symbols and taught me how to pronounce by looking at the letters. She also composed a rhyme for me to remember: A, A, A, apple, apple, apple; B, B, B, bird, bird, bird; C,C,C, cat, cat ,cat,….Z,Z,Z, zebra, zebra, zebra.   My mother read it with me several times a day; it didn't take me long to remember the whole rhyme, and my sister found it so interesting she read it with us.

In school, I was still far behind my classmates.   It was very difficult to catch up with people who had been learning English for six or seven years.   It was especially difficult when I didn't have a lot of chance to use the language.   But when it came to reading and understanding the textbooks, I didn't have a lot of problems.   However, in the written exams in school I was not able to do very well because there was always a section about phonetic symbols.   The English teacher knew that my father was also an English teacher.   She assumed that I should have been taught English for a long time.   However, she didn't understand my situation well enough.   So I was told off by her after every written exam.   She said that since my father was an English teacher, I should do very well in these easy exams.   I felt very bad because she assumed she understood me and my family situation but she took some things for granted and I was too scared to tell her the truth that my first lesson in school with her was the first English lesson in my life.   Instead I promised her that I would make more effort in order that my father should not lose face.   In the meantime, I felt happy with my decision to study at this school instead of in my father's school, this alternative might have been worse.

Despite my initial unpleasant experiences learning English at school, I still enjoyed learning it because of my parents' support. They told me not to worry about the marks I got in exams because I shouldn't just regard it as a subject in school but as a useful, living language. The most important thing was that I liked learning this language and knew how to use it. At this time, my parents used the same strategies to help me learn English as they had used before with Mandarin. They bought me English films and cassettes, which were not made for English learners but authentic, real life materials. They did not send me to cramming schools after school, like other parents, but were involved in my learning of English themselves. I had confidence in them and in myself because of their support. I also believe that my experience of learning Mandarin was another positive factor. Finally, my English ability caught up with that of my classmates and it turned out to be one of my favourite subjects of my school days.

When I graduated to senior high school, I kept my high level of interest and motivation for learning Mandarin and English. Mandarin and English were my best subjects. At this stage, I started to learn advanced Mandarin and English, which I greatly enjoyed and I forgot the hard time I had when I started to learn these languages. I had very good achievement in both; I represented my school and my class in speech as well as writing contests both in Mandarin and in English. During the last year of senior high school I was asked to take some special assessments and was identified as a gifted student in both Mandarin and English. This, combined with my achievements in the contests, enabled me to gain admission to the Chinese department of one university and to the English department in another, without taking the joint entrance exam. Each year there are only ten students nationwide passing the assessment in either English or Chinese. Everybody who congratulated me for

this accomplishment, the teachers and the students, said I was a genius or a gifted student.   However, in my heart, I knew clearly I was neither a genius nor a gifted student.   It was my parents' efforts, as well as my own, that had enabled me to attain this recognition.

1.4 University

After evaluating the advantages and disadvantages, I didn't take either of the offers, both of which were from universities in Taipei.   Although for a lot of my fellow students Taipei was a dream I didn't want to live so far away from my family.   Moreover, the living expenses in Taipei were high and I didn't want to increase the economic burden on my parents.   Therefore, I took the joint entrance examination and was admitted to the English department of Kaohsiung Normal University, which is among the top three universities in Taiwan.   It is a university for training future teachers of secondary education.   The completion of the degree with teacher certification takes five years: four years of study and one year of practice teaching in secondary schools.   At Kaohsiung Normal University the students didn't need to pay tuition fees, we got free accommodation and the government paid us a monthly salary.   Moreover, after the students got their degree, the government would assign them a school in which to teach based on their academic achievements.   Compared with students in other universities having trouble getting a job after graduation, this was a big advantage. All of those benefits had made Normal Universities very popular and the competition for places very tough.

Studying in National Kaohsiung Normal University was a very pleasant experience. The lecturers were very helpful and supportive.   We had several teachers from the

United States lecturing us in different subjects.   We also interacted with exchange students from American and Japanese universities.   It was the first time in my life that I had the chance to speak English to foreigners (in PingTung, my hometown, it was very unusual to see foreigners at all).   This experience was a graphic illustration that English really was a world language, not just a language spoken on television; also that it was a very important tool for speaking to people who have different mother tongue languages from you.

The courses in university widened my knowledge of English, both linguistically and in literature.   The teachers applied various methods and resources to help us to improve our English.   Aside from all of these interesting learning experiences, the most important things I learnt at university were: how to be an English teacher and how to be a good teacher.   Apart from the learning theories, we often practised our teaching on peer group students.   Feedback was given to help each other to improve the teaching.   In the second year of university, I started to teach English as a private tutor.   This was my first real job and one from which I gained some precious teaching experiences.   In the fifth year, I was assigned to do my practice teaching at a prestigious secondary school in Taipei.   We got the same pay as the formal teachers and we were able to stay to teach at our assigned school after we graduated. On the one hand, I was very happy to be able to teach at the school in Taipei because it was an approval of my academic achievements; on the other hand, I was very upset that I was going to stay very far away from my family.   PingTung is in the far south of Taiwan while Taipei is in the north.

While studying at university, my parents didn't stop supporting me.   I remember that in the second year of university, the school was advertising a study trip to Boston

where we would get the chance to attend courses at Harvard University while living on the campus.   It was very appealing and exciting prospect about which all of the students discussed.   However, the fee was almost three times my parents' salary.   I knew that it would be a very big expense for my family; therefore, I tried not to think about it as I didn't want to have any expectation of going.   I didn't want to put my parents in a difficult situation.   However, when my friends were talking about this trip to Boston and started to plan what to take with them, I still felt a little bit disappointed.   One day, my parents learnt of this trip from my friends and asked me why I didn't tell them.   Even though I told them that I wasn't interested in it at all, my parents could read my mind clearly.   My mother went to register me on the trip without letting me know in advance and she wrote me a letter telling me not to worry about the money; that she and my father would try their best to support me in things which I like and are good for me.   I couldn't sleep that night partly because of the excitement of being able to make this trip and partly because of the gratitude I felt towards my parents.

With this trip I had my first experience of sitting on a plane and travelling abroad. For my friends, who had made similar trips many times before, this was just another trip during the summer vacation but for me, it was a precious and valuable experience. It was a brand new world to me.   The people, language, culture and food were totally different from my own small world in the south of Taiwan.   There were unexpected surprises and shocks in every moment, even when I was in supermarkets.   Although western (US and European) films were very popular in Taiwan, it was still very different when I was there to experience it by myself.   This unforgettable trip spurred my dream of going abroad to study for a higher degree, even though I thought it would be very difficult I decided I was going to try my best to fulfill this ambition.

1.5 Teaching Career

In my own experience of learning, the teachers played a crucial role. Their words, attitude and their way of instruction had either positive or negative impacts on me. Since I started as a teacher, I have always borne in mind that I could have an enormous influence on my students. I should be careful not to make the same mistakes some of my teachers made with me.

My first students, as a qualified teacher, were a group of thirteen year olds in their first year of junior high school. I was their English teacher as well as their form tutor. My school was located in the business district of Taipei which is home to several big banks, large companies as well as small business such as food markets. As a result my students were from diverse family backgrounds and different social classes. This made my English teaching very difficult at the beginning because the students' abilities in English were of greatly differing levels. Some of them had been learning English since they were three years old, others were just starting to learn English letters, while some members of the class were born and had lived in English speaking countries for most of their lives. Therefore, I referred back to my own experience of learning English in secondary school and tried to find a best way to help them. I divided the class of fifty students into several small groups and applied cooperative learning. The students with better English ability were the group leaders and the teachers; they helped the students with inferior English ability. I had found out that through this team work, the students very much enjoyed learning. They liked to help each other and the competition among groups made the students very keen to learn and achieve more. The students with greater ability didn't feel bored and the students with inferior ability didn't feel embarrassed.

Additionally I taught them some English songs, played them some films and sometimes used ICT in my teaching. All of these activities made students highly motivated and ensured they didn't regard English as a boring, tough subject. In addition to the teacher's instruction in school, I found out that family support also played an important role. Because of parents' different social class and educational backgrounds, the levels of support they provided to their children were also different. Some of the parents had enough ability to teach the children on their own, and they spent time learning English with the children. Some of the parents sent their children to private schools, while some of the parents couldn't afford the time and expense to help their children to learn but showed interest in their children's learning progress. According to my experience, sending children to an extra (private) English class could be of limited benefit without parents either spending time learning with the children or showing interest in their learning.

After two years of teaching in junior high school, I wanted to try to teach different age groups. I applied for a teaching position at the Taipei municipal Xi Song Senior High School, which was among the top five schools in Taipei. It was very competitive since there were one hundred candidates fighting for one teaching place. Most of the candidates held an MA degree and had experience teaching in a senior high school. When I learnt this fact, I didn't have high expectations but thought of my application as a learning experience. There were three stages to the selection process: a written exam, a teaching trial and an interview. During my interview, the interviewers, university professors and teachers from other senior high schools, asked me several questions about my teaching trial. They told me that all of the other candidates spoke only English when doing the teaching trial, even while explaining

the grammatical structures.   They asked me why I chose to speak Mandarin when I taught grammatical structures.   I told them that since I had been teaching in junior high school for several years, I knew the curriculum very clearly.   There was a big gap between the English curriculum in junior high school and senior high school; most of the students found English very difficult in their first year in senior high school.   I believed if the teachers only used English in class even when explaining complicated grammar, this would only cause more confusion.

I was fortunate to get the position and started to teach students in the age group sixteen to eighteen.   However, I knew that my new colleagues were all educated to Masters level and felt that this was the way I too should progress in my career; I decided to study for an MA, either abroad or in Taiwan.

1.6 MA in London

I discussed with my parents and my university lecturers my ideas for further study. All of them thought it would be a good experience to go abroad to study for an MA degree, especially as I was going to study Teaching English to Speakers of Other languages.   I was hesitant because of the expensive tuition fees and living expenses. However, my parents gave me full support to fulfill this dream.

In 1999, I arrived in London and started my studies towards an MA degree in English in Education at King's College, London.   This was the first time I had lived alone in a foreign country for a long period.   The busy schedule in College didn't allow me a time to miss home very much.   The methods of teaching and learning here were a great challenge for me.   In Taiwan, students are usually asked to keep quiet in class

while the teachers lecture them.   Contrarily, in the classes in London, students played a more active role and we were always encouraged to express our opinions. Sometimes the classes were based on students' discussion instead of a predefined lecture.   Before we were able to discuss a topic we should have already read around the subject and absorbed the ideas.   I found that I learned more this way than by sitting passively listening to lectures.

During my MA studies I had the chance to study the module of Bilingualism and Biculturalism with Professor Eve Gregory in Goldsmiths College.   This course was the most beneficial and impressive course of all; it gave me the chance to gain knowledge about bilingual students and the problems which they encounter.   In Taiwan this was not a situation we encountered regularly, yet it mirrors my own personal experience.   In addition to the interesting and beneficial course content, the way Professor Eve Gregory organized this module and the way she interacted with students also had an important impact on me.   She was always the first to arrive at the lecture room, no matter if she was going to hold the class that evening or not. She prepared tea, coffee and the other drinks as well as many biscuits for us.   Every student was very appreciative of the way she treated us and to this day was the most pleasant learning experience I have ever had.   Moreover, Dr. Jim Anderson was my tutor for this module, for which the topic of my essay was the application of ICT into the teaching of English in Taiwan.   Dr. Anderson gave me several tutorials and discussed my essays with me, to an extent I had not experienced in any other modules. His keen tutoring and attention greatly inspired me a lot and aroused my interest in studying related topics.

In the year 2000, I submitted my MA dissertation, the topic of which was also the application of ICT in English classrooms in Taiwan. I returned to my motherland feeling refreshed and enriched by my experiences in London; I returned to my school and restarted my teaching job. In December 2000, I learnt that I had been awarded a Masters degree in English in Education with merit.

1.7 The Origin of Inquiry

In the year 2002, the second year after my return to Taiwan, I was promoted to vice principal, in addition to English teaching duties. This job was totally different from what I had done before and was a great challenge. My role was to serve as a bridge between teachers, parents and the principal. Moreover, my duties also included communication between the authorities and the press. Therefore, most of new vice principals have experience of administrative roles for more than ten years. However, thanks to the support of my colleagues, I didn't encounter a lot of difficulties. Because of this job, I was required to start to consider things from wider perspectives rather than limited on how to teach English. I was trained that when making a decision, I needed to take the students, parents, teachers, the upper authorities and society into consideration. In addition, this experience was also a good training for my ability to organise and for dealing with unexpected crises.

In this job my first research project came late in the year 2002. I was chosen by the government as one of the committee members representing senior high school English teachers on the panel defining the Taiwanese National Curriculum. This project lasted six months, with each member assigned a different duty. My responsibility was to both qualitatively and quantitatively investigate the progression and the

propriety of the English text books in senior and junior high schools.

The second project I conducted was when I worked as deputy coordinator of the research and development group in Taipei City Educational Bureau.   This two-year research project was a survey of contemporary media education & media literacy in secondary schools in Taiwan.   During these two years, we encountered the frustration arising from collecting questionnaires from students and parents.   This experience made me interested in conducting further research projects and I had gained a lot of precious experience.   This project was awarded the best research project of the year and was published as the Government paper.

At this time, the Taiwanese government started to pay attention to the education of dialects spoken in families.   Those dialects include Taiwanese, Hakka, and the aboriginal languages.   The government put all of these languages as compulsory modules into the primary and secondary curricula in order to maintain these heritage languages.   Students were required to choose one language, from among these, to learn.   This policy is contrary to the policy when I was in school.   Because of the ban on using dialects in school, students gradually lost the ability to speak in their heritage dialects.   It has been a very common phenomenon that the younger generation has difficulty communicating with the elder generation.   This social change reminded me of my personal experience in school days as well as inspired my interest in teaching Mandarin as a second or foreign language.   I took a PGCE in Mandarin teaching at the National Taiwan University and was awarded the teacher certificate for teaching Mandarin to speakers of other languages.   I also had the chance to teach Mandarin to foreign students in the language centre at the National Taiwan University.

Even though I had enjoyed the teaching job as well as the vice principal post, I felt I was exhausted and worn out. Every morning I had to arrive at school around seven o'clock and I couldn't go home until ten in the evening. I seldom had a restful weekend and I had no more than seven days off every year. The pressure and the weariness made me eager for a rest or a change in my life. Therefore, after discussions with my parents, I decided to return to London after four years in order to pursue a further degree. My colleagues and my friends could not understand why I would give up such a good job and a promising future and attempted to persuade me to stay. Although, on the other side of the world, my life might not necessarily be better nor easier, I was determined to give it a try and experience a different type of life.

In the year 2004, I arrived in London again and undertook an MRes degree in King's College London; as at that time, I hadn't got a very clear idea of exactly what research project I wanted to pursue but wanted more training in doing research. The MRes course benefited me greatly by helping me develop more knowledge and skills necessary for doing research; while I simultaneously cultivated a more clear idea about precisely which field I was interested in.

As soon as I arrived in London, I found a lot of people on the street tried to greet me by saying "Ni hao!", which means hello in Mandarin. This greatly surprised me because when I was in London for the first time, people who didn't know me and wanted the same effect would greet me only in Japanese. This also revealed the fact that Mandarin had become a popular language to learn in recent years.

The importance of Mandarin Chinese has been rising since China's market has been

opened.   With one-fifth of the global population using it to communicate, Mandarin has become one of the most influential languages in the world.   Enthusiasm for learning Mandarin has been witnessed around the world: today, more than 2,000 universities worldwide offer Chinese courses and almost 30 million non-Chinese students are learning the language (International Chinese Newsweekly magazine, Hong Kong, January, 2005).   In England, there are about 100 state schools teaching Chinese (Haydon, 2005); UK-wide, there are more than 150 independent and weekend Mandarin schools (UKFCS, 2005).   In both kinds of school there are an increasing number of students without a Chinese background learning Mandarin.

In addition to my study, I began teaching Mandarin as a part time job.   I taught adult learners as well as young learners at a complementary Chinese school: The London Hua Hsia Chinese School.   The school was held on Sunday afternoons and was originally intended for the children of overseas Chinese to maintain their heritage language- Mandarin.   There was a big age range, with students from 3 to 14 years old.   To my surprise, these students also had very diverse family backgrounds. Some of them had both parents of Chinese origin; others had one parent of Chinese origin while some of them didn't have any Chinese heritage at all.   On starting the job I had not realized, nor believed, I would encounter such diversity in students' family background.

Among the Chinese immigrants to the UK, as many as 80% are believed to have originated from Hong Kong, including the British-born Chinese whose parents came from Hong Kong (Li Wei, 1994).   This is the result of the historical fact that Hong Kong was one of the UK's colonies and it was easier for Chinese from Hong Kong to immigrate to the UK than Chinese from other places.   Since the mid-1970s, the

immigration of Chinese into Britain has slowed.   The 1981 British National Act has made it difficult even for dependents to gain access to the UK.   Therefore, the long-term residential Chinese population in Britain has grown mainly by the emergence of a British-born generation (Li Wei, 1994).   A considerable number of British-born Chinese have now become parents producing a third (or later) generation.

It was estimated that nearly 70% of the Chinese population in Britain use Cantonese as their first language, 25% Hakka and 5% of Beifang (Li Wei, 1994).   Mandarin is one dialect of Beifang; since 1911, it has been the official language of the Republic of China (now Taiwan) and subsequently the People's Republic of China.   The two generations of British-born Chinese have been exposed to British culture and the English language since they were born.   In this case, English is their first language instead of Cantonese or Mandarin.   Therefore, the majority of them send their children to learn Mandarin as their second or third language to maintain a link with their heritage (CSSA, 2005).

My first class at Hua Hsia Chinese school seemed, to me, to be the longest class I have ever given although actually it lasted only two hours.   I had fifteen students from the age of 5 to the age of 11.   I had never taught such young students before and the wide age range presented another challenge.   At the end of the class, I gave each of them a note for their parents.   When the parents, who had been waiting outside the classroom, came into classroom to collect their children, they asked them what they had learnt.   One of the parents came to me and asked if I could write the parents' notes both in English and Mandarin; she said neither her husband nor her could speak Mandarin at all let alone read Chinese characters.   Not until then did I realize the Mandarin abilities among the parents differed greatly.

Sometimes, I felt I was too lazy to break up my Sunday, especially as this lesson had always stopped me from going away for a weekend break. Some of the students asked me:

"Why do I need to come here on Sunday? My friends don't need to go to school on Sunday. They always have birthday parties on Sundays."

It made me appreciate how much effort the parents put in to take the children to learn Mandarin and to help them at home. Most of the parents stayed in the hall waiting for their children, where they either chatted with other parents or had meetings and seminars. Some of them attended the adults' Mandarin class. Sunday Mandarin school for them was an activity for the whole family. After class, the parents always came to speak to me and asked how their children were progressing. They also wanted me to suggest some other resources that they could use to help their children to learn Mandarin.

The support and effort shown by these parents reminded me of my own parents. It was these parents who inspired me to sacrifice my Sundays and stick to this job; it was the parents and my own parents' similar support of me that spurred me to research the influence of home support when learning a new language. In view of the different parental backgrounds, my intention is to investigate the kind and level of support these parents provide to their children and to what extent the different family supports aid these children's learning.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, I introduced my family and educational background as well as my

work experience.   I was born and grew up in a very supportive, warm family. Although we experienced a period of financial hardship, during which my parents worked day and night to support our family and to solve the financial problem, my parents devoted themselves to assisting me in my learning.   They applied different strategies to help me and encourage me.   Their support guided me through the tough times I encountered when I learned Mandarin and English.   With their support, I not only caught up with my peers but also enjoyed the learning process and the languages. When teaching English in Taiwan, I witnessed the different levels and methods of parental support, which were linked somewhat to the parents' social and educational background.   I also saw how children benefited from parental support.   When teaching Mandarin in a complementary Chinese school in London, I was surprised by the students' diverse backgrounds.   I was also very impressed with the devotion of the parents to learning Mandarin.   The parents were enthusiastic participants in activities held at the school and were determined to help their children learn Mandarin. In view of the parents' attitude, I was curious to discover whether parents of different backgrounds supported their children learning Mandarin outside the Chinese school? If so, in what ways do parents of different backgrounds support their children to learn Mandarin?   In addition, how is this support affected by social and cultural factors, as well as the parents' own educational experience?   In order to begin to investigate these questions, I first turned to existing literature in the field.

PART TWO THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Chapter 2

Home Support

Chapter 2 Home Support

2.1 Introduction

2.2 The Importance of Family Support and Involvement

2.3 Home Factors Affecting Children's Learning

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2.6 Summary

Chapter 2 Home Support

2.1 Introduction

In recent years, there have been a growing number of researchers investigating the nature of family and families' influence in the development of children's learning and literacy skills. Home support of and parental involvement with learners of either a foreign language (Gardner, 1985) or an ancestral language (Baker, 1992) has been widely acknowledged in the literature. For example, Sung & Padilla's 1998 paper, on the motivation of western elementary school learners of Asian languages, suggested parental involvement was crucial. This result was even more pronounced for students with Asian parents.

In this chapter, I discuss this research and the related literature on home support for children's learning. This review constitutes four distinct parts. First, the importance and influence of family support; second, an examination of the home factors which affect children's learning; next there is a discussion of how children learn at home and what parents can provide. Finally, I look into families with minority backgrounds: multicultural families; minority families and Chinese families.

2.2 The Importance of Family Support and Involvement

Young children's learning interactions outside of school occur within

> "organized, flexible webs of relationships that focus on shared cultural activities…These webs include, among others, family members and fictive kin." (Gregory, Long and Volk, 2004, p. 23)

Children learn the first from their parents therefore the home is a child's first place of learning.   As soon as children are born, parents feed and dress them, they later guide them in learning to walk and talk and teaching them the day-to-day skills needed for survival (Griffiths and Hamilton, 1987).   In this regard, all parents are teachers; families are most effective when they function as educating agents directly (Snow, et. al. 1991).   Research in recent decades has provided a wealth of evidence emphasizing the importance of parental interest and support for their children's learning.   Prior to this, researchers looking into the effects of involving parents in teaching children were very cautious (Griffiths and Hamilton, 1987).   Parents' involvement in children's school learning appeared to have been unwelcome. Schools and teachers had doubts about parents' knowledge, ability and methods; it was believed parents might not have professional and sufficient knowledge to help their children; they might use the wrong methods and they might cause the children a lot of stress.

Gradually, during the 1970s, parental involvement started to be seriously investigated and came to be discussed more openly.   In the early 1980s, researchers finally published results showing strong evidence of the positive effect of parental support and involvement.   Hewison and Tizard (1980) conducted research which looked at the relationship between children's home background and their success in school. They found that the parents' attitude toward their children's reading associated strongly with the children's reading attainment.   Follow-up research was carried out by Tizard, Schofield and Hewison (1982), who recorded that reading at home helped children more than extra help at school.

The topic of parental involvement in children's education continues to be of interest to

researchers and is relevant both to professionals in education and to parents.   There have been many studies into and projects involving parents in their children's development and education (Wolfendale, 1989).   Parental support and involvement have also been proven to be beneficial for the development of children's literacy and language.

> "Children's developing literacy was mediated by a network of people that included their teacher, parents, peers, siblings, extended family members, family friends, Sunday school teachers and pastors…"
>
> (Gregory, Long and Volk, 2004, p. 26)

Goodman (1980) introduced the term "roots of literacy" in children's development. She argued these "roots" are nourished in the home environment and children's reading grows from these roots.   These roots include being aware of print as part of the environment, being aware of written language on its own (in books and newspapers), getting to know the forms of writing, etc.   Teale and Sulzby (1986) showed that children develop their awareness and knowledge of literacy through experience and activities in the home, such as observing parents' literate behaviour and interacting with siblings in reading and writing activities. Purcell-Gates (1996) mentioned learners develop their understanding of language systems by using language to interact with other people within specific cultural contexts.   This implies that literacy development occurs wherever literacy practices are occurring. Therefore, young children begin to learn reading and writing in their homes when they observe and participate in literacy practices.   However, the quality of these practices and experience varies significantly in different families due to the different levels of functional literacy in each family.

Home as an important learning place for children has been demonstrated by many researchers; parents' support and involvement have considerable effect on children's learning as well as their development of literacy.

2.3 Home Factors Affecting Children's Learning

Starting in the 1960s, a lot of researchers aimed to identify the role of home variables in predicting school achievement. Amongst the considered factors, the education level and income of parents' were found to have the highest correlation with children's achievement. Researchers also found that a high level of literacy within a child's family environment was strongly associated with a high level of attainment in school (Snow et al., 1991). The relationship between the home literacy environment and children's school achievement is presented in Marjoribank's work (1980). He found that families' use of language as well as literacy correlated with children's word knowledge. On the basis of these results the home literacy environment can be discussed via the following factors: the parents' way of teaching; the parental education level and parental expectations.

Parental teaching styles have been observed to differ between middle- and working class families. In addition to socioeconomic status, teaching styles are also influenced by a variety of other demographic and psychological factors. Sometimes, parents teach children directly when they have enough supporting knowledge and ability. Parents who provide models of intellectual activities and who have a wide range of interests have children with higher school attainment (Snow et al., 1991). Beyond direct teaching, parents can indirectly create opportunities and facilitate their children's learning in many ways; for example, by facilitating access to other people

and activities, parents can enrich children's learning and indirectly promote their literacy and language. Parents can create opportunities for their children to spend time with siblings, other adults (such as family friends) and extended family members. These individuals can, like the parents, function as role models providing information and knowledge, as well as help with homework and provide emotional support. Parents' can encourage children's participation in a wide variety of activities outside of the home. Parkinson et al. (1982) found significant correlations between children's school achievement and the variety of activities in which they engaged with their mothers and with their opportunities to participate in adult conversation. Findings on the importance of access to adult conversation were also carried out by Anderson, Wilson and Fielding (1988) who backed up Parkinson's (1982) result.

Parents' educational background is an important component of the "family background" considered here. The educational level of parents' is statistically proven to have a significant relationship to children's school achievement. Many studies have shown that parents' education, especially maternal education, is a major predictor of a child's reading ability and school success (Durkin, 1966; Laosa, 1978; Roberts, Bornstein, Slater and Barrett, 1999; Fan and Chen, 2001; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Flouri and Buchanan, 2004; George, Hansen and Schoon, 2007; McCoy and Cole, 2011). They suggested that mother's education was related to her attitude and behaviour toward her children, which, in turn, may affect children's attainment in school More educated mothers may provide their children with more resources and opportunities that promote literacy; moreover, those mothers may be more directly involved in their children's education.

However, some researchers have criticized the idea that parental education plays such

a significant role, believing it can only be regarded as a surface status characteristic, which does not necessarily comprise the total form and substance of family life (Clark, 1983). The question of precisely how parents with better education background are advantageous to their children's education remains open.

In addition to parents' teaching style and level of education, parental expectation is another important home factor. Parental aspirations and expectations regarding their children's education can be transmitted directly to the children through support, encouragement or even demands (Sewell and Hauser, 1976). These aspirations/expectations may also affect other aspects of parental behaviour which might have influence on children's achievement (Seginer, 1983). The literature distinguishes "aspirations" from "expectations" such that: aspirations are goals without consideration of real life constraints (Spenner and Featherman, 1978) while expectations reflect real life constraints.

A study into the extent and value of parental help by Hewison and Tizard (1980) looked at a number of factors including: parent's attitudes to children's play and discipline; whether there was much conversation with the child and what attitudes parents had toward school. They additionally looked at mothers' language behavior and at children's IQ scores. Most of these factors were found to affect children's learning to some extent.

2.4 How Children Learn at Home and What Parents Can Provide

As established above, the home is an important, powerful learning environment for children, especially so for the preschool child. Since the preschool period represents

a significant proportion of a child's life, how children learn at home and what parents can provide to help children's learning are worthy of investigation.

The way children learn at home is understood to be very different from the way they learn at school. Hannon (1994) suggested some possible defining characteristics of home learning and of school learning. Home learning is usually shaped by interest and need, while school learning is shaped by curricular objectives. Home learning is often spontaneous, flexible in duration and rarely formally assessed but school learning is timetabled, of fixed duration and often formally assessed. At home, parents tend to use resources at hand to teach children, such as TV and print media. These resources are extensive but less controlled compared with the teaching materials in school. Extended conversations possibly occur at home but in school, limited opportunities for conversation might exist. Learning opportunities vary with home background while such opportunities are more equal in schools. Teale's work (1986) illustrates these characteristics; he showed that preschool children participate in, or observe, a range of literacy activities in the home related to daily living (working, shopping, travelling, etc), entertainment (reading stories, TV guides, etc), parents' work (reading manuals, checking advertisements) and interpersonal communication (letters, cards). Adults in the home act as role models while in school, adults act as instructors.

Apart from the possible characteristics of children's learning at home, what and how children learn at home can vary significantly with the culture and values of their family background and communities (Heath, 1983). Some children in Heath's research were found more likely to be involved in literacy events with several participants, while bedtime stories were more common for others. Heath showed

how these differences were rooted deeply in culture and in language use.

Learning occurs all the time, especially for young children, who continually learn from their everyday experiences.   Therefore, the environment parents offer at home is crucial in helping children's learning.

> "There are two main ways in which parents can help children with their learning at home.   One is by making time to sit down and work together in the evening, perhaps using books and other materials sent home by school.   The other is through the kind of learning that can take place at any time, and might be called "incidental" learning…" (Griffiths and Hamilton, 1987, p. 5)

There are a number of papers documenting the importance of "family involvement" for students' achievement in school (e.g. Epstein, 1983 and 1986).   Parents influence on pre-school children and those in their early years of elementary school education have been documented by researchers, as discussed above.   During a child's later years in elementary education, parents' influence on students' school achievement might be through their impact on school as an institution and their support, at home, of school initiated learning activities.   This kind of support differs from the support given to younger children which, as discussed above, is by direct parental teaching or modeling.   Snow et al. (1991) mentioned several different types of parental support for older elementary school students.

a. Formal parent-school involvement: This model of parental involvement is by joining organizations, attending school activities, serving as volunteer helpers and other programmes.   Whether such involvement is actually effective or not is not well understood, it could give children the impression that school, and that their

achievement in school, is important.　 It may also affect teachers' expectations of a child's attainment and the teacher's assessment of their family.

b. Good communication and contact with teachers: The frequency of contact between parents and teachers may be an indicator of the level of parental support. Contacting the teacher is a way of understanding and monitoring a child's progress in school.　 Good communication allows parents to discover any problems or difficulties with their child's learning in a timely manner.　 "Initiating contact or responding promptly to teacher-initiated contact may signal to teachers that parents are interested in their children's achievement, and may also enable teachers to recruit early and effective parental help for children." (Snow et. al.,1991, p. 117)

c. Homework help:　 Parents help with homework can show their support of their child's learning in school and parental responsibility both to the child and teacher. This also informs parents about the child's experiences and progression in school. Availability of help with homework can also imply parents' value and attitude towards school work, which is also an important message for teachers.

d. School punctuality and attendance: One of the most basic forms of support parents can offer is to ensure their children's regular attendance and punctuality.　 This also reflects that the parents' place a high value on school education.

Hannon (1994) investigated how parents can assist in the development of children's literacy ability.　 He mentioned four types of assistance: opportunities for learning; recognition of children's achievements; interaction around literacy activities and a model of literacy.　 Parents can provide crucial learning opportunities in a child's early years via the teaching of nursery rhymes (which helps speaking and language awareness); in providing resources for children's drawing or scribbling activities; by

reading stories and other written materials together; as well as by encouraging children to participate in social events (which provide further literacy demands and opportunities).

Parents' recognition of their achievement can provide great encouragement for children.   Moreover, parents can support, explain as well as challenge children to move on from what they know about literacy to do more.   For example, they can involve children in real literacy tasks, in which they can make a meaningful contribution.   Finally, parents can act as models for children, when performing reading and writing activities, such as reading books and newspapers as well as writing letters and notes.

In the later years of elementary school education, parents can provide the same kinds of support, mentioned above, but in different ways.   Providing literacy opportunities at this stage might be in providing resources such as dictionaries or reading and writing materials.   Recognition of achievement here might mean that parents appreciate children's reading and writing of more difficult texts at home and at school. Appropriate interaction remains significant at this stage.   In providing a model of literacy, parents can demonstrate how these literacy related activities are linked in the home, community and society.

In this section, the importance of home environment to children's learning was discussed.   I have looked at how children can learn at home and examined how parents can support children's learning at home as well as how parents can help the development of children's literacy.

2.5 Families with Minority Ethnic Backgrounds

Home support is crucial for children's learning and school performance. In other ways, home support also plays an important role to maintain immigrant families' heritage languages and cultures. In this section, I look into the home support in families with different ethnic backgrounds: Chinese families, minority families and multicultural families.

One of the major concerns of ethnic minority families' is to help their children to maintain their non-English mother tongue; this is especially true for children born overseas. Maintaining the mother tongue allows children to communicate more effectively within the family and their ethnic community. Moreover, people from the ethnic minority communities also believe that maintaining their ethnic languages means they maintain their ethnic, tradition, culture and social identity.

The effect of the home literacy learning environment in English-speaking homes is well documented both in the USA and in Britain. Until the last 10 to 15 years little research was carried out investigating the extent and nature of literacy practices in linguistic minority homes. During recent years a growing number of ethnographic studies have been made of the social construction of reading and writing in multilingual communities in Britain.

Saxena (1994) highlighted the diversity within the Punjabi community of Southall and described the literacy awareness and choices relating to individual religion and educational background. Martin-Jones and Bhatt (1998) similarly investigated young Gujarati speakers in Leicester. Some studies have investigated the broader

view of literacy, such as Hirst (1998) and Kenner (2000) who both focused on young children's literacy activities in different languages. Other studies, such as Gregory (1994) and Sneddon (2000) examined the insights of the nature of literacy experiences of multilingual children. While these investigations were conducted in urban locations in England, within minority ethnic communities, the experiences and perceptions of education among various other groups of minority ethic pupils in Britain have been investigated to some extent. Chinese communities were relatively rarely examined. These studies focused on minority languages with the exception of Chinese, partly because previous research conducted within Chinese communities in Britain encountered difficulties in gaining access to Chinese parents. Other factors were that the Chinese community in Britain was relatively new and the Chinese tend to be reserved and conservative about their personal lives. Many Chinese people don't want to reveal their problems for fear of "losing face". Many of the Chinese immigrants worked long hours (in the catering business), making it difficult to arrange interviews with them. On top of this, it was also difficult to locate qualified and experienced bilingual and bicultural investigators. The research K.C. Ng (1968), Cheung (1975), Tsow (1984) and Taylor (1987) all indicate that gaining access to Chinese communities is a major problem in conducting research on Chinese communities in Britain. Despite these difficulties, in recent years, there has been valuable research investigating the Chinese communities and the retention of Chinese language.

Ferdman (1990) suggested literacy has historical roots and has a close connection with an individual's or communities' cultural identity. Li Wei (2000) further suggested that the distinctiveness of Chinese characters becomes an important symbol of ethnic identity and cohesion for Chinese immigrants in Britain. However, with

the increase of the British-born ethnic Chinese, a reduction or loss of the ability to read and write Mandarin has been a significant concern for members of the Chinese community.

> "…. The British-born generation is perceived by the Chinese themselves as a major cause of concern. They are seen as lacking respect for traditional culture (for example, authority structures of the family), which is often expressed through Anglicized social behaviour (for example, speaking English…)"   (Li Wei, 2000 p. 178)

This view is reflected in research which has acknowledged Chinese parents as anxious to send their children to weekend complementary Chinese schools in order to retain the literacy of the family as well as traditional Chinese culture and values.

Heath (1983) suggested that the literacy and literacy related abilities learnt by children at home can vary greatly depending on the culture and values of their communities. Heath also showed how these differences were rooted in culture and in patterns of language use. Chinese culture places great value on education and the family and families are an important concept for Chinese. Showing filial piety is the most important task of children; this includes responsibility for looking after parents as well as obeying their wishes. On the other hand, families are very often involved in children's education and school work. The Chinese believe the more education one has received the more successful a person will be. Parents, therefore, pay a lot of attention to children's academic performance and make a lot of effort in helping them.

Gregory (1993) investigated a five-year old boy's experiences of learning two language systems: one in a mainstream school; the other in a Saturday Chinese school.

The results showed that the grandparents' and parents' own experience of acquiring literacy in the education systems of China and Hong Kong influenced the five-year-old to a great extent.   He preferred the learning style provided by his family, which was based on perfection through practise and attention to detail.

Sham and Woodrow (1998) investigated the reading and writing in five Hong Kong Chinese families living in Manchester.   They found all sent the children to weekend complementary Chinese schools as they wanted their children to be biliterate.

An Ran (2000) conducted a study investigating the role which Chinese mothers play in their children's language and literacy learning and the extent to which there is a standard or a range of approaches towards literacy teaching within the mainland Chinese community in Britain.   Within the relatively small and isolated mainland Chinese community in Britain, parents were found to be the most important support in maintaining the mother tongue.   Most of these parents had no direct experience of teaching young children to read or write. While native British parents supporting their children in learning their mother tongue at home would be able to consult and seek advice from school teachers, those Chinese parents could only use their own experience of learning to read and write when helping their children learn Mandarin. Many Chinese parents found that they have sole responsibility for teaching their child to read and write Chinese.   In this study, An Ran discovered that the mothers used their own experience of schooling in China when teaching their children to read and write Chinese at home.   They took a highly structured instructional approach by using standard textbooks instead of using texts associated with reading for enjoyment advocated by mainstream schools.

Hancock (2006) investigated the attitudes and approaches to literacy in the homes of eight Chinese families settled in central Scotland. He found almost all the families had a commitment to maintaining Chinese literacy skills and are supporting their children at home in developing these skills, despite the parents having varied educational backgrounds and linguistic profiles. Hancock also indicated that acquiring Chinese literacy was considered to be connected with the transmission of traditional Chinese cultural values by the parents.

Yun Xiao (2006) researched the heritage learners in the Chinese Language classroom. By comparing Chinese language development of heritage students who had home background in Chinese language and culture with those who did not, this study found that heritage learners did significantly better than those without heritage background in speaking, listening, grammar, and sentence constructions. However, they didn't do better in reading comprehension, vocabulary learning and Chinese character writing. The participants in Yun's study with heritage background claimed a family background in various dialects, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Taiwanese, and Hokkian, etc., but most of them claimed English as their native language. Yun's results suggest that heritage learners' oral exposure to their home language does not necessarily lead them to acquire reading and writing skills better, or faster, than non-heritage learners. However, there are some problems in this study. Firstly, Yun investigated only the family heritage background of the participants' and related it to the progress and achievement in learning Mandarin. In addition to the heritage background, how those families supported and assisted their children's learning should also have been taken into consideration. Some of the parents even with the heritage background and the ability to speak and read Mandarin might not have had the time to help their children's learning of Mandarin due to their career commitments

or other factors. Secondly, Yun's paper mentions that the heritage families speak various Chinese dialects. Those which speak dialects other than Mandarin might not be able to speak and read Mandarin. Moreover, these dialects either don't have written forms or have the written forms which are different from Mandarin. Therefore, these parents cannot be expected to help their children's learning Mandarin to a great degree. This study should have included the home support of those families with heritage background to get a more comprehensive result.

Chen (2007) researched how home factors effecting Chinese immigrant families, particularly parental involvement and the role of community schools, affect children's academic achievement in mainstream schools. She investigated three younger children, in two newly arrived families, and five older bilingual children all of whom attended one of two complementary Chinese schools in London. All of the parents involved had high expectations of their children's achievement and put a lot of effort into helping them. Having different educational backgrounds, the parents applied different methods and levels of assistance. The results showed that parental involvement improved children's performance in school; parents' high expectations and constant encouragement highly motivated the children's learning.

In the last few decades, the main change that has taken place in the contemporary Chinese community in Britain is the increasing number of British-born Chinese. The parents are concerned about their children maintaining their Chinese language, traditional culture and values, particularly those who are brought up and educated in Britain (Wong, 1992). Many of these children have acquired English as their primary language of communication either in outside of society or in families, and this has caused a generation gap both in language, in social value, and attitudes.

Many immigrants of ethnic minority are afraid that the loss of mother tongues would threaten the identity of their origin and their existence as a distinct cultural group in Britain. Amongst the Chinese and others, this has caused the worries amongst the parents.

Barren-Hauwaert (2004) looked at several bilingual families and concluded that the top ten strategies employed by these families to retain their heritage culture and language were.

(1) Trips to visit family and friends in the minority-language country.

(2) Reading minority-language books together.

(3) Watching minority-language videos or films together.

(4) Singing songs or listening to music together.

(5) Talking about the family history and stories and looking at photos albums together.

(6) Celebrating festivals linked to culture.

(7) Arranging for child to attend minority-language school when on holiday or go to a summer school.

(8) Meeting up with other minority-language speakers locally.

(9) Satellite television/CD ROMs and Internet use in the minority-language.

(10) Cooking and passing on traditional recipes.

(Barren-Hauwaert , 2004, p. 65)

Other ways were also mentioned, such as regular phone calls, reading newspaper together, attending complementary schools, etc.

With the increasing popularity of Mandarin, more and more parents send their children to learn Mandarin as a foreign language. Many such parents don't have the ability to use the Mandarin language. There are few research papers considering such families whose children learn Mandarin as a foreign language. In what ways these parents can support their children's learning and to what extent they can help are other issues requiring more investigation. An increasing numbers of British schools are adding Mandarin as one of the foreign languages in their curriculum. Therefore, in Mandarin (foreign) language classrooms, it is becoming increasingly common to see those two groups of students in the same class, one with the heritage background and one without. In addition, there are increasing numbers of students without heritage background attending weekend complementary Mandarin schools originally intended for the children of immigrant families. Accommodating these two groups of learners in a single classroom has therefore become an important issue. In order to address the increasing important issue of how best to accommodate the two groups of learners in one classroom, it is necessary to understand how parents support these students learning at home and what prior linguistic knowledge heritage learners bring to the classroom.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, the literature and related research on home support for children's learning were reviewed. The crucial role the family plays in children's learning as well as literacy development was discussed. Then, I examined the factors which affect children's school achievement and literacy development from three perspectives: parental teaching styles, parental education level and parental expectations.

Moreover, I discussed the possible characteristics of children's learning at home and what sorts of help and learning environment parents can provide at home. Finally, focus was given to the families with minority ethnic and in particular Chinese background. Numerous studies have been conducted on how parents support their children's learning of heritage languages (Saxena, 1994; Gregory, 1994; Martin-Jones and Bhatt, 1998; Hirst, 1998; Kenner, 2000; Sneddon, 2000), including learning Mandarin in families of Chinese heritage (Gregory, 1993; Sham and Woodrow, 1998; An Ran, 2000; Li Wei, 2000; Hancock, 2006; Yun Xiao, 2006; Chen, 2007). Yet, there is a lack of completed in-depth research focusing on parents of different backgrounds supporting their children to learn Mandarin. Therefore, I intended to fill this gap by investigating families who come from different social and cultural backgrounds and with different abilities in Mandarin. I intended to investigate the parental support for children learning Mandarin and how the parents' sociocultural background and educational experiences affect this support.

Chapter 3

Sociocultural Research

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Chapter 3 Sociocultural Research

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the research and the related literature on home support for children's learning. The review covered four perspectives: the importance and influence of family support; the home factors which affect children's learning; how children learn at home and what parents can provide; families with minority backgrounds including multicultural families and Chinese families.

In this chapter, I look at sociocultural research, which stresses the crucial role a society plays in human development. Firstly, sociocultural theory will be discussed in order to set the scene. The psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, who is associated to sociocultural theory, as well as his theories, will also be examined. Then, I discuss the related research within the sociocultural framework and how it relates to my research.

3.2 Sociocultural Theory

As the name suggests, central to sociocultural theory on psychological and educational issues are the words "social" and "cultural". The word "social" refers to interconnections with and relationships to other people. In sociology, social action refers to an action which takes into account the actions and reactions of individuals. According to Max Weber, one of the most important sociologists of the 20th century, "an Action is 'social' if the acting individual takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course" (cited in Secher, 1962). For Weber, sociology is the study of society and behavior as well as of mutual interaction. The theory of social action argues that humans amend their actions according to social

contexts and how they will affect other people.

The meaning of the second word "culture" is a classical anthropological issue, yet difficult to define. For anthropologists and other behavioral scientists, culture is the full range of learned human behavior patterns. Culture encompasses all human phenomena that are not purely the results of genetics. Culture was firstly defined by the pioneer English Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book, *Primitive Culture,* published in 1871. He defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Since Tylor's time, the concept of culture has become the central focus of anthropology. Fine (1987) remarked "culture includes the meaningful traditions and artifacts of a group; ideas, behaviours, verbalization, and material objects" (p.124). Goodenough (1994) expressed a more psychological point of view describing culture as something, which "one needs to know to participate acceptly as a member in a society's affairs" (p.265; cited in Cole, 2005). Cole (2005) defined culture as a kind of individual quality, influenced by the social environment; culture is the interconnection between the individuals and the objects in the environment through their usage in a specific and socially legitimate way.

Sociocultural theory is an emerging theory in psychology that looks at the importance of society in terms of individual development. This theory stresses the interaction between the development of people and the culture in which they live. A key feature of sociocultural theory is that learning is through socialization: that humans develop through social interaction. Sociocultural theory explains how individual mental functioning is related to cultural, institutional, and historical context; therefore, the

focus of the sociocultural perspective is on how the participation in social interactions and culturally organized activities influences psychological development. Social interactions and participation of group members play a key role in developing knowledge.

3.3 Vygotsky

Lev S. Vygotsky, a psychologist in Russia who began his work following the Russian Revolution of 1917, is most closely identified with sociocultural theory. He argues that the individual and his social environment were mutually constitutive elements. The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. He suggests that a child's development cannot be understood only by studying the individual. The external social world where that individual life has developed must also be examined. Through participation in activities that require cognitive and communicative functions, children learn to use these functions. Vygotsky (1934, translated in 1978) described learning as being embedded within social events and occurring as a child interacts with people, objects and events in the environment. He stated:

"Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals." (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57)

The movement from the social plane of functioning to the individual and internal plane of functioning, however, requires active engagement by children in social interaction with peers and adults.

Wertsch (1991) highlighted the nature of the interdependence between the individual and society in the construction of knowledge by examining three major themes in Vygotsky's writings: 1) individual development, including higher mental functioning, has its origins in social sources; 2) human action is mediated by tools and signs on both the social and individual level; and 3) the first two themes are best examined through genetic, or developmental, analysis.

To help explain the way that the individual develops by participating in society, Vygotsky (1934, translated in 1978) developed the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). His explanations of the zone stress the importance of social contexts for intellectual achievement. Vygotsky suggests that the completion of any activity always starts with assistance and guidance before the task is solved independently. ZPD is to describe the shift of control from adults to children during activities. He said that the zone of proximal development is "the distance between a child's actual development levels as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." (p. 86). It illustrated that in activities the more capable participants, or adults, structure interactions and so the children, or the less capable participants, can also participate. With practice, the less capable participants, or children, increase their ability and responsibility until they can perform the task without assistance and take the full control. The help from the adult, termed scaffolding, sets up frameworks for language, problem solving and other activities (Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976). Just as the scaffolding of a building

helps to support it, assistance from adults and peers in a child's environment helps support the child's development.

Expanding the concept of the zone of proximal development, some sociocultural theorists conceptualize learning as *distributed* (Cole & Engeström, 1993), *interactive* (Chang-Wells & Wells, 1993), *contextual* (John-Steiner, Panofsky, & Smith, 1994), and the result of the *learners' participation in a community of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1994; Wenger, 2006).

> "…learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers....learning is not development; however, properly organized learning results in mental development and sets in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning. Thus learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions."

> (Rogoff, 1994, p. 90)

> "Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other cope. In a nutshell: Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact

regularly."

(Wenger, 2006)

3.4 The Sociocultural Approach of Learning

"Culture is located in the minds and hearts of people who are at the same time actors and creators of social interactions." (Geertz, 1973, p. 11)

Inspired by Vygotsky, later theoreticians, such as Michael Cole (1985, 1996), James Wertsch (1985) and Barbara Rogoff (1990, 2003) developed "cultural psychology", which "puts culture in the middle" (Cole, 1996) viewing that culture and mind are inseparable: "Mind is interiorised culture; culture is exteriorised mind". Cole characterized culture as "a system of artifacts in relation to a supra-individual "envelope" with respect to which object/environment, text/context are defined (Cole, 1996, p. 143). Cultural psychology is different from cross-cultural psychology because the cross-cultural psychologists generally use culture as a means of testing the universality of psychological processes rather than determining how local cultural practices shape psychological processes. Cultural psychologists are interested in how the social practices of a particular set of cultures shape the development of cognitive processes in different ways. Cole stated:

"A number of methodological prescriptions follow from this shift in culture's status vis-à-vis mind and behaviour. Central is the need to study culturally mediated behaviour developmentally to reveal the dynamic interactions uniting different parts of the overall life system. Equally important is the need to conduct research at several developmental/historical (genetic) levels in order to analyze the ways in which they intertwine and fuse in human life over time. (Cole, 1996, p. 145)

Cultural psychology integrates the fields of cross-cultural, cognitive and developmental psychology with social, cultural and cognitive anthropology. Therefore, it is often referred to as taking a sociocultural approach to learning.

"Indeed, a sociocultural approach transcends academic disciplines and focuses on the inextricable link between culture and cognition through engagement in social activities, tasks and events.   (Gregory, 2008, p. 24)

The crucial part in sociocultural approach is to understand the role of mediators of culture, which actually facilitate the development and movement, such as the teachers, the more capable peers, siblings, grandparents (Gregory, 1998, 2004) and the parents in this research project.

In the previous sections, I looked at the concepts of sociocultural research, its origin and its framework.   I also discussed Vygotsky's theory of human development and learning as well as his concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Moreover, cultural psychology and taking a sociocultural approach to learning were introduced.   In the following sections, I am going to look at some important research which takes a sociocultural approach and is relevant to my research.

3.5 Learning within the Context of Community and Family

3.5.1 Funds of knowledge

Funds of knowledge is a term referring to "the cultural artefacts and resources as well as bodies of knowledge that exist in households and communities" (Gregory, 2008,

p71). *Funds of knowledge* is defined by researchers Luis Moll, Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff, and Norma Gonzalez (2005) as refering to "the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 72). Norma Gonzalez explained that the term emphasized the interpersonal relationships in families and the fluidity of practices in multilingual homes (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Gonzalez et al.(2005) argued that "people are competent, they have knowledge and their life experience have given them that knowledge" and that "students' learning is bound within larger contextual, historical, political and ideological frameworks that affect students' lives" (Gonzalez et al., 2005, ix). With this perspective, Luis Moll led a team of researchers in the US to work with teachers to carry out their research in the homes of Mexican American children and their families. They used this concept to define and classify phenomena that occurred in their households. "The concept helped make sense and give meaning to cultural objects and social practices in a particular way and within the concrete circumstances of life…" (Gonzalez et al., 2005, p. 277). There are other important research studies bearing the concept of "funds of knowledge"- investigating how the "important others: the family and community context" affect children's learning (Gregory, 1996, 1998, 2008; Gregory and Williams, 2000; Gregory et al., 2004; Gregory et al., 2007; Edwards, 2009; Edwards and Redfern, 1988; Sneddon, 2009; Anderson and Chung, 2010, 2011).

3.5.2 Guided participation

Building on and extending Vygotsky's notion of ZPD, Rogoff characterizes this process as *guided participation*. In her cross-cultural studies, she examined cultural similarities and variations in how toddlers and their caregivers from cultural

communities collaborate in shared activities. Rogoff, with her international team of researchers (from the US, Guatemala, India and Turkey), documented children's varying forms of participation with parents and peers, including verbal and nonverbal interactions (1990; 2003). For example, she looked at the caregivers and toddlers from Salt Lake City, US, who had frequent verbal interactions. She also investigated the Guatemalan Mayan children participating with their mothers in agriculture and housework more through non-verbal communication.

> "Children's cognitive development is an apprenticeship—it occurs through guided participation in social activity with companions who support and stretch children's understanding of and skill in using the tools of the culture"
>
> (Rogoff, 1990, p. vii).

In order to differentiate from ZPD, Rogoff explicitly explained that guided participation focuses more on the interactions between children and their caregiver. She argued that children's development occurs by active participation in cultural activities in which children, together with their caregivers and other companions, learn and extend the skills, values, and knowledge of the community. The interactions and routine arrangements between the children and their caregivers provide the children with opportunities to observe and participate in the skilled activities of their own culture. Through repeated practice in routine and activities with the adults' guidance, the children become skilled practitioners in the specific cognitive activities in their communities. (Rogoff, 1991, p. 351)

"Guided participation emphasizes the way in which, rather than simply internalizing activities as Vygotsky suggests, children actively appropriate these practices and make them their own (Gregory, 2008, p. 72).

Rogoff noted there were vital similarities across different communities in the process of guided participation because of universal aspects of human communication and shared human efforts.

"This process involves both direct communication and the arrangements of activities in which children participate; bridging between the participants' interpretations of a situation and the partner's mutual structuring of their involvement, to be evidenced by joint engagement (with variation in who takes a leadership role and in the means of engagement) and by caregivers' and toddlers' joint contributions to managing the activities. (Rogoff, 1990, p. 3)

The similarities found by Rogoff and her team across these different cultural communities are inherent to the nature of shared activities. The aspects of guided participation occurring across all four communities had to do with the collaboration between children and their caregivers in bridging between the individual understandings of the situations at hand and in their structuring of each other's participation. They directly shared the responsibility in problem solving as well as in their decisions about their own and each other's participation in activities. The guided participation included tacit and explicit forms of communication as well as arrangements of children's activities. Moreover, the process of guided participation that they have found as universal is the process to make connections between the

known and the new.   Children seek connections between the old and new situations or knowledge in caregivers' cues or instructions.

3.5.3 The important others

Siblings

Over the past two decades, there have been many studies carried out in the English speaking world to investigate the importance of family involvement for young children in their learning, including development of literacy.   I discussed about the related research in the previous chapter.   Apart from the parents and caregivers, some research has moved further to investigate the important role that grandparents, sibling and friends can play in children's learning of other languages.

The importance of siblings in non-Western societies in preparing young children for everyday tasks and school learning has been recognized (Rogoff, 1990).   Younger siblings observe and participate with the older siblings and learn through playing and imitating.   Recent researchers in Western society have also investigated the role siblings can play in the development of young children's language and literacy.

Gregory (1998) and a research team investigated a group of children in families of Bangladeshi origin living in East London.   Apart from mainstream school, all the children in this study regularly attended community classes to learn Bengali literacy and Qur'anic classes to learn to read the Qur'an in classical Arabic.   This research reveals that the older siblings play a very special role when young children are learning a new language.   The older siblings in this study acted as "experienced"

teachers providing "finely-tuned scaffolding closely adjusted to the reading ability of individual child."   A complex *syncretism* (Gregory and Williams, 2000) of Qur'anic and school literacy practices was witnessed in the interaction between child and older sibling**.**   Syncretism explains how children blend existing languages, literacy and practices to create new forms in learning a new language.   A *synergy* (Gregory 2001) also took place where children learn equally from each other (which means learning simultaneously and mutual benefits during the process).   Gregory defines synergy as 'a unique reciprocity whereby siblings act as adjuvant in each other's learning' (Gregory, 2001: 309).   Although the older sibling takes the role of teacher, the process of interaction with the younger child requires the re-formulation of concepts and thus triggers additional learning for both.

Gregory (2008) summarized learning with siblings as follows:

- Siblings are unique mediators of language and literacy in a new language.

- This occurs particularly during socio-dramatic play and especially during "play school"

- A *synergy* takes place whereby both older and younger children learn from each other.

- Older children learn through modeling, guiding, demonstrating, instructing, coaxing, looking after, comforting and socializing younger children as well as generally practicing their existing skills.

- Younger children learn through watching, listening, repeating, echoing, requesting help, following directions, imitating, challenging and experimenting.

(Gregory, 2008, p. 91)

Grandparents

Grandparents play an important role in childcare. However, little attention has been given to the potential role that grandparents can play in terms of language and literacy development in young children. In addition to siblings, Gregory et al. (2007) reveal the crucial role grandparents can play by investigating the learning exchange between three to six year-old children and their grandparents, in Sylheti/Bengali-speaking families of Bangladeshi origin and monolingual English-speaking families living in east London. The data demonstrate that the grandparents were engaged in a wide range of learning events with their grandchildren as well as the significance of the grandparent–grandchild relationship in terms of the amount of time spent together. Grandparents are excellent mediators of language and literacy to young children because they have more time and patience than parents. The data also suggest that grandparents and children treated each other as equal partners in learning; grandparents and young children both teach and learn from each other. "The older and younger generations used their different capabilities to create shared understandings, leading to new forms of linguistic and cultural learning." (Gregory, et al. 2007, p. 237) Therefore, a synergy similar to that between siblings also occurs.

Prolepsis between generations was also detailed in this research; it is a term referring to "the way in which caregivers bring their idealized memory of a cultural past and the assumption of cultural continuity in the future to actual interactions with the child in the present" (Gregory, 2008, p. 71). In the 1970s, "prolepsis" was described as "a communicative move in which the speaker presupposes some as yet unprovided information" (Stone, 1993, p. 171). In the 1990s, the meaning of prolepsis was expanded by researchers using a sociocultural perspective to analyse scaffolding in

the zone of proximal development (Stone, 1993) and intersubjectivity (Rogoff et al., 1998). Cole (1996) referred 'prolepsis' as how a parent brings memories from their own past into current interactions with their child. Similarly, grandparents also bring such ideas when they interact with their grandchildren.

Moreover, syncretism also emerged as a key characteristic in intergeneration learning. For example, syncretism took place in the practice of story-reading between the grandparent and child generations in one Bangladeshi- British household. The grandmother brought her experience as a reader of Bengali literature to co-construct an interpretation of the European traditional tale 'Snow White' which was more familiar to her grandson (Gregory, et al, 2007).

Friends

Like siblings, children have peers and friends with whom they can learn their new language. Susi Long, Donna Bell and Jim Brown (2004) investigated the power of peer interactions in South Carolina. They looked at three 5-year old emergent Spanish/ English bilinguals. The study illustrated many ways that the children took control of their own learning and described some of the children as skilled mediators of language, culture and literacy in the new language.

Charmian Kenner (2004) conducted a peer teaching project. She asked four 6-year-old children, two Chinese, one Syrian and one Palestinian, who were learning Arabic and Chinese, to teach the scripts to their peers in their regular classrooms. The outcomes were positive: the bilingual children's bilingual ability was appreciated and they also stimulated their monolingual peers' interest in languages and culture.

Chen and Gregory (2004) looked into bilingual exchange teaching in the interaction of two Chinese girls: one newly arrived from Hong Kong and the other was born in Britain and was fluent in both English and Mandarin.   Chen and Gregory argued that the concept of *synergy* was used in the girls' joint activities.

Manjula Datta (2000) analyzed the interactions between three seven-year-old boys (Turkish, English and Algerian French) in an inner London primary school as well as two nine-year-old boys of Greek origin in a Greek community school.   The data illustrate that friendship can be a good pathway within and beyond the classroom setting.

In this section, I have reviewed the important recent research taking a sociocultural approach, all of which illustrate the important roles that caregiver/parents, grandparents, siblings and friends can play in terms of children's language and literacy when learning a new language.   The following important concepts from sociocultural theory were revealed in these research projects: funds of knowledge, guided participation, scaffolding, synergy, syncretism and prolepsis.   The sociocultural research and the concepts mentioned above set the scene for my research. In my project, I investigate the parental support when children learnt Mandarin as a new language.   I examine how parents act as mediators of Chinese culture and Mandarin language, how the parents set up the learning activities and guided their children's participation.   Moreover, I look at how prolepsis took place in the interactions between the parents, in one case the grandmother, and the children.   I also discuss how the parents and children draw on funds of knowledge to support the learning of Mandarin language and culture.   I also investigated the occurrence of

syncretism, which is how children blend existing languages, literacy and practices to create new forms in learning Mandarin as well as the synergy when one of the children learns with her cousin.   In addition, in my research, I look into how the parents without a Chinese background support their children's learning Mandarin, a theme absent in the previous research projects I have reviewed.   I investigate how, while not being a member of the Chinese community, they got access to it and draw on the funds of knowledge as well as how they arrange their children's learning activities and participate together.   I also look at the synergy taking place between these parents and their children.

3.6 Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed sociocultural theory, which is based on Vygotsky's theory of human development and was later expanded by theorists and empirical research. Then, I looked at some important research projects within the framework of sociocultural approach which are relevant to my project.   One vital part in a sociocultural approach is to understand the role of mediators of culture and a new language.   In reviewing these projects, I discussed the roles played by parents, grandparents, siblings and peers.   These projects have recognized the importance of home and community literacy practices and learning styles.   They also acknowledge the importance of uncovering the funds of knowledge in peoples' lives and giving pupils and their families a voice in their own education.   Inspired by these studies, I investigated parental support outside of classrooms and how this is affected by the parents' backgrounds.

PART THREE EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES

Chapter 4

Methodology

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Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Choosing an appropriate research approach is a prerequisite to conducting a successful research project.　In order to choose the most appropriate research approach, it is necessary for researchers to first clarify the aim of the research and the data required to fulfill that aim.　Moreover, the researcher must have a good understanding of different research approaches to make the best decision.

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology I chose to address the two research questions: -firstly, whether and if so in what ways parents of different heritage backgrounds supported their children learning Mandarin as a second or a foreign language (both parents of a Chinese background; only one parent of a Chinese background; neither parents of a Chinese background)? -Secondly, how was this support affected by social and cultural factors as well as the parents' own educational experience?　I used ethnographic research as a framework, combining quantitative and qualitative research approaches.　In the early section of this chapter, I discuss the features of the two general approaches of inquiry: quantitative and qualitative research.　Then, I look at ethnographic research and continue to justify details of the particular methods employed for data collection: interviewing; participant observation and videoing.　Finally, I discuss issues of data analysis and the ethical considerations of my research.

Before examining the research methodology, I clarify my identity in this study.

4.2 Researcher's Identity

I mentioned in the first chapter that I have been a foreign language teacher for fifteen years.   The learning of a foreign language is a familiar setting for me; I am familiar with the difficulties students encounter and the factors affecting students' learning. When I started to teach Mandarin, at a Chinese school in London, although the target language was different from that I had previously taught and the ages of the students were different, the whole educational setting still correlated with my past experience. Moreover, having been a teacher, as well as a teacher coordinator at Hua Hsia Chinese School (for three years), I was well acquainted both with the school and the majority of students.

In some ways, familiarity with the research setting can be an advantage.   Past experience and "insider" expertise is very helpful to the flow of the research. However, familiarity with the research subject at hand, such as the target culture and subculture and the patterns of behaviour, might encourage a researcher to ignore the importance of preliminary work.   For example, finding out the new norms in the setting might be neglected.   Ely et al. (1991) discussed "Making the Familiar Unfamiliar" when doing Ethnographic research in settings with which they were familiar.   They stated knowledge of others' thoughts and experiences cannot be assumed, regardless of familiarity.

> "When dealing with familiar terrain, self-exploration is crucial for the qualitative research.   Am I talking about them or am I talking about me?   The question must be asked time and again."

<div align="right">(Ely et al., 1991, p. 125)</div>

Another issue related to this concept "making the familiar unfamiliar" concerns some

deeply held expectations and values.   Without being alert and objective, researchers who are familiar with the setting and hold certain values might assume that research participants feel the same.   In this way, some findings, or new phenomena, are likely to be at risk of being misinterpreted, distorted or ignored.

As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) stated "even where he or she is researching a familiar group or setting, the participant observer is required to treat this as 'anthropologically strange', in an effort to make explicit presuppositions he or she takes for granted as a culture member" (p. 9).   Therefore, since I have certain degrees of familiarity with my research group, I had to remind myself to remain open-minded, alert and faithful to the phenomena observed when I did my fieldwork. An open mind also allowed me to explore rich, untapped sources of data, which might not have been mapped out in the research design.

4.3 Choosing a Research Methodology

Having clarified my identity in this research, in the following section, I discuss the methodology I chose to conduct this study.   The features of two fundamental approaches of inquiry, quantitative and qualitative research, will be delineated in order to illustrate the concerns when choosing an appropriate methodology.

In this study, I intend to give an overview of the Mandarin learners' background in a Chinese school as well as provide an in-depth description of each learner's family support.   Quantitative research is relevant to the establishment of findings at the larger scale, macro level (Bryman, 1988). In order to get the statistics of this Chinese school (number of students, their backgrounds etc), I used the quantitative research

method at the first stage of my research.

In the 1800s, the methods and procedures devised from natural sciences became the dominant research approach in investigation of the world (Hughes, 1990). Research in the natural sciences is called quantitative research because it usually uses numbers and statistics to interpret the findings. Quantitative research is conducted as part of a positivistic and empirical study. For positivists, the most important feature of scientific theories is that they are open to and are subjected to test. This can be done by experiments or through statistical analysis of a large number of cases. Quantitative research emphasizes quantification in the collection, measurement and analysis of data, focusing on the causal relationships between variables, quantitative research is not concerned with process. It entails the collection of numerical data and exhibits a view of the relationship between theory and research as deductive, it assumes an objectivist conception of social reality. Quantitative researchers have a stance as outsiders in relation to subjects and have a distant relationship with subjects, while qualitative researchers are insiders and closer to their subjects (Bryman, 1988).

In order to clarify the context of this study, I used questionnaires (Apendix 1) to investigate the students' family background, the parents' Mandarin ability and whether the parents supported their children in learning Mandarin at home. Among 60 respondents, British Nationality and "Other Nationalities" accounted for the majority of the parents, where "Other Nationalities" included French, Spanish, Swedish, German, American, Canadian, Chilean, Japanese, Korean, Malaysian, Singaporean, Indonesian and Vietnamese. As for the ethnic groups, 42 respondents were of Chinese ethnicity from Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. Among the spouses of the respondents', 28 of them had Chinese ethnic background.

Regarding the level of the respondents' abilities in Mandarin, 50 of them indicated they could speak Mandarin, with abilities varying from Mother tongue standard to basic, while 10 of them could not speak Mandarin at all. In terms of the parental involvement and support, 32 of the respondents provided support and helped occasionally while 16 of them spared specific hours every day to help their children.

The statistics resulting from the questionnaires (and detailed in Appendix 2) set out a clear context for this study. However, quantitative research has its limitation. Alasuutari (1995) argued that quantitative research only looks at the relationship between the different variables defined by the researchers and enables them to draw conclusions and generalizations about the phenomena. He also mentioned that not all research questions can be answered by empirical experiments and statistical analysis.

After getting the understanding of the Chinese school and the students' families, my next step was in the investigation of the types and differences of home support in each sample family chosen from the different categories outlined in earlier chapters. These questions should be explored in depth through narrative accounts. Qualitative research, in contrast to quantitative research, investigates the micro level of social life and presents a processual view of social life.

Qualitative research is an approach to study the social world and seeks to understand and analyse the behaviour and the culture of certain groups; while helping to generate an in-depth account of the group (Bryman, 1988). Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. It means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings,

attempting to understand and interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the relationship between the researcher and what is studied, as well as the situational constraints that shape inquiry. They emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry and seek to find out how social experience is created and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative research uses a variety of methods, such as interviews, observations and document analysis, to evaluate social and educational programmes, policies, projects etc. Non-statistical means are used to analyse and interpret the data collected.

There are various topics in education research, which are suited to qualitative enquiry. Gillborn and Gipps (1996) discussed the value of a qualitative approach for researching issues to do with the achievement of ethnic minority students in school and they pointed out how this approach can help to "understand the dynamics of teaching and learning" as well as to explore the factors underpinning success and failure in a classroom situation (which are often not revealed by quantitative findings). The qualitative approach can help us in understanding students' attitudes and sensitivities where they involve complex personal issues, such as racism. They pointed out that it is often the effects of perception and stereotype which lead to success or failure in school, rather than other quantifiable factors.

At this stage, I sought to find out the different levels of home support within different family backgrounds. Accordingly, closer contact with the subjects as well as descriptive texts were necessary. Quantitative data served only to investigate factual information but did not serve the need to have a deeper understanding of the opinions of the subjects. In view of this, I employed the qualitative research approach in this

stage. The rationale for using qualitative methodology here was its four characteristics: deep insights into the subjects, descriptive data, emphasis on process and flexibility.

First, deep insight into research subjects is an important requirement of this project. The most fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is in viewing events, actions value, phenomena, etc. from the perspective of the participants studied. Qualitative researchers explore the deeper level of people's words and thoughts and have access to "inside" experience and the inner reality of humans (Mason, 1996). For qualitative researchers, only by getting close to their subjects and becoming an insider can they view the world as a participant in that setting (Bryman, 2001). This also entails the possibility to penetrate the frames of meaning within which the subjects operate. Researchers can get a profound understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants. Moreover, direct contact with subjects allows researchers to investigate complex factors instead of generalizing results from statistical data. This study sought to find the different methods of parental support used within different family backgrounds, as well as how that support is affected by social and cultural factors, including the parents' own educational experience. There was a need for close contact with the subjects in order to get a deep understanding of their family life, parents' attitudes toward learning Mandarin, and the degree and kind of support they provided to their children.

Secondly, qualitative research can move away from numbers and provides rich descriptions of people and their interactions within societies. Rather than numerical statistics qualitative data are in descriptive texts involving a variety of empirical

materials, such as: case study; interview; observational and historical texts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).   The sustained contact with research subjects permits penetrating access, which can explore events in great detail and investigate the full extent of every phenomenon relating to the subjects.   The deep, rich descriptive data provide a framework for the understanding of different perspectives within the research project.   These data can also map out a context for the understanding of subjects' interpretations of the events and for the researchers to produce analyses and explanations from the observations and interviews conducted.   Moreover, qualitative researchers seek to go beyond pure description and to provide analyses of the environments they examine.   In this project, descriptive texts were necessary to understand and investigate the different kinds and levels of home support parents offer within different family backgrounds.

The third characteristic taken into consideration is the emphasis on process, which can be seen as a response to the qualitative researcher's concern to reflect the reality of everyday life (Bryman, 1988).   Qualitative research is much more concerned with the process of events rather than their outputs; thus it emphasizes the various responses of research subjects, their interpretations, as well as how perspectives change.   It presents a processual view of social life while quantitative research provides a static account.   In my study, there were substantial variations in parents', teachers and students' perspectives of Mandarin learning as well as the extent and the impact of home support.   Those differences exist in the process of learning, not just in the results.   Therefore, qualitative research's stress on process serve the need of this project.

The fourth feature of qualitative research is its flexibility.   Qualitative research is

relatively open and more flexible than quantitative research, which has predetermined test variables and approach. Qualitative research allows researchers access to unexpected important topics which may not have been visible to them initially. While investigating the complicated interaction among parents, students and teachers, employing qualitative research methods will derive its strength from its flexibility. It allows new leads to be followed up, or additional data to be gathered, in order to cope with new important issues arising in the research process.

In the remainder of this chapter, I focus on the process of conducting my fieldwork. First of all, the framework I chose for this research, ethnography, is discussed. Then, I describe how I carried out my empirical fieldwork, including participant observation, interviews and videoing. The considerations of conducting fieldwork are also illustrated.

4.4 Ethnography

4.4.1 What is ethnography?

> "…all ethnographic studies start by having an important story to be told, a story that lies deep within the soul." (Gregory, et. al 2005, p. x)

Ethnography is the fundamental research method of cultural anthropology. It not only has a very long history but also "bears a close resemblance to the routine ways in which people make sense of the world in everyday life." (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). It is an approach to discover and investigate social and cultural patterns as well as meanings within communities, institutions and other social settings. It seeks

to answer central anthropological questions concerning the ways of life of living human beings. Ethnographic questions generally concern the link between culture and behavior and/or how cultural processes develop over time. The data for ethnography is usually extensive description of the details of social life or cultural phenomena in a small number of cases.

As Spradley (1979) described "ethnography contributes directly to both description and explanation of regularities and variations in human social behaviour" (p10). Ethnography focuses on the sociology of meaning through close field observation of sociocultural phenomena. Typically, the ethnographer focuses on a community (not necessarily geographic, possibilities include: workplaces, leisure, schools and other communities), selecting participants who are known to have an overview of the activities of the community.   Within those communities, ethnographers communicate with the participants and collect primary data.   Ethnographers must hear what community members have to say, observe them and learn through participation in their daily lives.   Hammersley and Atkinson argued that ethnography

> "involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily
>
> lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what
>
> is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to
>
> throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research."
>
> (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 1)

In conclusion, ethnography has the following features (Hammersley, 1990):

(a) People's behaviour is studied in everyday contexts instead of under experimental

conditions created by the researcher.

(b) Data are gathered from a range of sources; observation usually being the main

method.

(c) The focus is usually on a single setting or a group.

(d) The analysis of the data involves interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions and mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, sometimes with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role.

4.4.2 Ethnographic research is both qualitative and quantitative

Ethnography is, very often, categorized as qualitative research method. There are continuous debates amongst ethnographers as to whether or not ethnography includes quantitative research (Bernard, 1995, Pelto and Pelto, 1978). Some qualitative researchers argue that it is impossible to use numbers to describe beliefs and behaviour, while others insist that only numerical data are scientifically valid and reliable. However, Alasuutari (1995) pointed out "the real gist of cultural studies is to make use of all useful theories and methods in order to gain insights about the phenomena one studies" (p. 2). The nature of ethnography allows researchers to combine different research methods so as to obtain richer data and a deeper understanding of those data.

Schensul et al. (1999) argued that both qualitative and quantitative data are vital parts of the ethnographic research endeavour.

> "Whereas results may be expressed numerically through frequencies, percentages, correlations, and graphs, interpretation and communication of results always involve translation back into the qualitative language of ideas, concepts and theories. Thus, numbers cannot be divorced from words either

conceptually or practically."

(Schensul et al., 1999, p. 5)

Ethnographic research focuses on understanding a community in a broad socioeconomic, political or cultural context. Understanding this broad context is essential in order to situate the experience and cultural observations within the community investigated. Therefore, some aspects of the context can be conveyed quantitatively.

Gregory et al. (2005) argued that ethnography is a methodology, a research approach and not simply a method. Therefore, ethnography in education may use variety of different methods, such as participant observation, interviews, life stories, surveys and other statistical methods. Quantitative methods can be used when doing ethnography as long as they serve to answer the big question of the study.

In my study, my quantitative data served to depict the broader context, that being the population of Mandarin learners in the Chinese school and their families. These data helped me understand the general background of the families and allowed me to categorise the participants in order to continue my research.

4.4.3 Ethnographic research in educational settings

Lutz (1993), using the famous phrase from Geertz (1973), suggested a definition of ethnography as it can be applied to educational settings:

"Ethnography is a holistic thick description of the interactive process involving

the discovery of important and recurring variables in the society as they relate to one another, under specific conditions, and as they affect or produce certain results and outcomes in the society.

<div align="center">(Lutz, 1993, p. 52)</div>

Ethnographic research has been widely used in educational settings. Mehan (1981) suggested that one of the most important contributions of ethnography is its capacity to open the "black box" of learning in classrooms and begin to reveal something of what really goes on inside. Heath (1983) suggested that applying ethnography has its origins in anthropology and the "…. study of human behaviour in cross-cultural perspective to educational settings".

Gregory (2005) also stated that

> "…. ethnography in education speaks up for those who are 'just ordinary'. By making visible the lives of people whose stories are not often told, it gives a voice to all of us who are 'nothing special'."

<div align="right">(Gregory, et. al, 2005, p. ix)</div>

Cochran-Smith (1984) investigated how teachers and parents reacted to children's ability to make sense of written texts before formal instructions on reading were given. She also looked at how teachers and children established a culture of reading in a private nursery classroom in the United States. She participated in the field and collected data through observations, informal conversations and interviews with parents at home. Then she used data to answer her research questions.

One of Hammersley's (1990) ethnographic research projects in the educational setting was the study the organization of classroom talk in an inner-city Secondary Modern

school. He focused on the hierarchical structure of classroom interaction and the assumptions about knowledge, learning and intelligence built into it.

The various ethnographic research in teaching and learning settings have shown that the data generated from ethnography allow the researchers to explain the observed phenomena within the community or context they studied. As mentioned above, ethnography is a holistic, thick description of a phenomenon occurring within a group of people. In the Chinese school, where I carried out my study, there were students with various family backgrounds. I sought to develop as full and as comprehensive a picture as possible of the students attending this Chinese school. Moreover, I intend to provide a rich and detailed illustration of the support mechanisms and learning in these families. Therefore, I chose ethnography as the framework of this study.

4.5 Fieldwork

An ethnographers' task can be compared to that of an investigative reporter, who interviews relevant people, reviews relevant records and looks for ties to special interests and organizations; they then write reports. However, the key difference between an ethnographer and an investigative reporter is that the reporter looks for the unusual, such as a murder or an accident, while an ethnographer writes about the routine, daily life of people (Fetterman, 1998).

An ethnographer is a human instrument. Once an ethnographer selects a problem or a phenomenon of interest and chooses the participants, with a theory of social interaction or behaviour and a variety of conceptual guidelines in mind, the researcher

steps into the field and starts the fieldwork. Fieldwork is the heart and the most characteristic element of any ethnographic research design. In the field, data collection methods and techniques, as well as analysis, are fundamental elements of ethnography. The most important element of fieldwork is to be there, to observe, to ask questions and to record what is seen and heard.

The field is defined by the researcher in terms of institutions and people of interest, as well as their associated activities. For ethnographers, the field can be any naturalistic, geographic or social setting or location, where research is going to be conducted. The examples of the field are in a hospital, a gallery, a school, a classroom or a family. My field in this study was the participants' families. There were six families involved in my fieldwork; they were chosen from three categories: two families were from the group in which both parents were of a Chinese background, two were from families with only one parent of a Chinese background, and the other two were from families without any Chinese heritage. The children in this study were between seven years and eleven years old. I observed the teaching activities occurring in the families and I interviewed both the parents and the children. The fieldwork lasted for eight months. The observation and the interviews were carried out once per month for the eight month period; each lasted roughly ninety minutes. Audio and video data were also collected in addition to fieldnotes. In the following sections, I discuss my fieldwork in more detail.

4.5.1 The entry

When researchers go into the field, it also means that the researchers leave their own communities, familiar behaviour and cognitive patterns and enter another social world.

In this new world, the researchers need to learn how to function with new rules of behaviour, norms, social relationships and other aspects of life (perhaps even a new language).

Some field situations are so open that there are no obvious officials or gatekeepers from whom to obtain permission to enter.   Some situations require formal approval prior to beginning the study.   Gaining access is a thoroughly practical issue.   It involves interpersonal resources and strategies.   Access is not just a matter of physical presence or absence in the setting.   Researchers need to locate and build relationships with people who not only have access to the community but also to important information and to other resources relevant to the study.   Usually an introduction by a member, or a gatekeeper, is the researcher's best way to gain access into the field.   This facilitator maybe a chief, principal, teacher or director and should have some credibility within the group, either as a member, or as an acknowledged friend or associate.

Some ethnographic researchers choose to do their research within settings unfamiliar to them, or in communities to which they don't belong.   On the contrary, some researchers choose to study their own communities: they may have grown up in the community, or they may belong to the ethnic group they wish to study.   For me, initial access to my research field was not particularly difficult; I had been teaching in this Chinese school for several years.   Despite this, I still needed to get the permission of the principal to conduct my research on these students and families as well as sitting in classrooms to observe.   The further level of access into participants' families was more difficult to obtain.   Since I was also the teacher coordinator at the Chinese school, the parents knew me very well and regularly approached me to

discuss their children's learning progress.   However, when I expressed my interest in researching some families, some parents were worried that they were not worthy of my study.   After I explained in more detail and assured them of confidentiality, those parents agreed to accept taking part my research.

In the following paragraphs, I discuss how the data were collected after having obtained access to my field.   The methods include participant observations, interviews, fieldnotes, and audiovisual recordings.

4.5.2 Participant observation

In my fieldwork, I carried out participant observation within the six families chosen from three categories: families in which both parents were of a Chinese heritage background, those in which only one parent had a Chinese background and those in which neither parent was of a Chinese background.   The families and the children will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.   I participated and observed the teaching activities of these parents at home for eight months.   I visited each family once a month and the formal observation lasted roughly sixty minutes (the precise duration depended on how long the activities lasted).   All families welcomed my observation and treated me as a good friend.   When I visited the families, I was always invited to have tea, or even dinner, with them before the teaching activities started.   I interviewed the parents and the children after the learning activities and followed this with a casual chat.   In the following section, I discuss what a participant observation is and the reasons for this being chosen as one of the methods to collect data.

"If you are a successful participant observer, you will know when to laugh at what your informants think is funny; and when informants laugh at what you say it will be because you meant it to be a joke."

<div align="right">(Bernard, 1988, p. 148)</div>

The essential means of collecting data in ethnographic research are looking and listening.   Participant observation characterizes most ethnographic research and is crucial to effective fieldwork.   It has been described as an oxymoron by Ellen (1984); it combines participation in the lives of the group of people under study with maintenance of a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data.

The term "participant observation" was introduced by Lindemann (1924), who distinguished between "objective observers" and "participant observers".   The former primarily use interviewing to approach a culture from the outside while the latter use observation to research a culture from inside (Friedrichs & Ludtke, 1974). The origin of participant observation is generally attributed to Malinowski's (1961) fieldwork among the Trobriand Islanders; he is considered to be the first researcher to use this method to generate specific anthropological knowledge.

Participant observation refers to a process of learning through exposure to, or involvement in, the daily or routine activities of participants in the research setting. Bogdan (1972) defined participant observation as:

"research characterized by a prolonged period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects, in the milieu of the latter, during which

time data, in the form of field notes, are unobtrusively and systematically collected."

(Bogdan, 1972, p. 3)

Jorgensen (1989) argued that the ultimate aim of participant observation is to generate practical and theoretical truths about human life which are grounded in the realities of daily existence. He then defined the method in terms of seven distinct features:

"…the insiders' viewpoint, the here and now of everyday life, the development of interpretive theories, an open-ended process of inquiry, and in-depth case study approach, the researcher's direct involvement in informants' lives, and direct observation as a primary data gathering device."

(Jorgensen, 1989, p. 14)

Participant observation differs from ordinary observation in that it brings to the social situation purposes, awareness of easily taken for granted phenomena, a broad perspective of information, insider and outsider experience as well as record keeping. Wolcott (1988) discussing the difference between ordinary participation and participant observation stated:

"We are ethnographic observers when we are attending to the cultural context of the behaviour we are engaging in or observing, and when we are looking for those mutually understood sets of expectations and explanations that enable us to interpret what is occurring and what meanings are probably being attributed by others present.

(Wolcott, 1988, p. 193)

The fundamental reason to choose participant observation over other research methods relates to the significance of the cultural context and observing behaviours in

answering the research question.   Participant observation would help researchers to identify and build relationships with the target group, which are important to the future of the research endeavor.   It also provides the researcher with cultural experiences.   The richness and complexity of the human condition can be more fully appreciated and understood.   Moreover, the sequence and connection of events that contribute to the meaning of a phenomenon can be identified.   The context can be observed as it unfolds in everyday life.   It helps the researcher to grasp the way things are organized, how people relate to one another and the ways in which social and physical boundaries are defined.

In my fieldwork, I intended to get insights into the ways in which parents supported their children learning Mandarin within different family backgrounds.   Although data from interviews gave me some knowledge, I believed participant observation would be the best means to get to know what really happened in each family. Therefore, in addition to interviews, I conducted participant observations in the families.

The extent of an observers' participation varies according to the different mode of participant observation.   Junker (1960) suggested four theoretical social roles for conducting fieldwork, based on the degree of participation: complete participant; participant as observer; observer as participant and complete observer.   A complete participant joins a group as a regular member solely for the purpose of conducting research; at the other end of Junker's scale is a complete observer.   Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) pointed out complete observation has advantages and disadvantages, similar to complete participation.   In both situations, the researcher doesn't interact with the people being studied as a researcher.   Both of these roles also make it

difficult to question and interview the people being studied.   Most fieldwork lies somewhere between these two extremes.   Junker (1960) characterized 'participant as observer' as subjectivity and sympathy and 'observer as participant' as objectivity and sympathy.   Even though there is an overlap between these two roles, distinguishing them as separate is a way of encouraging the researcher to move about the scale and adopt the best role for their research.   The extent to which the researcher both chooses to participate and is allowed to participate depends on several factors, including the purpose of the study and the particular nature of the setting.

Wolcott (1988) made the distinction between three different participant-observer styles: the active participant, the privileged observer, and the limited observer.   The active participant has a job to do in the setting, in addition to the research.   The privileged observer is someone who is known and trusted and given easy access to information about the context.   The limited observer observes, asks questions and builds trust over time, but does not have a public role other than as a researcher.

As for my stance in participant observation, I would describe myself as the privileged observer.   When I started to contact my sample families, the parents knew my role in the Mandarin school.   Therefore, my getting permission for access was relatively easy.   After initial contact, establishing rapport is then very important to gain access to important aspects of daily existence and to be trusted with dependable and pertinent information (Jorgensen, 1989).   Bogdewic (1992) suggested some tips for establishing and maintaining rapport: be unobtrusive, be honest, be unassuming, be a reflective listener, and be self-revealing.   When I was questioned by the sample families about my interests and what I hoped to find out, I explained carefully and ensured they understood.   I also assured them that their participation was voluntary,

identities would remain anonymous and all information would be treated confidentially. As the rapport was developed, I was able to begin participating in the activities in the families.

However, my role moved between participant as observer and observer as participant. For example, in my several visits to Lucas' family, my role changed. When I was observing the learning sessions Lucas had with his mother, since Lucas knew that I was one of the Mandarin teachers in school, he occasionally asked for my suggestions. Also the mother sometimes asked for my opinions when she was not sure if she was correct. Therefore, sometimes I joined in their learning activities while I was observing. I was concerned that the events I witnessed as a participant observer may not have been characteristic behaviour or may even have been put on for my benefit. Ely et al. (1991) cited Guba and Lincoln (1989) in suggesting prolonged engagement and persistent observations would be the most helpful techniques for constructing a view of the context in its natural state. For this reason I observed the families once per month for a period of eight months.

When researchers participate in the setting, researchers might wonder "what should we observe?" In my first visit to Curtis' family, which was the first observation I carried out, I had the same worries and concerns. I didn't know on what exactly I should focus. In fact, during the early stages, it is very important to document observations accurately. With repeated observations and questioning, the meanings of items, patterns of behaviours and events become clearer. One way to think about participant observation is to think of all the elements needed to tell a story- whom what, when, where, why and how (Bogdewic, 1992). Goetz and LeCompte (1984) suggested a framework for participant observation: Who is present? What is

happening? When does this activity occur? When is this happening? Why is this happening? How is this activity organized? With this framework in mind, after several visits to the families, I had a clear idea what I should mainly focus on.

In the previous sections, the definition of participant observation was discussed, why participant observation was chosen as a method of data collection and the researcher's role when conducting observations. Then, the question of how to start to participate in a setting and what we should observe was discussed. In the following sections, I look at how I conducted the interviews and explain why interviews were chosen as one of the methods to collect data.

4.5.3 Interviews

After observing the teaching and learning activities in each family, I conducted interviews with the parents and then with their child. Each interview lasted thirty minutes. Duranti (1997) suggested the importance of using local languages in conversations with participants and avoid relying on interpreters because they might add their personal interpretation of participants' meanings. In my interviews, there were two languages used, Mandarin and English. When talking to the parents with a Chinese background and a good command of Mandarin, I used Mandarin to communicate and interview. Using Mandarin with them made the parents feel secure and consider me as a member of their community. During the interviews they frequently referred to their experience and opinions on Chinese philosophy, Chinese idioms and even slangs because they thought I could appreciate what they tried to express given I spoke Mandarin to them. I believe that the data I obtained were far more in depth and more authentic than the data which could have been collected by an

interviewer who had spoken English to them.   For example, in one of my visits to Sophie's family, Sophie's father explained why they insisted that Sophie should learn Mandarin.   He stated:

> "You know we Chinese always say "飲水思源" (When you drink water, think of its source.)   Although we have settled down in this country (UK) and will remain here in the future, it is very important for our children not to forget where their ancestors were from."   (Sophie's father)

Because I am from the same culture and speak the same language as Sophie's parents, I could immediately understand and appreciate the message they tried to convey. Another example occurred during my visit to Curtis' family.   Curtis mother taught Curtis to write some Chinese characters in their learning session.   Then Curtis' mother said to me:

> "Teacher, you know how we learn Chinese characters in school in Taiwan.   We just sit there and write again and again… I don't think this will work on Curtis. I need to do something different to help him to learn Characters."
>
> (Curtis' mother)

This example again illustrated the advantage of using Mandarin for conducting the interviews in this study.   Curtis' mother talked about our common experience learning to write in Taiwan and believed I would be able to appreciate it.

When interacting with the parents whose Mandarin ability was not good, I used English to communicate.

In the following sections, I justify why interviews were chosen as a means to collect data and I also discuss how I carry out the interviews.

An interview is "… a purposeful conversation usually between two people (but sometimes involving more) that is directed by one in order to get information" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p. 135). An interview is more than a simple tool with which to mine information. "It is a place where views may clash, deceive, seduce, enchant…it is as much as seeing a world- mine, yours, ours, theirs- as about hearing accounts, opinions, arguments…..words with views into different worlds" (Schostak, 2006, p. 1). Interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways for researchers to understand people within certain groups. It has the ability to obtain a rich, in-depth experiential account of an event, resulting in true and accurate pictures of the respondents' lives. It also opens up the possibility of gaining an insight into people's experiences, concerns, interests, beliefs, values, knowledge and ways of seeing and acting. Ethnographers use interviews to help clarify and classify an individual's perception of reality.

Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured; there are different forms, including: individual; group; face-to-face verbal interchange; mailed or self-administered questionnaires and telephone surveys (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A structured or semi-structured interview is most valuable when the fieldworker comprehends the fundamentals of a community from the insider's perspective (Fetterman, 1998). The interview method involves questioning or discussing issues with people. During the process of interviewing, the researcher can discover, uncover or generate the meanings and rules within the groups to which they belong or with which they interact (Blaxter, 2001). The interviewees become the teachers and

instruct the researcher in the ways of life they find meaningful (Spradley and McCurdy, 1972).

Some interviews are done during participant observation. These interviews are usually quite informal. Other interviews can be more formal and are more planned. Formal interviews are usually carried out away from the action so the interviewer and interviewee can talk in peace and in greater depth.

The interviews conducted in this study were one-to-one, in-depth and semi-structured. I sought to discover the different means of parental support within different family backgrounds as well how that support was affected by the parents' social and cultural background as well as their educational experience. The reason for choosing a semi-structured interview was due to its feature of being both flexible and yet better focused than an unstructured interview. A semi-structured interview takes a thematic, topic-centred, biographical or narrative approach. The interviewer has an interview guide (a list of questions or specific topics to be covered) but is flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered; the interviewee is allowed to develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues (Manson, 1996). Questions that are not included in the guide can be asked when the interviewer picks up on topics mentioned by interviewees. The questions on a semi-structured interview guide are preformulated, but the answers to those questions are open-ended. They can be fully expanded at the discretion of the interviewer or the interviewee and can be enhanced by further probing questions (Schensul et. al, 1999).

In contrast, structured interviews involve tight control over the format of the questions and answers; the researcher has a predetermined list of questions, to which the

respondent may offer limited option responses.   Unstructured interviews tend to be similar in character to a conversation (Bryman, 2001).   With a clear focus, rather than a very general notion in mind, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews in order to address specific issues while allowing flexibility. Such a structure allows the interviewee to develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues.

Researchers need to consider carefully how to sequence questions in both semi-structured and structured interviews.   Schensul et al. (1999) suggested the questions should be ordered as follows:

(1) Temporally: From earlier events to more recent events

(2) According to the complexity: From simpler topics to more complex ones

(3) According to topics or domains: Groups all questions on the same or similar topics together

(4) By level of abstraction within domains: From the most concrete to the most abstract issues

(5) In accordance with the threat level: From the least sensitive or threatening to the most sensitive or threatening; place the most sensitive topics last

(Schensul et al.1999, p. 15)

I designed my interview guide to follow the above order as well as to include the nine steps suggested by Kvale (1996): introducing questions; follow-up questions; probing questions; specifying questions; direct questions; indirect questions; structuring questions; silence and interpreting questions.   In the following section, I illustrate my interview process by describing one of the interviews I conducted.

The interviewee was Curtis' mother, Ching-hui. She was originally from Taiwan but married to a British man. Curtis attended the Hua Hsia Chinese School to learn

Mandarin.

I began the interview by introducing background information about the aims of the research and the reason for choosing the subject as one of my interviewees. The aim was to set a relaxed atmosphere for the rest of the interview and to encourage the interviewee to feel free to open up on the topic under consideration. After gaining her trust and rapport (Denscombe, 2003), I asked for her permission to record the interview and reassured her of the confidentiality of comments made during the interview.

The first question takes on a particular significance for the interview since it will offer the interviewee the chance to settle down and relax. I started by asking general questions about the interviewee. These questions allowed me to collect her background information as well as let the interviewee start off covering topics with which she was entirely familiar.

Second, the questions on the prepared interview guide were discussed. The interviewee explained the motivation for sending her son to learn Mandarin; these included a desire to maintain heritage and concerns for their son's future career. She gave several examples of children losing recognition of their origin and the problems caused. Additionally, she mentioned her future plan for educating her child. Then, she gave a detailed description of the support she provides to her child, including the material she uses, the amount of time, and how she makes use of other available resources. She also complimented her husband on his support although he could not speak Mandarin. When asked of the level of satisfaction she perceived for her son's progress, she stated she was pleased. Moreover, she made some suggestions

about the teaching style and teaching material at the Chinese school. She concluded that it was a tough task to motivate her child, who was only 7 years old, and to maintain the momentum in learning Mandarin, particularly as the Mandarin school is run on Sunday afternoons. She stated a lot of effort was required on her part and that the support offered by her husband was vital.

During the process, it was important for me, as an interviewer (relying on a busy interviewee), to complete within the allotted time having covered most of the key issues. At the same time, I had to identify the highlights, concerns and priorities expressed by the interviewee. I maintained eye contact throughout the interview and made a note of non-verbal communication, which I thought might be helpful for the later interpretation of the interview. At the end of the interview, I invited the Curtis' mother to raise any points that she thought still needed to be discussed and any expectation she might have for this research project.

The one-to-one, semi-structured interview is relatively easy to arrange and affords straightforward access to the interviewee. Adopting the semi-structured genre provided flexibility for probing in-depth questions. There are some basic elements in the preparation of a good interview guide. Firstly, it is important to create a number of questions on the topic areas, so that the questions about these topics flow well. But the order can be adjusted during the actual interview (Bryman, 2001). During the interview I changed the order of questions as the need arose or as directed by the interviewee talking about some of the questions not yet raised. Also, with sufficient prepared questions in mind, I didn't have a hard (nor an embarrassing) time not knowing what to ask. The structure also enabled me to probe the answers to my questions instead of requiring prompting out of further new questions. Secondly,

besides the main questions relating to the research, it is useful to ask questions about interviewees' background, which may be of use in contextualizing their answers.   It is also crucial to be familiar with the setting in which the interviewee works, lives and engages in the topics which are the subject of the research questions.   The interviewee here works in a Chinese culture and folk group; this background explains her stress on the education of cultural heritage to her child.

A third important point is the use of recording devices and note taking during the interview.   I employed both strategies in case of unexpected problems and in this found both advantages and disadvantages.   Using an audio recorder allowed me to concentrate on the process of the interview, to focus my attention on the interviewee, giving appropriate eye contact and non-verbal communication.   However, Curtis' mother was nervous despite having given permission to record at the beginning. Sometimes, she asked if she could answer questions again and delete what she had said earlier.   Sometimes it is less likely that an interviewee reveals confidential information when feeling uneasy (Blaxter, 2001).   Note-taking, while distracting, gave me an instant record of the key points of the interview. When I started to take notes, Curtis' mother slowed down and repeated her responses; when I stopped taking notes, she might have thought her comments unimportant as sometimes she stopped to change to other topics.

In the previous sections, I discussed how interviews were carried out in my study and drew on an example to illustrate.   (Example interview excerpts are shown in Appendix 3.)

One of the challenges for the researcher lies in the recording of fieldwork.   In the

following sections, I look at the methods I applied to record the data, including fieldnotes, audio recording and videotaping.

4.5.4 Fieldnotes

The most common tools ethnographers use are pen and paper.   Pen and paper have some advantages, such as ease of use, minimal expense and unobtrusiveness.   With the tools, the fieldworkers record notes from interviews and observations during or after each section.   These fieldnotes record what has been seen, heard and experienced in the field.   The more complete and accurate the fieldnotes are, the easier it is for researchers to catalogue, code and use them as data.   There are three fundamental questions to be considered regarding fieldnotes (Hammersley and Akinson, 1995): what to record, how to record it and when to record it.

What to record

During the early stages of the study, researchers cannot be certain of what will eventually contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Description must include enough of the context surrounding the activity that meaningful comparisons and contrasts can be made during analysis.   Spradley (1980) proposed a framework for constructing the context:

1. Space: the physical place or places

2. Actor: the people involved

3. Activity: a set of related acts people do

4. Object: the physical things that are present

5. Act: single actions that people do

6. Event: a set of related activities that people carry out

7. Time: the sequencing that takes place over time

8. Goal: the thing people are trying to accomplish

9. Feeling: the emotions felt and expressed

(Spradley, 1980, p. 78)

This framework would help to produce a thick description. Moreover, there are some important points to remember about keeping fieldnotes. Firstly, behaviours should be defined as behaviour instead of what they mean to the observer. Researchers should describe the behaviour while avoiding attributing meaning to it in the fieldnotes during the early stages until they discover what the behaviour might mean to others in the setting. Secondly, description of an individual should include appearance, clothing, items used by the person. For example, instead of describing "dressed elegantly", we should write down what the person really wears. Thirdly, the physical state of the environment should also be described as if through the lens of a camera (Schensul and et. al, 1999).

In addition to the descriptive content, there should be a reflective part in fieldnotes. Fieldnotes can be considered as a dialogue with the researcher's self. Since the researcher is the primary tool in the fieldwork, it is essential to include researcher's thoughts and concerns: their feelings, hunches, assumptions, reflective thoughts and even expected outcomes. The reflective dimension can be put into several categories (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982): reflection on feelings and frame of mind, ethical dilemmas and conflicts, clarification, method and analysis.

How to record

Fieldnotes are intended to represent an expanded account of a variety of information obtained in the field, during observation, and then later assembled. There are different types of notes that are generated during the course of our fieldwork; these include jottings, logs as well as the fieldnotes themselves.

In attending an ongoing scene and event, field researchers take note of certain details and impressions. These initial notes are often best described as jottings. In the field, what the researchers are usually able to do is to jot down phrases, or even just key words, which capture some aspects of the fieldwork. Later, jottings can help to recall the researcher's memory and construct the scene. There is no particular format for jottings; the primary objective is to capture key phrases without drawing attention to the process of doing so. Field researchers write jottings in different ways. Many researchers develop their own systems of symbols and abbreviations since there would rarely be enough time to write out every word fully. Discovering the best way to write jottings in a particular setting requires some experimentation. Apart from how to write jottings, field researchers also need to decide when and where to write jottings. The researchers hope to observe, or be included in the activities, but at the same time, they also wish to preserve the immediate moment by jotting down the scene. In order to solve this problem, in addition to jottings, we can use other methods to help us to record, including audio and video recording. We will discuss these in the later section.

Logs are the expansions of the rapid jottings. A log is storage of all the data gathered as well as a chronological record of what we have learnt and our insights

about how we learn it.   Such log has many advantages.   It can be used for planning future sessions; for recording the amount of time spent in the field; and for easy reference in reviewing the interviews or the observations.   By providing a historical record of the entire fieldwork experience, analysis of the log can generate additional insights into the study.   After the log, the permanent fieldnotes, which form the foundation for the eventual analysis, can be composed.   Therefore, it is essential to be as accurate and complete as possible and should be written as soon as possible after an observation or an interview.

In order to manage the data, it is important that fieldnotes are well constructed.   Ely (1991) suggested guidelines for their production.   First, we should leave generous margin on each page, allowing us to add additional comments, later discoveries and clarifications.   Secondly, despite the inconvenience, we need to number the lines of our fieldnotes so that when we are sorting out similar items and are documenting our statements later, we have a specific line reference.   It will be easy for us to cross reference our fieldnotes efficiently as our analysis develops.   Bogdewic (1992) further suggested that each page should be properly labeled, with the date, location, time of the observation period and the names of the people involved.   Such labels are useful in recalling a particular section.   Another consideration is how to accurately record dialogue.   The actual words which participants use are important.   It is essential that the dialogue be recorded accurately.   As mentioned above, audio taping and videotaping can be used to record the scene.   Finally, he suggested being liberal in starting new paragraphs.   Any new event that is new to the scene being observed should start a new paragraph.   By doing so, the notes will be easy to read and code. Bogdewic also suggested that we keep a separate or parallel set of journals, containing our reflective notes.   The journals are the notes we write to ourselves about our

thoughts, confusions, and understanding of personal, methodological and analytic aspects of the fieldwork experience. Such notes enable the researcher to trace their intellectual and emotional journey and enable us to gain an analytical distance from the data.

When to record

Since the fieldwork can continue for a long periods of time, the researcher's understanding of what the data mean will likely change before the investigation is complete. Therefore, it is crucial that the researcher develop effective habits for writing fieldnotes.

As mentioned earlier, we should record our notes as soon as possible after the fieldwork. The longer we wait before writing notes, the greater the risk of losing data, not least because we might forget the details of our observations or interviews. In addition, we should not discuss our fieldwork with others until we have recorded it. Another person's opinion might affect our memory of observations and interviews. Moreover, we should plan sufficient time for recording and find a private place that has equipment needed to do the work. Gathering large amounts of data without sufficient time for recording usually produces poor notes.

For my fieldnotes, I jotted down what I observed within the families, such as the learning activities and interactions between the mothers and the children. As soon as I finished the observations and interviews I returned home, recalled what I had seen and developed these jottings into more extensive logs. During my observations, I used audio and video recording (as discussed in the next section), to gather data as

well as to capture scenes that I did not notice. I watched the video recordings and made additional comments on my fieldnotes. (An example of my fieldnotes is shown in Appendix 4).

4.5.5 Audio and video recording

In addition to the written materials, which generate and collect data about the situation, many researchers find it useful to additionally document with audio tapes and videotapes. Duranti (1997) stated that electronic recording, such as tape or video recording, can improve the accuracy of ethnographic accounts of the observed social phenomena, such as the flow of discourses and movements as well as the process of events. Ethnographers attempt to immerse themselves in the field, working with people rather than devices. Audiotapes add people's voice to the words, while videotapes offer the ability to show context, setting, people in verbal and non-verbal interactions and elements, such as gestures and facial expressions. With the recording equipment, ethnographers will be able to record the scene more completely and to engage in lengthy observation and interviews without interruption. Both audiotapes and videotapes allow for analysis through repeated studying, as well as for composing fieldnotes.

Audio recording is an excellent tool for making notes, especially while conducting interviews. This method effectively captures long verbal quotations, which are essential to fieldwork, while the ethnographer maintains the flow of the investigation. When conducting the interviews, I found it difficult to write down the responses properly and talk to them at the same time. The interviewees sometimes stopped talking in order to wait for me to write down their words. This pause not only

interrupted their flow of thinking but also prolonged the interviews.   Therefore, due to time constraints, some interviews ended up incomplete.   Learning from the experience, I used audio recording in my later interviews removing the need to write down the interviewee's responses and enabling me to concentrate on my questions and to probe for further information.

However, there were some problems associated with audio recording.   When I asked for the interviewees' permission to make audio recordings of the interviews, all of them agreed.   Nevertheless, at the beginning, they were noticeably a little bit nervous. I could feel that they were being more careful than they would otherwise have been about what they wanted to say.   Theirs eyes sometimes checked the recording device and looked nervous.   Sometimes, they asked to stop the recorder and record again. In order to solve these problems and make the interviewees less nervous, I assured them firstly: the function of the audio recording was to backup my data, in case I was to forget what they said during the interview; secondly, I confirmed the confidentiality of the data.   I chose to use a relatively small recording device, in order to minimize the attention drawn to it and the intimidation it caused.   After a short while, I found that the interviewees relaxed and seemed to forget about the recorder.

The other problem I found was that the recording equipment allowed me to concentrate on talking with my interviewees to the extent that, sometimes, I forgot to check if the device was still recording.   More than once, I was not aware that my recorder lost power; I continued to interview without writing the responses down fully, and my recording was not made.   In order that, my recorder would always have enough space to record the full interviews I chose to use a digital recording device, which can record for long time periods.

Video recording is another method used to record my fieldwork. Ethnographers usually have some thoughts to reflect on a person's gestures, posture and facial expression. The primary advantage of video over audio tapes is the availability of nonverbal behaviour for additional analysis. Videotapes provide visual records of observations and allow the researcher to watch them repeatedly if needed. They also have the advantages of showing how scenes develop and how the movements and actions which occur.

Pink (2005) argued that visual images are inextricably interwoven with our personal identities, narratives, lifestyles, cultures and societies. Ethnographic research is likewise intertwined with visual images and metaphors.

> "When ethnographers produce photographs or video, these visual texts, as well as the experience of producing and discussing them, become part of their ethnographic knowledge…Just as images inspire conversations, conversations may invoke images…In ethnography, images are as inevitable as sounds, words or any other aspect of culture and society."
>
> (Pink, 2005, p. 17)

Ball and Smith (1992) stated that visual data present a precise record of material reality which is beyond description. Visual data enrich the written data by making them more vivid and reliable. However, many researchers are concerned that videotaping is too intrusive to those people being observed. Collier and Collier (1986) suggested that as an ethnographer becomes more acquainted with the social group, electronic recordings can take up a greater role in data collection.

At the beginning, before my visit to Sophie's family, I had the parents' permission to take photographs of their activities as well as a tape recording.   When I just started my observation, I found that Sophie and her mother were very cautious because of my taking photographs and tape recording.   Similarly, I assured them that the photographs and then recording would serve as my own data and that I would ask for their consent if I need to show the images to other people.   During the course of the observation, they became accustomed to the camera and the recording even joking that they should dress up next time for the camera.   When I was writing my fieldnotes, I looked through the images and found information which I didn't write down and the audio device did not record.   They were, for example, the smile on the child's and the mother's faces after the child had completed learning tasks.   With this observation I realized that visual data were an important aid to research.   From then on, I used video recording device to record the scene instead of just using camera and tape recorder in my fieldwork.

4.6 Data Analysis

In ethnographic research, data analysis is not a distinct stage of the research.   It can begin in the pre-fieldwork phase, with the formulation and clarification of research problems, and continue through the process of writing up.   Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) argue that

> "Formally data analysis starts to take shape in analytic notes and memoranda; informally, it is embodied in the ethnographer's ideas and hunches.   In these ways, to one degree or another, the analysis of data feeds into research design and data collection."
>
> (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 205)

Foster (1996) stated the inter-dependent nature of data analysis and data collection is "to encourage researchers to clarify their research foci and questions, and subsequently to collect new data, or sometimes to re-analyse existing data, to shed further light on their revised research problems (p. 63)." This process of analysis guides the researcher to focus and refocus observational and interview lenses and to phrase and rephrase research questions. This is much the same as my research. My data analysis began during the early stage of my research, with the formulation and clarification of research problems and continued through to the writing up.

Researchers usually gather large amounts of data on the phenomenon being studied. These data would be worthless in their original form. The initial stage of data analysis is to summarize the data and to identify the significant features, which relate the phenomena being studied. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested there should be three stages of data analysis; early stage- data reduction, stage two-data display and final stage- conclusion drawing and verification. However, the first stage should continue throughout the whole study.

In order to analyse ethnographic data, we need to systematically transcribe and translate our collected data into words. In the following section, I discuss the issues of transcription and translation.

Using an audio or video device to record interviews or observations should improve the accuracy of research data given that the human memory is not as reliable as a recording device. When the transcription of the audio and videotaped data is being carried out, decisions must be made, such as: what and how to transcribe. Wood and Kroger (2000) stated that "transcription refers to the transformation of spoken

discourse into a written form that is fully amenable to analysis and available for inclusion in the report of the research (p. 82)." Oches (1979) argues that transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions. Walford (2001) also pointed out that the decision about what to transcribe rests with the research objectives. In my transcription, I went through the data so as to become thoroughly familiar with it and then decided how detailed the transcripts should be.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

As the scope of the social sciences has expanded and as our methods of research and analysis have become more sophisticated, concern over the ethics of conducting research in social sciences has grown. Issues related to research participants' rights and welfare as well as researchers' obligations have been discussed and most scientific associations have adopted ethical codes that cover their particular domains (Nachmias, 1996). Conducting research that may violate the rights and welfare of the participants is neither the intent nor the interest of researchers. However, ethical issues arise from the kinds of problems researchers investigate and the method used to obtain valid and reliable data. They can be raised by the research questions, the setting in which the research takes place, the procedure required by the research design as well as the method and type of data collected (Burton, 2000).

In my study, I considered some potential ethical issues associated with my interviews: privacy, informed consent and psychological harm. Privacy concerned three perspectives: the disclosure of personal information, voluntary participation and intrusion. Since I was looking at the home literacy and family support, questions about family life were inevitably raised. The idea of informed consent derives both

from cultural values and legal considerations. It is rooted in the high value we attach

to freedom and to self-determination (Nachmias, 1996). However, while the issue of

informed consent seems reasonable and desirable, it is not easy to implement.

Researchers need to consider how fully informed participants should be in order to

find a balance between the ethical consideration and the validity of the findings.

The last ethical issue was that participants should not suffer personal harm arising in

the process of research (Denscombe, 2003). In order to avoid psychological harm,

researchers should bear in mind that the identities and records of individuals should

be maintained as confidential (Bryman, 2001).

4.8 Summary

In this chapter, my main purpose was to discuss the rationale and scenario for

conducting ethnographic research. To begin with, I stated my identity and stance in

this research. Conducting a research project in a familiar setting, as I did, could be

beneficial; however, it might be affected by the researcher's existing expectations and

biases. Therefore, a researcher in this context must be alert, cautious and

open-minded. Secondly, I discussed the features of two fundamental approaches,

quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative approach was applied in the

initial stage of my research to set up the context; qualitative approach was used in the

later fieldwork which was intended to investigate the deeper meaning of people's lives

within context.

Next, I illustrated the framework of my research: Ethnography. I started from the

definition of ethnographic research pointing out that ethnography is the fundamental

research method of cultural anthropology; it is to step into people's lives and discover

their stories.   Here, I also argued that ethnography in education uses various different methods of investigation.

After discussing the framework of my research, I continued to discuss my fieldwork; fieldwork being the most characteristic element of ethnographic research.   My field in this research project was the Hua Hsia Chinese School and the sample families. Interviews and participant observations were used to collect data.   Moreover, I looked into the composition of fieldnotes: what to record, how to record and when to record.   Audio recording and video recording were used in my research to enrich the data and maintain the flow of the research.

Finally, data analysis was discussed, including the issues of transcription.   At the end of this chapter, I examined the ethical issues raised and considered in my study.

Chapter 5

Data Analysis-Outer Layer

Chapter 5 Data Analysis-Outer Layer

5.1 Introduction

5.2 The Social and Cultural Background

5.2.1 Social background

5.2.2 Linguistic background

5.2.3 Access to Mandarin

5.3 Summary

Chapter 5 Data Analysis-Outer Layer

5.1 Introduction

In this project, the data analysis is conducted by using the method of multi-layering (Bloome and Theodorou, 1987, Gregory and Williams, 2000). Bloome and Theodorou argued multiple layer discourse analysis is needed for understanding classrooms and lessons:

> "….. (a) the shifting, interactional constraints and conditions under which teachers and students interpret classroom discourse; (b) how classroom discourse mediates the interpretation of classroom tasks and (c) how macrostructural classroom processes face-to-face interaction of teachers and students."
>
> (Bloome and Theodorou, 1987, p. 217)

Gregory and Williams (2000) also adapted multi-layering analysis in order to interpret different kinds of data.

> "…a multi-layering approach has been used in which focus moves from an ethnographic analysis of the outer layer, or the social context, to a detailed ethnomethodological analysis of individual reading and literacy interactions or inner layer."
>
> (Gregory and Williams, 2000, p. 15)

The data was analyzed in three layers: the outer layer- social and cultural background, the middle layer- supporting strategies used by the parents and the inner layer- the pedagogic methods used by the parents. Firstly, the broad ethnography background of these sample families' is discussed. Then, I examine the patterns of the methods and strategies applied by the parents and look into how social and cultural background

affects the way the parents' support their children's learning.   Finally, combining the discussion from the outer layer and the middle layer, I examine the pedagogic methods used by the parents.   The research questions of this study are: whether and if so in what ways do parents of different backgrounds support their children in learning Mandarin as a second or a foreign language and how is this affected by the parents' social and cultural factors as well as their educational experience.   The method of multi-layering allows me to move my focus from the broad layer of social and cultural context, through the layer of supporting strategies, to the inner layer of pedagogic strategies.   Moreover, the method enables me to interweave and combine the three layers of analysis.

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1989), a developmental psychologist, articulated Ecological theory of human development, which defines complex "layers" of environment, each having an effect on a child's development.   He analyzed five types of systems that aid in human development, they include the micro system, mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macro system and finally he developed the fifth system which is the chrono system.   Micro system includes one's immediate physical and social environment, such as the family, peer group, neighborhood and school life; this system helps shape a person's development in that a person has direct contact with them.   The mesosystem, which is defined as a combination of microsystems, leads to a new level of developmental influence.   In exosystem the individual has no active role in determining the settings but the settings have direct influence on the individual. The macro system is the cultural contexts an individual lives in.   The chronosystem develops as a result of a persons experience in his life, this includes environmental events and transitions in an individual's life, and this also includes the history of an individual.

Cultural & Social Background

Supporting Strategies

Pedagogic Methods
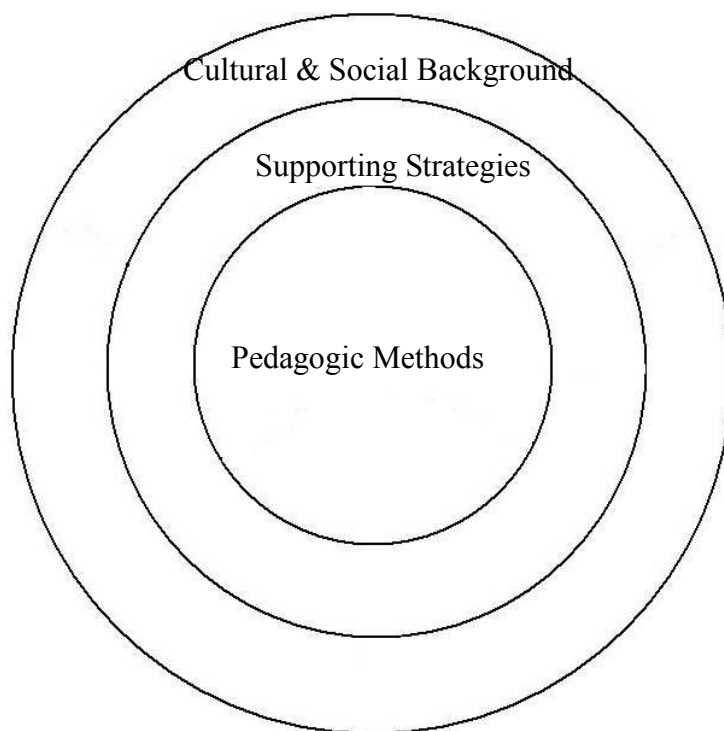
Figure 5.1 Multi-layering analysis

5.2 The Social and Cultural Background

In this chapter, I discuss the outer layer of analysis, the social and cultural context of the families from three perspectives: the social background of these families, the linguistic background and their access to Mandarin and the history of learning Mandarin.

As mentioned earlier, I categorized the families into three groups in this study. The first group is the families with both parents having Chinese ethnic background. The two families in the first category are Sophie's family and Kaixin's family. The second group is mixed families with only one parent having a Chinese background. In

this category, I have Curtis' family and Lucas' family. The third group is the
families without any Chinese background. Caroline's family and Philip's family are
in the third category.

5.2.1 Social background

	Child	Ethnic	Educational background	Occupation
Families with a Chinese Background	Sophie	Father: Chinese (Fujian Province)	Father: PhD	Father: Researcher in university
		Mother: Chinese (Fujian Province)	Mother: University Degree	Mother: Employee in a French company
	Kaixin	Father: Chinese (Hong Kong)	Father: Secondary school	Father: Catering business
		Mother: Chinese (Malaysia)	Mother: Secondary school	Mother: Casual Work
Families with only one parent who has a Chinese background	Curtis	Father: British	Father: Master's Degree	Father: Financial sector
		Mother: Taiwanese	Mother: Master's Degree	Mother: Housewife
	Lucas	Father: US born Mexican origin	Father: University Degree	Father: Financial sector
		Mother: Taiwan born Chinese/Japanese origin	Mother: University Degree	Mother: Housewife
Families without any Chinese background	Caroline	Father: Australian	Father: University Degree	Father: Financial Sector
		Mother: Thai	Mother: University Degree	Mother: Lawyer
	Philip	Father: British	Father: University Degree	Father: Financial Sector
		Mother: American (of Italian descent)	Mother: University Degree	Mother: Housewife

Table 5.1 Social and cultural background

5.2.1.1 The families with Chinese background

Sophie and her Family

Sophie was eight years old when the research was conducted. Both of Sophie's

parents are from China.   They are from Fujian Province, where Fujianese is the main dialect and Mandarin Chinese is the official language.   Sophie's parents came to U.K. in 1988 for studying and have remained in the UK since then.   Sophie's father is a researcher at the University of London and Sophie's mother works for a French company.   Sophie's parents were typical of the overseas students from China at that time.   Because of communism, most of the people in China at that time didn't have a good income and led a comparatively poor life.   Education, which has always been highly valued in Chinese society, was thought of as a ticket to good jobs.   However, because of the poverty, not many people could afford not to work for a living but go to school instead, let alone travel abroad to pursue further study.   The only way that people could get the chance to study abroad was to be sponsored by the government. Therefore, only the students with the highest academic achievement could get the sponsorship.   Sophie's father was one of these students.   He got a post as a researcher when he finished his studying and has stayed in London since then.

"Living abroad was not easy.   The scholarship did not allow for much left over after paying the tuition fee.   My wife came here to work full time to support our life….we have always missed our home country, our family in China.   We were too poor to go back to China to see our family when I was still a student. It was hard, but I knew this chance was very precious.   What I could do was to study hard to honour my family.   My parents were very proud of me; the whole village was very proud of me, too.   You know our culture.   Being educated is the most important thing and is the highest valued priority."

(Sophie's father)

In Sophie's family, we can see some contrasts and conflicts resulting from their background and the environment they are in.   First of all, they adopted different ways to educate their daughters.   Sophie has an elder sister, who is ten years older than Sophie.   Sophie's elder sister was born in China and came to the UK when she was five years old; Sophie was born in London.   Because of this difference, Sophie's parents adopted a very different way to educate their two daughters.   Sophie's sister had problems communicating with fellow students and even the teachers when she first arrived in the UK and started her schooling.   Sophie's parents focused on how to improve her English and helping her to accommodate herself to the new environment. Therefore, they used English to communicate with her as often as possible.   On the contrary, in terms of Sophie, they emphasized the importance of learning Mandarin and Chinese culture.   Even though Mandarin can be said to be Sophie's first language, as soon as she started nursery, English has become the dominant language. However, they hoped that she wouldn't forget her Chinese ethnic identity and that she would retain good ability in the Chinese language.

Secondly, even though they didn't want Sophie to forget her Chinese identity, they hoped Sophie didn't feel excluded from the British society.   They were looking for a balance between these two ends.   Therefore, they didn't have a lot of interaction with other Chinese families; they preferred to socialise with British families.

"Sometimes Sophie is upset because people ask her where she is from and why her English is so good.   She doesn't think she is different from other students except for her appearance.   As a Chinese saying goes, we cannot forget our roots.   Falling leaves go back to the root eventually. We told her that she should be proud of her Chinese origin.   However, she is living in London now.

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We want her to feel that she is also part of this society and she is the same as other kids who grow up here.　(Sophie's Mother)

Thirdly, the parents' past experience of education in China also affected their perception of education.　In Chinese society, the ultimate goal of education is to get students to attain the highest possible degree.　All of the students hope to get admitted to the best schools.　Therefore, the teachers in Chinese society tell students in what subjects they are weak and where they should make more effort.　The students and the parents highly respect teachers and would always follow teachers' guidance.　On the contrary, as Sophie's parents said, education in Britain aims to help students to find their potential and help them to find for themselves the most appropriate role in society.　The differences between their past experience and the existing environment had made them confused and they tried to find a solution.

"We help Sophie with her school work very often.　We hope that she can have good academic achievement.　We contact Sophie's school teacher and try to find out what we can do to help Sophie.　The school teacher always tells us that Sophie is learning very well and has done a very good job.　However, we have realized that she is not good in some subjects.　We feel very confused. We hope the teacher could just tell us the truth and then we can help her."

(Sophie's Mother)

"Therefore, we cannot just rely on the school teacher.　We need to keep a close eye on her and pay more attention to her and then we can get to know what we can do to help her."　(Sophie's Father)

Their experience of being educated in a Chinese society always affected how they supported Sophie's learning of Mandarin. This point will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Kaixin and her family

Kaixin's family is the other family with Chinese background in my research. Comparing to Sophie's family, Kaixin's family has a very different socioeconomic and educational background. These differences reflect the daily life of the family and how the parents support Kaixin's learning of Mandarin.

Kaixin was eight years old when I started to conduct this project. Her mother is from Malaysia and had been living in the UK for eighteen years; her father is from Hong Kong and moved to the UK when he was a child. He had been living in the UK for more than thirty years. Kaixin has a younger brother, who was three years old when I went to visit the family. Both Kaixin and her brother were born in the UK.

Sien's family (Kaixin's mother) is Malaysian Chinese. The family lived in a small village, where Cantonese was the main language. When Sien finished school, her sister, who had moved to the UK, suggested she come to the UK for a better living environment and more job opportunities. Therefore, the whole family, including Sien's mother and sisters moved to the UK and stayed since then.

Kaixin's paternal family moved to the UK more than thirty years ago. The family is like the other immigrant families from Hong Kong at that time; they came to UK for a

better life.   Most of them worked in the catering business as Kaixin's father's family.
As soon as Kaixin's father finished school, he started to work to help the family's
income.

Because of their educational background, it was not easy for Kaixin's parents to get
stable and well-paid jobs.   Kaixin's father worked in the catering business and
Kaixin's mother worked at different places when this study was conducted.   They
were always very busy and worked for long hours.

Different from Sophie's family, Kaixin has some relatives around in London.
Therefore, I observed the close links and the strong support in this big family.   Even
though Kaixin's family now lived on a small council estate flat in north London, it
was the base where the families got together.   During my visits, I always found a
warm, active and happy atmosphere in the family.   Because Kaixin's maternal
grandmother lived with Kaixin's family, Kaixin's aunts, uncles and cousins went to
visit them every weekend.   When they got together, the women were responsible for
the cooking and the men were chatting, looking after young kids or repairing things.
One of Kaixin's aunts was responsible for teaching the elder children Mandarin and
helping them to complete their homework from the Mandarin school.   Sometimes,
the cousins helped each other to complete their homework.

> "My aunt and my cousin, Yong Le, always come to our place on Saturdays.
> Yong Le also goes to my Mandarin school.   Their place is very far away from
> the school.   Therefore, Yong Le stays over night and we goes to school
> together… My aunt teaches me and Yong Le Mandarin on Saturdays.   She also
> checks my homework for me.   Sometimes, she is busy doing other things with

my grand mum and other aunts.   I ask Yong Le to help me.   She is in Year 5; I am in Year 4.   She knows most of the words in my book…" (Kaixin)

Like Sophie's parents and other Chinese, Kaixin's parents also valued education highly even though they themselves didn't have higher education.   They paid careful attention to Kaixin's academic achievement.

"Kaixin's schoolwork is not too difficult for me at the moment.   I can help her with some subjects, such as mathematics.   We send her to English classes and other classes after school.   We hope she can do very well in school and goes to good university." (Kaixin's mother)

"My husband and I are very busy.   My husband works for long hours and I have several different part-time jobs.   We don't really have a lot of time to look after our children.   Luckily, my mother lives with us and she can look after them.   Kaixin is a very good girl.   She always finishes her work before she goes to play or do other things…I sometimes help her with her homework from the Chinese school but my sister comes to our place to help the children every Saturday." (Kaixin's mother)

In addition to her studies in the mainstream school, Kaixin's parents hoped that Kaixin could speak and write Mandarin fluently since they have Chinese background.

"We think Mandarin is such an important language and we have Chinese background anyway.   We want Kaixin and her younger brother to be able to speak Mandarin very well.   In Malaysia, the schools in my village used Malay

to teach.　My parents sent me to a school, where Mandarin was used to teach because they wanted me to be able to speak Mandarin…"

<div align="right">(Kaixin's mother)</div>

Sophie and Kaixin are both from families with a Chinese background.　The parents had similar opinions about the children's education as well as the children's learning Mandarin.　However, because of their past experience and the current situation, they adopted different ways to support their children.　The relationships with the communities were also varied.　Sophie's parents tried to meet up frequently with non Chinese families in order to help Sophie to feel inclusive in the society surrounding her.　On the contrary, Kaixin's family had frequent interactions with the other relatives and friends with the same background in order to create a Mandarin speaking environment and to enhance the children's identity.

5.2.1.2 The families with only one parent having a Chinese background

Curtis and his family

Curtis was seven years old when I carried out my research.　Although Curtis was only seven years old, he has had a lot of experience of living in different countries. He was born in Den Haag, Netherlands.　When he was three, the family moved to Switzerland because of his father's work.　They moved to London when he was four. He is from a mixed middle class family; his mother is from Taiwan and his father is British. His father works in the financial sector and his mother doesn't work outside the home.　He is the only child in the family and has been brought up in English and Mandarin Chinese.　Curtis' father is British and doesn't have any Chinese ethnic background nor the ability to speak Mandarin.　Curtis' mother, Ching-hui, came to

the UK for her Master's degree and has stayed in Europe since then.　She values the importance of maintaining the heritage language as well as the culture, and so since Curtis was born, she has always spoken to him in Mandarin.　She has been his primary teacher of Mandarin.　Curtis' father is also very supportive of Curtis' learning of Mandarin.

> "Since Ching-hui is from Taiwan, half of our family is in Taiwan, it is important for Curtis to appreciate this and be able to see himself as one of them. Therefore, being able to speak Mandarin is beneficial.　However, I hope learning Mandarin is interesting to him instead of being stressful.　As long as he enjoys learning it, I would support him." (Curtis father)

Apart from being supportive in Curtis' learning of Mandarin, Curtis' parents paid a lot of attention to his achievement in mainstream school.　Curtis was studying in a private school, where students are often put under a lot pressure before going to the secondary school.　Not only the academic achievement but also their extracurricular activities are taken into consideration in the admission to the secondary school. Partly for this reason, Curtis was also very busy learning the violin, piano and several other classes.　Curtis' parents thought that providing Curtis with different learning opportunities would help him to find out his potential.　Moreover, because Curtis is the only child in the family, he can make friends by attending different classes and activities.

> "Maybe it is because Curtis is the only child.　He is not very extroverted and talkative.　It always takes him a while to feel comfortable to talk to other people and express his own opinions.　The school teacher has also noticed

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this and discusses it with us.   Therefore, I think sending him to do different activities and classes will be helpful for this."   (Curtis' mother)

Lucas and his family

Lucas was also seven years old when I started this project.   He is also from a mixed middle class family; his father works in a bank and his mother doesn't work outside the home.   His ethnicity is far more complicated than Curtis'.   Lucas' father is Mexican but the family moved to the US before he was born.   Therefore, he was born in the US.   Lucas' mother, Miki, is also from a mixed family.   Her father is Chinese and moved to Taiwan with the government withdrawing from China in 1949. Miki's mother is half Japanese and half Taiwanese.   Miki's grandmother is Japanese and her grandfather is Taiwanese and they both live in Taiwan.   Miki was born in Taiwan but the whole family moved to Japan when she was four months old.   She had most of her schooling in Japan.   Miki's parents sent her back to Taiwan to learn Mandarin for three years.   Then she went back to Japan to continue her secondary education.   However, before she finished her high school, the whole family moved again to the US and then she stayed in the US before she moved to the UK with her husband.

Instead of choosing Spanish or Japanese, Lucas' parents chose Mandarin Chinese as the main second language for Lucas to learn.   Miki stated:

"I discussed with my husband before Lucas was born about what second language we should choose for Lucas to learn.   I can speak Mandarin and Japanese and my husband can speak Spanish.   We should take advantage of

this.   We came to an agreement that Mandarin should be the main second language for him.   We believed that Mandarin was a very difficult language to learn, especially learning Chinese characters.   We also thought that Mandarin would be a very important language in the future.   Therefore, I only speak to Lucas in Mandarin."

Miki was the main and first Mandarin teacher for Lucas.   Lucas' father was also very supportive of Lucas' learning of Mandarin.   Compared to Curtis' father, Lucas' father is more strict and serious about Lucas' learning of Mandarin.

"My husband cannot speak Mandarin but he plays a very supportive role in Lucas' learning of Mandarin.   He always makes sure that Lucas has completed the homework from Chinese school.   He also asks Lucas about what I teach him very often." (Lucas' mother)

Like Curtis, Lucas is also the only child in the family; he doesn't have other relatives in the UK.   Both his paternal and maternal families are living in the US.   In order to provide Lucas more chances to speak Mandarin, Miki arranged frequent gathering with families in the same situation.   In order to enhance Lucas' Chinese ethnic identity, the family visited Lucas' maternal grandparents regularly.   The grandparents spent most of the time in the US, apart from going back to Taiwan sometimes. Lucas' parents thought it was essential for Lucas to appreciate that even though they didn't live in Taiwan or in China at the moment, part of his roots was in Chinese culture.   The grandparents are a good example.   Being able to speak the heritage language is very important.   With this language ability, he then can communicate with his grandparents and other relatives.

"I think my parents are a very good example for Lucas. They live in the US most of time since my brother and sister are living there. This doesn't affect the fact that they are Chinese and they speak Chinese. I hope Lucas can get the idea that not only people who live in a Chinese country are Chinese. If he understands this, he would be very happy to speak Mandarin."

<div align="right">(Lucas' mother)</div>

This belief resulted from Lucas' parents' background. When living in Japan, Miki felt very confused about her identity. She didn't understand why her parents always spoke to her in Mandarin since her mother was Japanese and they lived in Japan. She didn't see the need to learn Mandarin and she also felt ashamed to speak Mandarin in front of her friends.

"My parents tried very hard to help me to learn Mandarin; they insisted on that they should speak Mandarin to me all the time even when they went to school to pick me up. I can recall that I felt very embarrassed to speak Mandarin to my parents in front of my friends when I was a teenager. None of my friend spoke Mandarin. I didn't understand why I needed to learn this "useless" language. I didn't need it for living in Japan; I didn't think I would need it in the future at all. I refused to learn Mandarin any more. That was why they sent me back to Taiwan to learn Mandarin. In Taiwan, I have grandparents and other relatives. People there speak Mandarin. The "useless" language was used there every day. My grandparents used it; my aunts and uncles used it; my friends in Taiwan used it and my parents used it. Not until then did I realize that half of my roots were in Taiwan and I was half Chinese. This

language should be part of me.   I started to learn Mandarin and accepted it."

(Lucas' mother)

Lucas' father had a similar conflict when he was young.   His family immigrated to the US just before he was born.   He used English to communicate with the outside world and he was upset that the family couldn't speak English at all.   He identified himself as American and made no effort to learn Spanish until a family gathering, at which all of the relatives spoke Spanish to each other and he couldn't understand anything like an outsider.   He realized that even though he denied that his origin was Mexican, it was still a fact.   He started to learn Spanish voluntarily.

Therefore, Lucas' parents foresaw what might happen to Lucas in terms of learning Mandarin; they adopted the best way according to their experience to support Lucas' learning of Mandarin.

In this section, I examined the families with only one parent having a Chinese background: Curtis' family and Lucas' family.   Both of the mothers have a Chinese background and were responsible for the direct linguistic support of the children. Neither of the fathers has a Chinese background nor Chinese language ability, yet, they held positive and supportive attitudes towards their children's learning of Mandarin.

5.2.1.3 The families without a Chinese background

Caroline and Her Family

Caroline was eleven years old when this project was carried out.   She had been

learning Mandarin on and off for five years.   The reason why I chose her as one of the participants is that she had outstanding achievement in learning Mandarin.   In the class of the Mandarin school she was in, she was one of the best students; she got very good marks at every exam and she was actively involved in school activities.   She won first place in the Chinese composition contest, which was entered by students across the country.   She also achieved A plus in GCSE Mandarin in 2008 at age 14.

With all of these significant achievements, people might guess that she would have Chinese ethnicity.   On the contrary, neither of her parents has a Chinese background. Her mother had just started to learn Mandarin and her father cannot speak Mandarin at all.   Caroline's father is Australian; Caroline's mother was born in Thailand. After Caroline's mother finished her schooling, she got a scholarship and went to Australia to university.   She met Caroline's father and stayed for another thirteen years in Australia.   Then they moved to Hong Kong because of their work.   The family stayed in Hong Kong for two years and then moved to London.   In Hong Kong, Caroline went to an international primary school, where English was used for teaching.   During this study, the family had settled in London; the father worked in a bank and the mother was an accountant.

Caroline has an elder sister; both of them are very outgoing and are very interested in learning new things.   Both sisters participated in a lot of extracurricular activities; Caroline did swimming training every evening.   She also had violin and piano lessons every week.   At the weekends, she went to Mandarin school.   Amongst school subjects, Caroline was interested in learning languages the most.   She had been learning French, Spanish, Latin and classical Greek for a long time.   On top of these, she started to go to Mandarin class since the school started to offer Mandarin

classes.   She also went to a Chinese club during lunch time.

Caroline's parents were very supportive of her wide range of interests, including learning Mandarin.   It was Caroline's mother who encouraged her to learn Mandarin. She stated:

> "Caroline is always very interested in learning languages.   I went to speak to her Latin teacher.   She said that Caroline was the best student she had ever had.   I cannot say that Caroline is very talented but once she is interested in something, she tries to learn it very well….I think I should encourage her to learn languages.   I believe Mandarin is a very important language and it is very beautiful.   I once had the chance to learn Mandarin when I was working in Hong Kong, but I was too busy to do so.   I suggested Caroline should learn Mandarin; I showed her some Chinese calligraphy in order to motivate her. She likes painting very much.   I think I have made the right decision.   She loves learning Mandarin, especially the Chinese characters."

<div align="right">(Caroline's mother)</div>

Since Caroline's parents cannot speak Mandarin, they cannot give her direct linguistic support.   Nevertheless, they showed Caroline their enthusiasm for and interest in her learning.   They discussed with Caroline about her progress and what they could do to help her.   They also tried to look for some network that Caroline could join to have contact with Chinese speakers.   Therefore, they offered a different way of support for Caroline's learning of Mandarin.

Philip and His Family

Philip was seven years old when I started to research his learning. He was in year one in the Mandarin school. He was one of the students in that class without any Chinese background. According to his teacher, he was the most enthusiastic student in the class; he happily participated in every learning activity and was always the first to answer the questions. He always completed the homework and reviewed his work. That was what attracted my attention; a small "foreign" boy with such a strong motivation to learn Mandarin.

Philip is the only child in the family. Neither of his parents has a Chinese background nor the ability to speak Mandarin. Philip's father is British but moved to the US a long time ago and also possesses an American passport. Philip's mother is American of Italian descent; she is the third generation. Philip was born in the UK. After his birth, the family moved to the US. When Philip got older, the parents compared education between the US and the UK. They decided that the education in the UK would be better for him; so they returned to London and intend to stay here. The father works in the financial sector and the mother doesn't work outside the home.

Philip's parents mentioned in the interview that they found that at an earlier age education was much stronger in the UK than in the US. Moreover, they also thought that because of the diversity in this country, the schools here provided more opportunities for students to learn languages. Philip's parents valued the importance of learning different languages, especially while Philip was young. Therefore, they encouraged Philip to take opportunities to learn different languages.

Philip has experience of learning several languages, for example, French, Greek and

Latin.   One year ago, his school started to run an afterschool Chinese club.   Philip's best friend, Lucas, the boy we mentioned earlier, attended the club.   Partly for this reason, Philip was also interested in going.   Philip's parents encouraged him to attend the Chinese club.   Philip's father stated:

> "Philip didn't pick learning Mandarin by accident.   We did give him some encouragement and support.   We thought carefully before we made this decision.   We thought he should have an European language, but after that, what language should we choose for him?   A lot of people pick Japanese because of Japan's economy and possibilities of business contacts.   But when you bear that in mind, you would think Mandarin is another good choice.   Mandarin has a lot of appeal when you think about it.   When he grows up, China will be a very important country in global politics and global economy.   So it makes huge amount of sense to learn Mandarin."   (Philip's father)

The teacher's encouragement in the after school club enhanced Philip's confidence and motivation.   Unfortunately, the club only lasted for one term and Philip was very disappointed.   Philip's parents then started to look for some Mandarin classes for him to attend.   They asked other parents with a Chinese background for advice about where they should go.   Finally, Philip and Lucas went to the same Mandarin school.

In this section, I looked at the families without any Chinese background, Caroline's family and Philip's family.   These children learnt Mandarin as a foreign language and for the purpose of a future career.   Neither set of parents can speak Mandarin but they supported their children in a different way.   They encouraged their children, showed their interest in their children's learning and tried to solve problems for the children when they encounter difficulties.

5.2.2 Linguistic background

	Child	Parents' native languages	Mandarin Ability	Language(s) used at home
Families with a Chinese Background	Sophie	Father: Putian dialect & Mandarin Chinese	Father: Native speaker	Mandarin & English
		Mother: Fuzhou dialect & Mandarin Chinese	Mother: Native speaker	
	Kaixin	Father: Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese	Father: Reading/writing native speaker Listening/speaking intermediate	Mother with Kaixin: English & Mandarin Father with Kaixin: Cantonese Maternal grandmother with Kaixin: Mandarin
		Mother: Cantonese, Hakka, Malay, Mandarin Chinese, Min dialect	Mother: Native speaker	Kaixin with her younger brother: Mandarin Between parents: Cantonese
Families with only one parent who has a Chinese background	Curtis	Father: English	Father: None	Father with Curtis: English Mother with Curtis: Mandarin Between parents: English
		Mother: Mandarin Chinese, & Taiwanese	Mother: Native speaker	
	Lucas	Father: English,(Spanish as the second language)	Father: None	Father with Lucas: English Mother with Lucas: Mandarin Between parents: English
		Mother: Japanese, (Mandarin as the second language)	Mother: Advanced	
Families without any Chinese background	Caroline	Father: English	Father: None	English
		Mother: Thai & English	Mother: Very Basic	
	Philip	Father: English	Father: None	English
		Mother: English	Mother: None	

Table 5.2 Linguistic background

In the previous section, I introduced the social background of the six families in this research project. I looked at their ethnic background, the structure of the families and their socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the reasons for learning Mandarin and the kind of support given by the parents were discussed preliminarily. In the

following section, I focus on the linguistic background of the families and the languages used at home in daily life.

Sophie's family

Sophie's parents are originally from China.   They are from Fujian Province in Southern China, which is famous for its diversity of cultures and language varieties. The Han people in Fujian Province can be divided into four linguistic groups: Min, Hakka, Wu and Gang.   Min and Hakka are the majority groups.   The Min group is bigger than the Hakka group here (Fujian Official Annual Report, 2007).   Min is an old name of the Fujian area and now it is the short name of that area.   Linguistic Min includes five regional dialect groups: Min Nan (South Min), Min Bei (North Min), Min Dong (East Min), Min Zhong (Central Min) and Puxian.   (The usage of "dialect" and "variety" is shown in Appendix 5.)

Sophie's mother was born in Fuzhou, the capital of Fujian, where Fuzhou dialect is the main dialect; it is within the Min Dong (East Min) group.   The first language of Sophie's mother is Fuzhou dialect.   She started to learn Mandarin Chinese when she went to school.   Sophie's father was born in Putian, where Putian dialect is used in daily life context.   Putian is within Puxian group; it is a very restricted regional dialect.   Only the people in Putian can speak Putian dialect.   However, the population in Putian is very highly concentrated.   Therefore, there are about five million people speaking Putian dialect.   The first language of Sophie's father is Putian dialect; he didn't learn Mandarin Chinese until he started to go to school.   The two dialects spoken by Sophie's parents are very different from each other even though they are both in the Min group.   Therefore, Sophie's parents speak to each

other in Mandarin. When they speak to their own relatives in China, they use their own dialects. When they moved to the UK, especially before Sophie was born, they tried to use English as much as possible to encourage Sophie's sister to learn English. After Sophie was born, Sophie's sister studied in boarding school, they speak Mandarin to Sophie as often as possible. When the family gets together, they alternate between English and Mandarin. However, Sophie only speaks to her sister in English partly because they are used to it and partly because Sophie's sister cannot speak Mandarin very well.

Kaixin's Family

Kaixin's family is multilingual. The alternating between the different languages is complicated yet natural to them. Kaixin's father is from Hong Kong. His first language is Cantonese. When he was in Hong Kong, he learnt Mandarin at primary school. Moreover, Mandarin and Hong Kong Cantonese share the same characters. His reading and writing in Mandarin are atnative speaker's level and listening and speaking are at an intermediate level.

Kaixin's mother, Sien, is Malaysian Chinese. Her maternal family was from Chaozhou in Guangdong Province. Chaozhou is at the border between Guangdong and Fujian. Her paternal family was from Fujian. She grew up in a small village in Malaysia, where Cantonese was used as the main language for daily communication. Sien's parents used to run a grocery shop at the border where several villages met. These villages included villages where Malay was spoken villages and Hakka speaking villages. In order to deal with the customers from different villages speaking different dialects, Sien and her parents ensured that they were able to speak

these dialects.   However, Sien went to schools where Mandarin was used to teach.

Therefore, her Mandarin is of native speaker's standard.

Sien spoke English to Kaixin and had done so since she was born.   Sien only spoke to her in Mandarin when she taught her Mandarin.   Kaixin's father always spoke Cantonese to her and Kaixin's maternal grandmother, who lived with them, always spoke to her in Mandarin.   Therefore, although the dominant language of Kaixin is English, her Cantonese and Mandarin are also good.   When I went to visit Kaixin's family, I had witnessed a very interesting language interchange.   The adults spoke Cantonese to each other most of the time.   Sometimes Kaixin's aunts spoke to Kaixin's grandmother in Hakka and Min dialect.   Kaixin spoke to her father in Cantonese and English to her mother; she spoke to her grandmother and her younger brother in Mandarin.   She used English to communicate with her cousins. Everyone spoke to Kaixin's younger brother, who was three years old, in Mandarin since they wanted him to be able to speak good Mandarin.

Curtis' Family

Curtis' mother, Ching-hui, is from Taiwan.   She can speak Taiwanese as well as Mandarin.   Taiwanese is a dialect in Min (Fujian) dialect group.   Since she has been in the UK for many years, she can speak English very well.   Curtis' father, John, is British.   His first language is English and he doesn't speak any other language.   He can understand some Mandarin and can speak easy phrases.   In order to create a Mandarin speaking environment for Curtis, Chin-hui had always spoken to Curtis in Mandarin since he was born.   John was very supportive in this method.   Chin-hui stated:

"It is actually very difficult to stick to this mode: I speaking Mandarin to Curtis and John speaking English to him…. It was hard for him. Imagine! He cannot understand the conversations between his wife and his son most of the time. It must have been very frustrating for him. Without his support, I could never have done this."

Curtis followed this mode most of the time. He spoke English to his father and Mandarin to his mother. There were some exceptions according to Ching-hui.

"Curtis is not a very outgoing boy. He doesn't normally tell me what happens in school. Sometimes when he wants me to know what happened that day in school, he cannot use Mandarin to describe. He uses English instead. I normally would let him use English just in case he doesn't continue. Also it depends on what he tells me. If he tells me something happy, after he finishes, I would use Mandarin and describe again what he just said, and ask him if it is correct or not."

Lucas' Family

As mentioned earlier, Lucas' parents have a more complicated linguistic background than Curtis' parents. Lucas' father was born in the US soon after the family moved there. In the family, Spanish was the only language used to communicate. Lucas' father was educated and grew up in the US. Therefore, his dominant language is English and he refused to speak Spanish when he was young. As he got older, he realized the importance of the heritage language and started to use Spanish.

As for Lucas' mother, Miki, she grew up and went to school in Japan. Japanese is

her dominant language.   In addition, Miki's parents insisted that she should learn Mandarin and they always speak to her in Mandarin.   However, when young she felt very embarrassed and refused to speak any Mandarin.   Her parents sent her to a secondary school in Taiwan for her to learn Mandarin properly.   She stayed in Taiwan for three years and improved her Mandarin significantly.   Therefore, her ability in Mandarin is advanced.   Moreover, Miki finished her secondary school and university in the US.   Her English is also at an advanced level.

In Lucas' daily life, his father spoke to him in English and his mother spokes to him only in Mandarin.   The father's situation was similar to Curtis' father; he cannot speak Mandarin and cannot really understand the conversations between Lucas and Miki.   Even so, he was still very supportive in this interaction.   Miki stated:

> "My husband used to live in Japan.   He had the experience of guessing what people said by looking at the body language and the context.   He can guess most of the time that what I am trying to say to Lucas.   Of course, there are some occasions that he couldn't understand.   I always told him afterwards. He has very firm attitudes towards our using of Mandarin.   Sometimes when Lucas tried to speak English to me, he told Lucas strictly that he must not speak English to me."

Because of her own experience of learning Mandarin, Miki can appreciate that Lucas would feel embarrassed if they speak Mandarin in front of his friends.   Therefore, she did not want to force him to speak Mandarin if he felt uncomfortable.   However, Lucas had acquired the concept and accepted the learning of Mandarin.   He told his mother "Mummy, you don't need to speak English to me.   You are a "foreigner".

English is not your language.   Let's speak Mandarin.   I can understand."

Caroline's Family and Philip's Family

Caroline's parents and Philip's parents don't have a Chinese background.   They cannot speak Mandarin.   Caroline's mother is from Thailand but she didn't intend to teach Caroline Thai.   Philip's mother has Italian heritage but she cannot speak Italian. Therefore, the language used in these two families is English.

5.2.3 Access to Mandarin

In the previous section, I discussed the linguistic background of each family and the use of language in each family.   In the first two groups of families, Mandarin was used in the household.   In the third group, Mandarin was not used in daily life.   In the following section, I look into access to Mandarin in each family, the opportunities for using Mandarin and the experience of children's learning Mandarin.

In Sophie's daily life, she had plenty of access to Mandarin.   Her parents spoke to her in Mandarin most of the time.   Her mother taught her Mandarin or gave her some Mandarin related tasks to complete.   She had a nanny who went to pick her up from school and looked after her until the parents returned home from work.   This nanny is also from China and can speak Mandarin.   The purpose of having a Chinese nanny was also to help Sophie to learn Mandarin.   She spoke to Sophie in Mandarin and sometimes helped Sophie with her homework from Mandarin school.

Sophie

Family-related access

1. Parents speak Mandarin to Sophie most of the time.

2. Mother gives Sophie Mandarin classes

Access outside of the family

Mandarin school

Sophie

Other resources
Chinese DVDs
Chinese books
Chinese speaking nanny
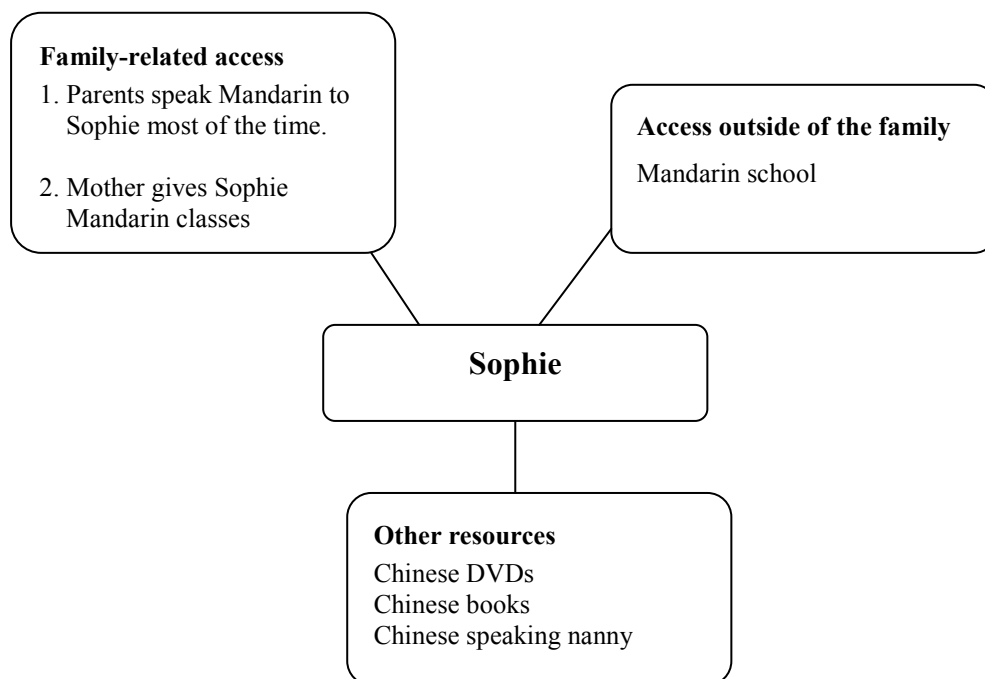
Figure 5.2 Sophie's access to Mandarin

Another source of access to Mandarin was from the mass media. Sophie's parents subscribed to several Chinese channels and they usually watched these channels. The parents also bought a lot of Chinese DVDs. Sophie loved to watch these DVDs. Surprisingly, the DVDs were for adults; most of them were historical dramas. Sophie stated:

> "I like to watch these historical dramas. They are very funny. I couldn't understand everything at the beginning. I need to read the subtitles or ask my parents. Now I have watched them so many times that I can almost guess what the next line will be."

Sophie's parents were very pleased that Sophie liked to watch these DVDs and

apparently, she had learnt not only Mandarin language but also the culture and history from these programmes.

Apart from the contact in daily life, Sophie's parents also sent her to a Mandarin school since she was five years old. The first Mandarin school she went to grouped the students according to their abilities in Mandarin regardless of age. Sophie's Mandarin had always been good when compared to other children of the same age. Therefore, the students in her class were much older than she was. She felt very scared and didn't want to go anymore. The next year, there were two other students who were at the same age as she was; her parents encouraged her to try again. She felt much more comfortable this time and continued to attend the Mandarin school. However, the school finished running because of some financial problems. Sophie's parents didn't want her to stop learning; they tried several Mandarin schools and finally decided to stay in Hua Hsia Mandarin School.

Kaixin

The complicated yet natural language use in Kaixin's family was described earlier. The access to Mandarin she usually got at home was from her grandmother and sometimes from her mother. By doing so, she had set up an example for her younger brother, who started to learn to speak and he spoke Mandarin to the grandmother, too. Kaixin's mother spoke Mandarin to Kaixin when teaching Kaixin Mandarin. Therefore, when Kaixn encountered any problems relating to Mandarin and Chinese school, she always turned to her mother for help and approached her in Mandarin. Moreover, Kaixin's aunt taught her Mandarin on Saturdays. Kaixin also discussed her Mandarin homework with her aunt in Mandarin.
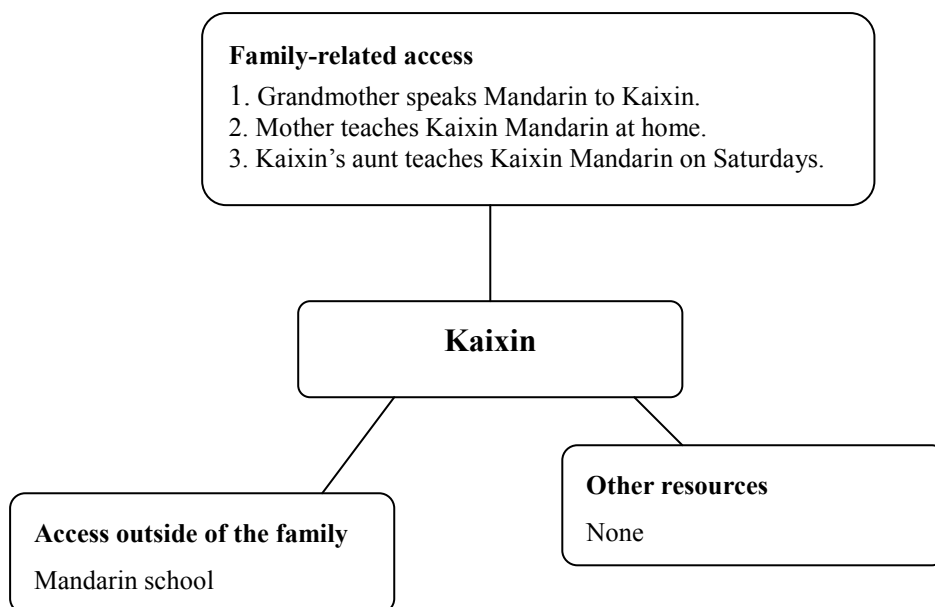
Figure 5.3 Kaixin's access to Mandarin

Kaixin started to go to Mandarin school when she was three years old. She used to go to a Mandarin school, which offered six hours of classes. Kaixin's parents were busy with work and Kaixin's grandmother broke her back and couldn't look after her. They thought the Mandarin school with long hours could not only help her learn Mandarin but also serve as a nursery. When she was five years old, the family situation changed. Therefore, she changed to Hua Hsia Mandarin School.

The family and the Mandarin school were the main access to Mandarin for Kaixin. Kaixin's parents didn't get her extra resources, such as books and videos. Kaixin's mother thought that Mandarin should be and was already a part of life for Kaixin. She didn't think extra resources were necessary. Therefore, in terms of Kaixin's Mandarin learning, the family focused on the work at the Mandarin school.

Curtis

In Curtis family, there were different types of access to Mandarin. Curtis' mother was Curtis' main access to Mandarin. Curtis' mother, Ching-hui, insisted on using Mandarin to communicate with Curtis. She was also the first and primary Mandarin teacher for Curtis. Ching-hui used to be a teacher in Taiwan. She took a lot of effort and applied a systematic method to teach Curtis. She set up a special session every day to sit down with Curtis and had their Mandarin class. In order to keep up with native children's level, Ching-hui used the textbooks used in Taiwan to teach Curtis. In addition to the daily Mandarin class, Ching-hui told Curtis a Chinese bedtime story every night. As Curtis got older, Ching-hui adjusted this story time into reading time. They read a Chinese book together before Curtis went to bed.

Family-related access
1. Mother speaks only Mandarin to Curtis.
2. Mother teaches Curtis Mandarin at home.
3, Contact with relatives in Taiwan

Curtis

Access outside of the family
1. Mandarin school
2. Meeting other children of the same background
3. Regular trips to Taiwan

Other resources
Textbooks in Mandarin from Taiwan
Chinese books
Chinese films
Chinese CDs
Chinese learning websites

Figure 5.4 Curtis' access to Mandarin

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Ching-hui also appreciated that she shouldn't be the only person with whom Curtis could speak Mandarin in the UK and so she started to send Curtis to Mandarin school. She was very pleased with the decision because this access opened more contacts for them. Curtis got a chance to meet other children with the same background; Ching-hui also met a lot of families in the same situation. She sometimes arranged to meet up with other families so as to create opportunities for Curtis to speak Mandarin as well as experience the culture. Moreover, Ching-hui also provided teaching Mandarin to the children during holidays.

Their family in Taiwan was another opportunity for Curtis to gain access to Mandarin and the culture. Curtis' parents took him back to Taiwan regularly to stay with Curtis's maternal family. There he was immersed in a Mandarin speaking environment. According to Ching-hui, Curtis seldom used English when he was in Taiwan. Returning to Taiwan had always been good to enforce and refresh Curtis' learning of Mandarin.

Curtis' parents also provided him with plenty of extra resources; they bought Chinese books and films from Taiwan regularly. The books they provided covered various areas, such as literature, history, science, etc, the idea being that the varied subjects would make learning Mandarin more enjoyable for Curtis. They also helped him to use Mandarin learning websites to learn Mandarin.
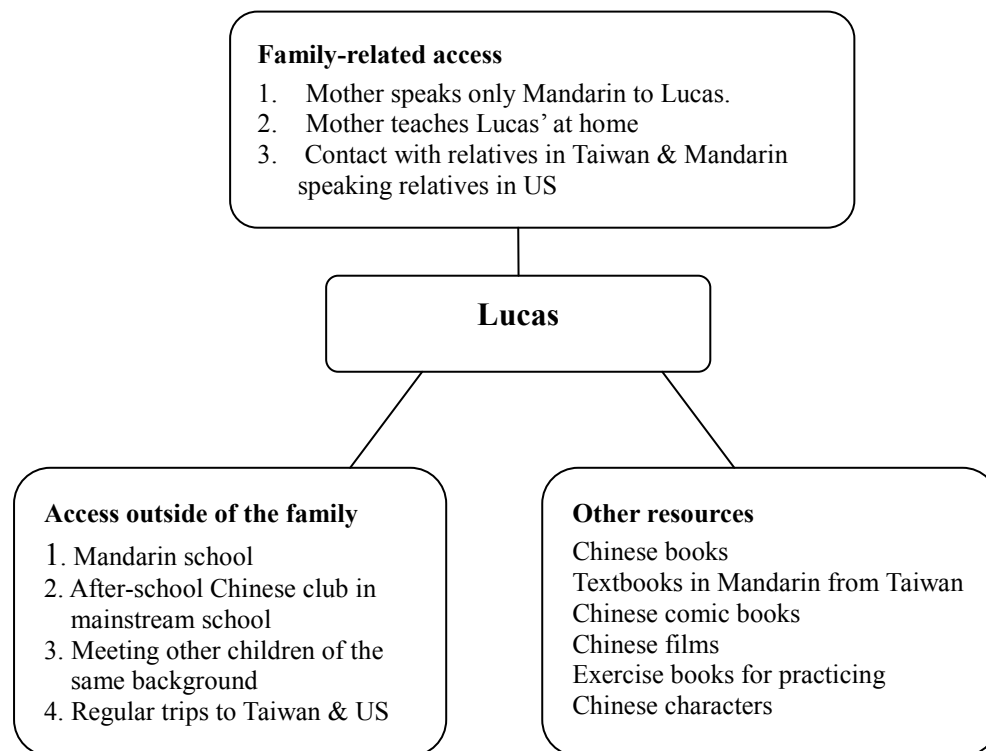
Figure 5.5 Lucas' access to Mandarin

Lucas

For Lucas, the main access to Mandarin was from his mother, Miki.   Like Curtis'

mother, Miki also started to speak Mandarin to Lucas as soon as he was born.   She

spent one hour every day teaching Lucas Mandarin.   The materials she used were

sent by her parents who lived in the U.S.   Lucas' grandparents were also very

concerned about his learning of Mandarin as well.   They called Miki and Lucas

frequently and asked about Lucas' progress in learning Mandarin regularly.   Miki

said:

"I am very lucky to have my parents' support.   My father always asks me what

material Lucas needs and sends us a big parcel every month.   The materials

they have sent include textbooks, comic books, storybooks, exercise books, films and cartoons. Whenever they see something helpful for Lucas to learn Mandarin, they would purchase it and then send it to us. I don't need to worry about getting anything here."

The grandparents not only provided the Chinese learning related materials but also chat to Lucas regularly in Mandarin. Lucas told them what was going on in his life. This regular chat increased the chances for Lucas to use Mandarin as well as enhanced the connection between Lucas and the grandparents. Moreover, Lucas' parents took Lucas to the US to visit the grandparents and other relatives at least once a year. The family sometimes got together in Taiwan since Lucas' great grandparents were living in Taiwan. When they were in Taiwan, Miki arranged for Lucas to join in some children's activities. Because Lucas didn't have any cousins, he could meet some Mandarin speaking friends.

Apart from the family contact, Lucas started to go to Mandarin school two years ago. Even though Miki taught Lucas at home every day, Miki thought that a professional teacher was necessary. In addition to being taught by a professional teacher, another benefit brought by going to Mandarin school was the contact with the community. Miki and Lucas got to know other families with the same background and they met up frequently. Lucas' family knew Curtis' family through Mandarin school. These two families met up very often. Miki stated:

"It is very good that we got to know other families through the Mandarin school. For example, Lucas really likes to play with Curtis and he stayed in Curtis' place at the weekends sometimes. I have learnt a lot from Ching-hui; I

always ask for her suggestions about how to teach Lucas.   She gave me a lot

of good ideas."

When Lucas and Curtis played together, they didn't necessary speak Mandarin all the

time.   However, the adults would remind them and encourage them to speak

Mandarin sometimes.

Caroline

Family-related access
None

Other resources
Chinese books
Chinese films
Chinese music

Caroline

Access outside of the family
1.   Mandarin school
2.   Chinese classes and after-school clubs in mainstream
     school
3.   Private tutor
4.   Attending Chinese cultural activities
5.   Attending a summer camp in China
6. Regular contact with friends made at Chinese summer camp
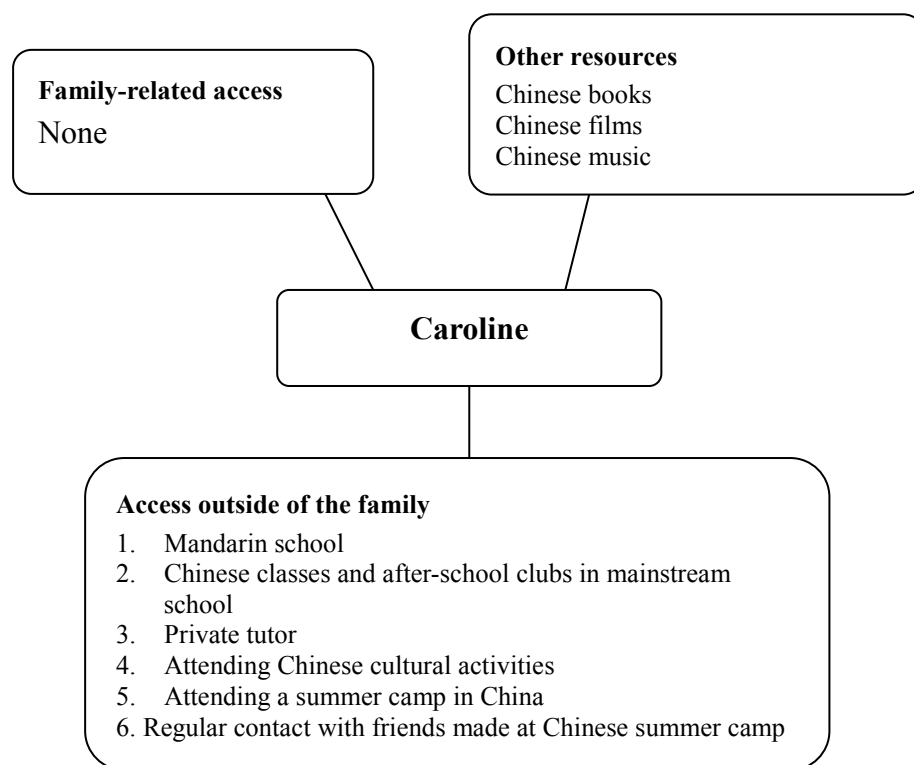
Figure 5.6 Caroline's access to Mandarin

Caroline's parents cannot speak Mandarin and they don't have Chinese relatives.

Therefore, they didn't have convenient or straightforward access to Mandarin.   Since

Caroline was interested in learning Mandarin, Caroline's mother started to look for a

Mandarin school or a class for her.   It took them a long time to find one suitable.

Caroline didn't have an easy time when she started to learn.   When Caroline started to go to Hua Hsia Chinese School, it was set up especially for overseas Chinese, especially for people from Taiwan.   The textbooks used then were from the Taiwanese government, composed especially for helping the children of overseas Taiwanese to learn Mandarin and Chinese culture.   Caroline's mother said:

"We started at Hua Hsia and then we left there because they used the textbooks from Taiwan, which were very useful for families who are originally from Taiwan.   Those books are not so appropriate for families like us, who learn Mandarin as a foreign language.   Moreover, the head teacher then didn't allow teachers to use English to explain in class.   Therefore, my daughter couldn't understand anything and then felt very confused, without knowing what was going on."

Then, Caroline tried another school, which was run by immigrants from Hong Kong. According to Caroline's mother, the school was very good at teaching the writing of Chinese characters.   Caroline learnt a lot of writing but she couldn't speak.   Also, she was the only westerner in that class.   Most of the students there were Cantonese speakers; so the teacher spoke Cantonese in class.   Caroline found herself in the same situation again in that she couldn't understand and had to ask some classmates to translate for her.   Also, the textbooks were from Mainland China and unsuitable for students like Caroline.   She stayed at that school for one year and one term and then gave up.   At the time that Caroline almost gave up going to Mandarin school, Hua Hsia Mandarin School changed the curriculum to accommodate the increasing number of students without a Chinese background.   Finally, Caroline stayed there learning happily.   Moreover, she met some friends like her at a similar age.   They

always spent the whole afternoon together after Mandarin school.   Sometimes, they got together on Saturday and discussed the homework from the Mandarin school.

The mainstream school Caroline went to started to offer Mandarin classes and an after school club.   Caroline took Mandarin classes as well as joining in the after school club.   Caroline thought the Mandarin classes in school were very easy for her. However, she regarded the classes as a good opportunity to review what she had learnt.

In addition to Mandarin school and the mainstream school, Caroline's parents sought other opportunities and access to Mandarin for her.   Firstly, they found a private tutor; the tutor taught her and another girl who attended the same Mandarin class at Hua Hsia Mandarin School as Caroline.   They had two hours every week; the tutor reviewed the schoolwork for them as well as helped them prepare for the GCSE examination.   Caroline's mother usually sat at the other side of the room and observed the class progress.   Secondly, the parents bought various Mandarin related resources for her, such as Chinese books, films and music.   The whole family usually watched Chinese films together.   Moreover, the family arranged to attend Chinese culture related activities, such as exhibitions, workshops, festivals and restaurants. Caroline's parents arranged a summer camp in China for her.   This summer camp was held for students interested in learning Mandarin and Chinese culture.   Caroline spent forty days in China.   This summer camp widened her perspective of China and improved her Mandarin significantly.   There she met a lot of good friends.   She was still in contact with them and met up with them regularly.

Philip

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┌─────────────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ **Family-related access**│              │ **Other resources**          │
│ None                     │              │ Chinese books                │
│                          │              │ Chinese cartoons             │
└─────────────────────────┘              └──────────────────────────────┘
              \                                  /
               \                                /
              ┌──────────────────────────────┐
              │          **Philip**           │
              └──────────────────────────────┘
                            │
              ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────┐
              │ **Access outside of the family**             │
              │ 1.  Mandarin school                          │
              │ 2.  After-school club in mainstream school   │
              │ 3.  Private tutor                            │
              │ 4.  Attending Chinese cultural events        │
              │ 5.  Going to Chinese restaurants regularly   │
              │ 6.  Travelling around China                  │
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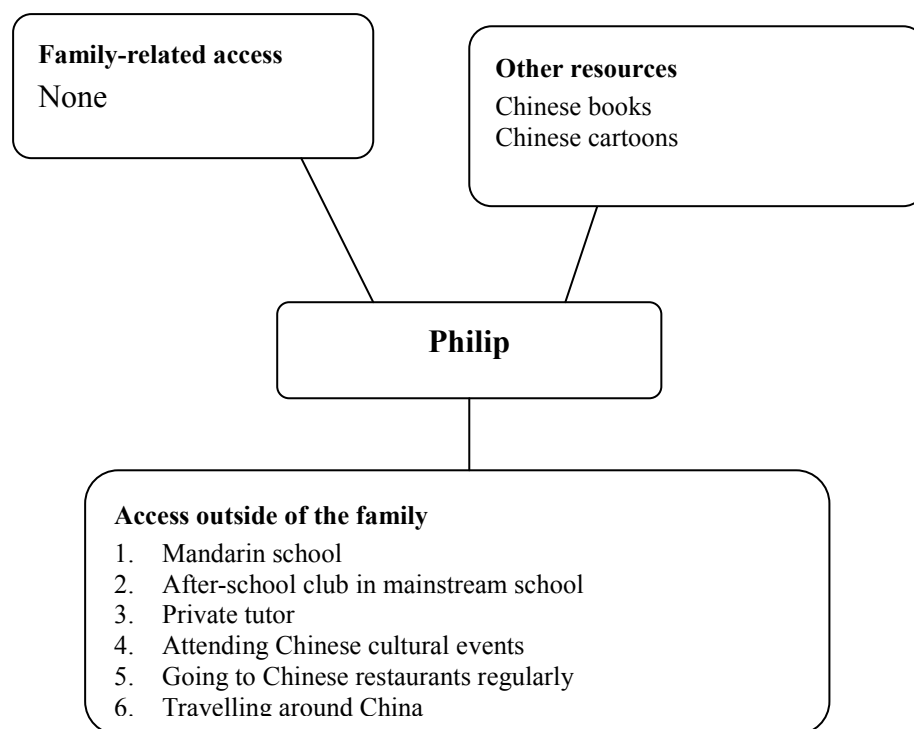
Figure 5.7 Philip's access to Mandarin

Philip's family was in a similar situation to Caroline's family. His family doesn't have Chinese background and therefore didn't have a convenient access to Mandarin. Philip's first access to Mandarin was joining in the after school club. When he started to be interested in learning Mandarin, the first contact was through Lucas' mother. Philip and Lucas were very good friends in school. They always wanted to do things together. They went to the Mandarin club together. When Philip's mother asked some advice from Miki, Lucas' mother, Miki suggested that Philip should go to the Mandarin school with Lucas. Philip did so.

Apart from going to the after school club and Mandarin school on Sunday, Philip also had a private tutor to teach him every week. Since Lucas' Mandarin was much more

advanced than Philip's, Philip wanted to work very hard to catch up with Lucas. Then he could go to the same class as Lucas.   His tutor went to teach Philip one hour every week to review the schoolwork from the Mandarin school.

Additionally, Philip's parents also provided him with other contacts with Chinese culture.   They took him to Chinese restaurants regularly; they attended Chinese themed exhibitions and workshops.   Moreover, they arranged a trip to China with Philip.   There Philip was able to use Mandarin to greet people and have simple conversations.

In this section, I have examined the children's access to Mandarin and their experience of learning Mandarin.   In the families with some Chinese connections, the family was the main access to the language and Chinese culture.   The parents with a Chinese background gave the children direct support.   In the families without any Chinese background, they didn't have a direct access through the family.   They found other alternatives to be able to gain access to the language and the culture. Nevertheless, the most common access to Mandarin amongst the six families was going to Mandarin school.

5.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have examined the outer layer of the data, the ethnographic context of the families.   I have discussed the outer layer from three perspectives: the social and cultural background, the linguistic background and the families' access to Mandarin.   The data has shown that the social and cultural background had an important impact on the way and the extent of the parents' support of their children's

learning of Mandarin.   The parents' social background shaped the parents' attitudes towards the learning of Mandarin.   The parents' linguistic background is an important factor affecting how parents provided their support.   The access to Mandarin allowed us to perceive the extent and different types of support within different families.   All of these factors are interwoven and lead to our further discussion of the middle layer- supporting strategies and the inner layer-pedagogic strategies.

Chapter 6

Data Analysis-Middle Layer

Chapter 6 Data Analysis-Middle Layer

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Motivation

6.2.1 Families with both parents having a Chinese background

6.2.2 Families with only one parent having a Chinese background

6.2.3 The families without any Chinese background

6.3 Cultural Awareness

6.4 The Definition of Culture

6.4.1 Aesthetic sense of culture

6.4.2 Sociological sense of culture

6.5 Summary

Chapter 6 Data Analysis-Middle Layer

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the outer layer of analysis: the ethnographic context of the families.　I examined the families' ethnographic context from three perspectives: the social background of these families, the linguistic background and their access and the history of learning Mandarin.　Those ethnographic factors have a crucial influence on the way in which the parents support and assist their children learning Mandarin.　In this chapter, I discuss the middle layer of the analysis: the methods and strategies the parents adopted to help their children learn Mandarin.

I use the terms "methods" and "strategies" to describe parental support that was planned carefully and carried out deliberately instead of occurring randomly and naturally.　All of the parents in this study chose Mandarin as a second or a foreign language for their children after careful consideration and evaluation.　The support they offered and the learning activities they performed with their children was considered and planned explicitly.　Although some of the learning activities occurred daily, they were elaborately set up initially.　With the parents' and the children's efforts, these learning activities turned into their daily routine.

In this middle layer, I discuss the parental support from two perspectives: motivation and cultural awareness.　Motivation and cultural awareness are two important factors affecting language learning.　As there are different backgrounds, the parents adopted different ways in which to raise their children's motivation and facilitate their awareness of Chinese culture.　Moreover, with different abilities of Mandarin and

different learning experiences, the parents applied various methods to teach their children.   Even though some of the parents had limited Mandarin ability, they found methods to assist their children.

6.2 Motivation

Motivation has been identified in the literature as one of the most influential factors in second language acquisition and learning (Dörnyei, 1994a, 1994b, 2001a, 2001b, 2005; Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Lamb, 2004; Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh, 2006; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009; Gu, 2009; Murray, Gao and Lamb, 2011).   Therefore, the methods by which to raise learners' motivation are of great interest to language teachers.   Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) undertook the pioneering work to identify the nature of motivation specific to language study.   Gardner highlighted two different types of motivation: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is the desire to learn the target language in order to communicate with people from the target culture and to identify closely with as well as to integrate into the target culture.   Instrumental motivation is the goal to gain some social or economic reward through learning a new language, and thus refers to a more functional reason for language learning (Gardner, 1959).   In this study, the parents, regardless of backgrounds and Mandarin ability, made great efforts to improve their children's motivation.   Moreover, because of their backgrounds and Mandarin ability, they applied different methods to facilitate their children's motivation.   In order to foster integrative motivation, the three categories of the families: the family with both parents having Chinese background, the families with only one parent having Chinese background and the families without any Chinese background, used different methods to enhance the sense of "identity" and

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"identification" of the children. As for the instrumental motivation, because the children in this study were young, the parents only explained the foreseeable benefits of learning Mandarin to the children instead of focusing on raising their instrumental motivation.

6.2.1 Families with both parents having a Chinese background

For families with Chinese background, learning Mandarin is learning a heritage language. Chinese identity was used to inspire and encourage the children to learn Mandarin by the parents of Chinese ethnic origin. These parents hoped that their children could retain their heritage as well as the heritage language. All of the children in this study were born and educated in the Western society, including those of purely Chinese and mixed Chinese Western ethnicity. In their mainstream schools, these children had been offered the chance to learn French, Spanish, Latin and Ancient Greek. Mandarin was either not on the curriculum at all or classes were provided as after school clubs. In order to motivate these children to learn Mandarin, which was not being learnt by their school friends, the parents took steps to explain the ethnic background and identity for their children.

When compared with the other families in this study, the recognition of identity for the families of purely Chinese ethnic origin was not a difficult issue. Sophie's parents are from China. They had frequent contact with their friends and relatives in China and they involved Sophie in these interactions. For example, when they telephoned friends or relatives in China, they let her take over the conversation when they had finished. Sophie was also encouraged to join her parents in writing and posting letters to relatives she knew in China. These engagements were to familiarize Sophie with her kinsfolk in China. For Sophie, it was clear that she had

grandparents and relatives in China; they were far away but they were real.

"Sophie has only been back to China once when she was four years old.   My
parents live in a small village.   Sophie was very ill because of the weather and
the unhygienic conditions.   We will take her back again when she is older but it
is not easy now.   But we don't want her to forget her grandparents, uncles,
aunts and cousins in China.   We call them and write to them very often.   She
was very shy and didn't know what to say to them before but now she likes to
speak to them.   We also taught her how to make a phone call to China and how
to post a letter to China.   She likes to look up the number in our address books
and dial the number for us." (Sophie's father)

In addition to emphasizing the connection with China, the food in the family is
another method Sophie's parents used to enhance the Chinese identity.   Food is of
vital importance in Chinese culture.   Although Sophie's parents had been living in
the UK for more than twenty years, they remained unaccustomed to Western food.
Sophie's family mainly ate Chinese food.   By doing so, Sophie's parents believed
that they could introduce Sophie and her sister to the traditional food and cuisine
people eat in China.   Moreover, Sophie's parents also insisted that Sophie should
use chopsticks instead of cutlery when they had Chinese food.   Sophie's mother
regularly prepared a lunch box for Sophie to take to school.

"I don't feel embarrassed that I have different food from my friends.   I
am very proud of the lunch my mum prepares for me.   My friends in
school   always ask me what those are and what they taste like.   I am
very happy to share with them.   I sometimes take extra food to share

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with my friends." (Sophie)

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │     Sophie      │
                    └────────┬────────┘
                             │
              ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
              │ Recognition of Chinese       │
              │ heritage and identity        │
              └──────┬───────────────┬───────┘
                     │               │
        ┌────────────┴───┐     ┌─────┴──────────────┐
        │ Frequent contact│    │ Having Chinese food │
        │ with friends and│    │                     │
        │ relatives in    │    │                     │
        │ China           │    │                     │
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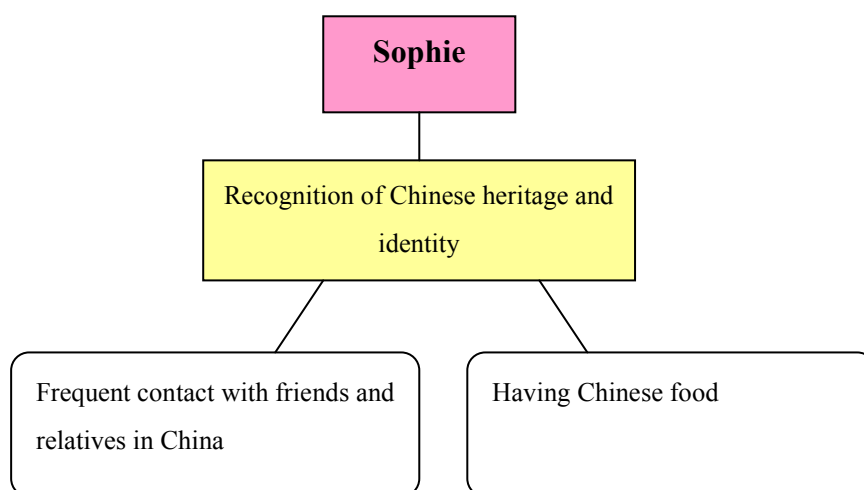
Figure 6.1 Methods that Sophie's parents applied to enhance motivation

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Sophie's parents made considerable effort for Sophie to feel included in the Western society in which she was living and for Sophie to be reminded of her Chinese heritage background. They had frequent interactions with non-Chinese families and friends. On the other hand, they kept regular contact with their relatives and friends in China.

"I think I am both (British and Chinese) and I am very happy I am both…I have two schools to go to; one is my English school and one is my Chinese School...They are different. I have different teachers and friends and I like them all…I am happy that I can speak both English and Mandarin. I can help my cousins in China with their English. Sometimes they ask me some English words and I can explain to them in Mandarin."   (Sophie)

Kaixin is the other child in this study for whom with both parents are of Chinese heritage.   Unlike Sophie's family, both Kaixin's maternal and paternal families are settled in the UK.   As mentioned in Chapter 6 (the outer layer of data analysis), Kaixin's maternal grandmother lived with Kaixin's family and the maternal relatives assembled at Kaixin's home every weekend.   The whole family cooked and ate together.   The children sat down and did their homework from Chinese school together.   This occasion provided Kaixin and the other children opportunities to experience family life and community life in Chinese culture. Moreover, the children got the chance to learn Mandarin together and to help each other.

"This is what we usually did when we were in Malaysia.   Families like to get together.   That is what family means to us…We all think this is a good way to encourage our children to learn Mandarin.   They enjoy spending time with each other, no matter whether playing or studying.   Our children never questioned why they needed to learn Mandarin and go to Mandarin school because we are all doing the same thing." (Kaixin's mother)

Kaixin

Recognition of Chinese heritage and identity

The maternal relatives assembled at Kaixin's home every week, experiencing family and community life

Having Chinese food
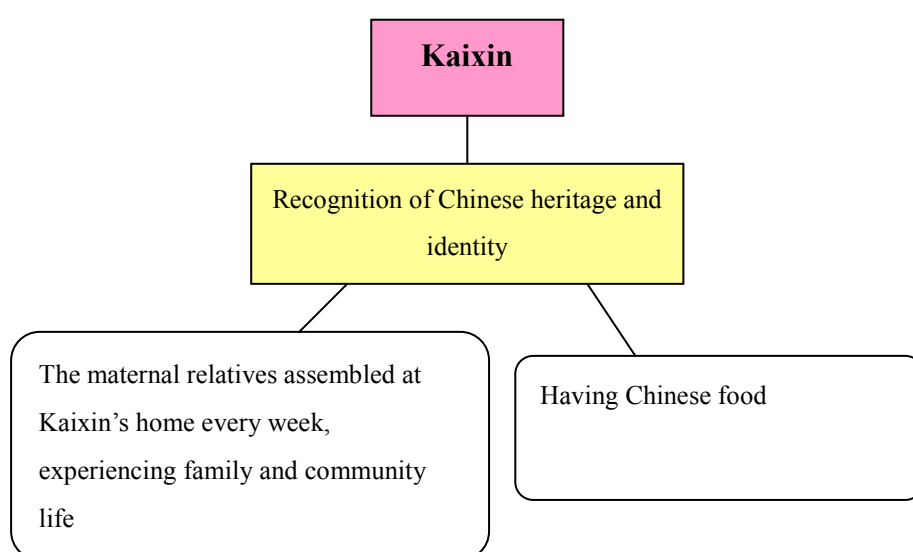
Figure 6.2 Methods that Kaixin's parents applied to enhance motivation

In this section, I discussed Sophie and Kaixin (both of whom have exclusively Chinese heritage) and the methods by which Sophie's and Kaixin's parents enhanced their children's identity.   Sophie's parents maintained close ties with their relatives in China, which gave Sophie easy access to her relatives and led to her feeling of their existence and involvement.   In addition, Sophie's parents also acted as a role model for her, speaking Mandarin at home and living a life in a Chinese style, one example of which was their almost exclusively eating Chinese food.   Kaixin's parents also maintained a good link with their family and community.   The difference between Kaixin's and Sophie's family is that Kaixin's extended family was in the UK.   The family and community actively met up, exchanged life experience and shared responsibilities. The model of family and community life assured Kaixin of her identity and her Chinese heritage.   Both children were clearly aware of their Chinese identity and were willing to learn Mandarin happily.

6.2.2 Families with only one parent having a Chinese background

In the families with only one parent of a Chinese background, it takes great effort from both parents to foster and retain their children's perception of Chinese heritage. Comparing these families to those with both parents of Chinese background, the fact that there is only one parent with Chinese background could be more challenging when dealing with the child's recognition of their Chinese heritage background.   Curtis and Lucas are both from mixed families, in which the mothers are of a Chinese background and the fathers have no Chinese background.   Both of the children were born outside Chinese speaking countries and were educated in the UK.   They grew up in Western society and were immersed in Western culture.

Because of their environment and their Western fathers, life in those two families was a mix of Chinese and West and tended more to the Western way of life. In addition, neither Curtis' nor Lucas' father could speak Mandarin and the language used between the two sets of parents was English. All of these factors increase the difficulties for the children to identify themselves with Chinese heritage. Curtis' and Lucas' mothers had realized that it would be a tough task and could be a perpetual tug- of-war to retain their children's Chinese identity and their ability in the Mandarin language. They had to be patient and persevere.
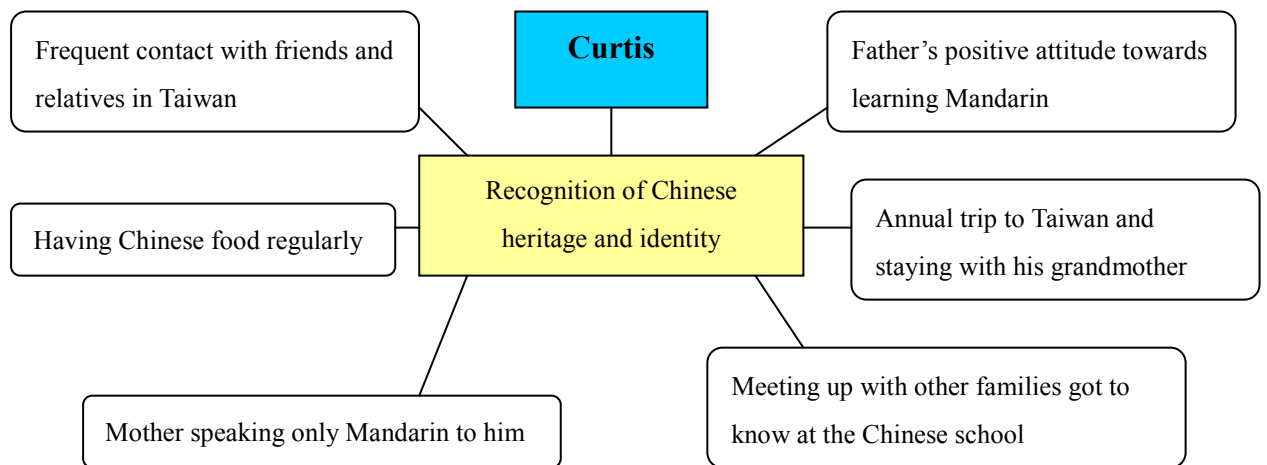
Figure 6.3 Methods that Curtis' parents applied to enhance motivation

Curtis mother, Ching-hui, is originally from Taiwan. She had been living in Europe for fifteen years. Ching-hui and her husband, John, agreed that it was necessary for Curtis to recognize his Chinese heritage and to be able to speak Mandarin. One of the methods Ching-hui used to help Curtis accept his Chinese identity was their close relationship with their family and relatives in Taiwan. Apart from daily contact, Ching-hui took Curtis to Taiwan every year and he would stay there with his grandmother for two months. This was to provide Curtis an

opportunity to stay with his Chinese family in order to experience a purely Chinese way of living and to be immersed in a Mandarin speaking environment.   In Taiwan, he usually went to summer school with his cousins.   This kind of summer school is held by mainstream schools during summer holidays to help students to revise the school work taught during the previous term.   In addition to the revision of the school work, there are various extracurricular activities.   Curtis' annual trip to Taiwan was the trip he most looked forward to.   It also had been a stimulus for him to retain his Mandarin ability.

"I like to go to Taiwan.   I like to play with my cousins and my friends there…My Mandarin is good.   I can say what I want to say to them and I can understand them.   But I forget some characters.   I need to study more at home with my mummy…I am going to Taiwan next year on my own.   I am very excited to fly there and see my grand mum and cousins on my own."

(Curtis)

On the other hand, during his normal daily life in the UK, Ching-hui acted as a role model for Curtis: she only spoke to him in Mandarin, regularly cooked Chinese food and provided Curtis with a variety of Chinese resources.   Ching-hui also arranged frequent meetings with other families of similar backgrounds. Sometimes those families got together at the home of one family or at a Chinese restaurant in order to eat together.   Sometimes they did other activities together, such as going for a day trip, a picnic, or to a museum.   The parents took the chance to share their experiences of how they helped their children to learn Mandarin and other issues while the children played with each other.   Once in a while, Ching-hui held learning parties at their home.   The children got together to have a Mandarin

session led by Ching-hui or another parent. The topics were various: Chinese stories, poems, songs and traditional games. Both the parents and children enjoyed taking part in these sessions. These families were like a small community, where the children and the parents could find a sense of belonging and where they could share their knowledge and help each other. Having close interaction with these families, Curtis got to know that there were many other children, who were in the same situation as him and that learning Mandarin was important for them.
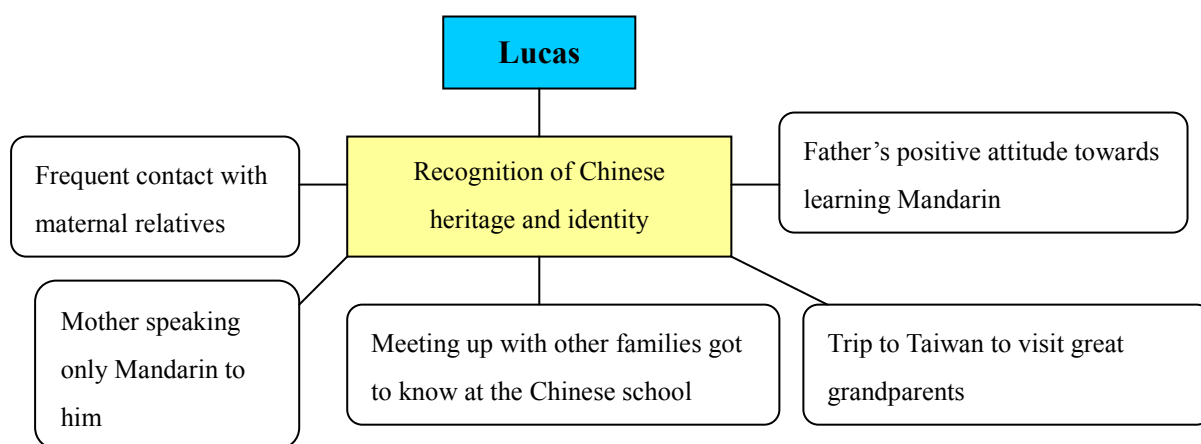
Figure 6.4 Methods that Lucas' parents applied to enhance motivation

The other family in this category is Lucas' family. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Lucas' mother, Miki, was born in Taiwan but educated in Japan and the US. Her father is from Taiwan and her mother is half Taiwanese and half Japanese; the family moved to Japan when Miki was four months old and stayed there for twenty years. Miki's parents valued their Chinese origin and made a lot of efforts helping Miki retain her Mandarin ability. Placing the same value on Mandarin as her parents had done, Miki had been making similar efforts for Lucas. Miki and her husband both agreed that Mandarin was the second language Lucas' should learn.

Therefore, Miki had only spoken to Lucas in Mandarin since he was born. Miki maintained close contact with her family which aided in enhancing Lucas' perception of his Chinese heritage and identity. Before Lucas' family moved to the UK, they had lived in the US, where Miki's parents and sister had lived nearby. The close relationship between families enhanced Lucas' awareness of his Chinese heritage. It also provided Lucas an environment in which to speak Mandarin. Miki maintained that close link with her family although their immediate family had moved to the UK. Miki's parents frequently telephoned Miki and Lucas and Lucas' parents arranged annual family trips to US to visit Lucas' grandparents.

Lucas had already been to Taiwan twice when he visited his grandparents (who were also visiting) and his great grandparents. The great grandparents were ninety years old and could be said to be a living history book. Their life experience was interesting and exciting to Lucas.

"I know a lot about the history of China and Taiwan and I know who my great great great great grandparents were! My great grandparents told me a lot of stories; they also told me what their life was like when they were young, even when they were eight years old!" (Lucas)

The trips to meet their families from China and Taiwan not only provided opportunities for Lucas to speak Mandarin but also enhanced his understanding and recognition of his Chinese identity.

Lucas was the only child in the extended family and so he didn't have any cousins in Taiwan. Although he had grandparents, uncles and aunts, Miki thought it would

be beneficial for Lucas to learn with other children at the similar age.   Therefore, Miki sent Lucas to Chinese school at the weekend.   Going to Chinese school was for Lucas to learn more systematically from experienced teachers and to get the chance to get to know other children of similar background.   Moreover, Miki got to know a lot of families in the same situation and started to maintain regular contact with them.   Curtis, mentioned above, and Lucas got to know each other in Chinese school; their two families met up regularly and the children could play together and do their homework from Mandarin school together.

In Curtis' and Lucas' family, both mothers made a great effort to retain their child's recognition of their Chinese heritage and identity and to maintain their motivation for learning Mandarin.   Living outside Chinese society and having a non-Chinese spouse had increased the difficulty of this task.   Luckily, both Curtis' and Lucas' fathers were very supportive of their child's learning of Mandarin.   Although they didn't speak Mandarin, they cared about the children's progress in learning Mandarin.   At home, the conversations between their wives and their children were in Mandarin, which they couldn't really understand.   Although they sometimes felt excluded, they could understand the effort their wives were making and were always supportive.   In order to encourage their children to learn Mandarin, they motivated them by showing they placed value on learning Mandarin and their interest in the child's learning progress.   Both fathers usually accompanied their children to Mandarin school on Sundays.   They waited at the school and talked with other parents.   They discussed their child's progress with the teachers and questioned whether there was anything they could or should do to help them at home.

Lucas' father checked if he completed his homework before he went to Mandarin school every week. Sometimes, when Lucas forgot to speak Mandarin to his mother, he would remind Lucas to speak Mandarin to his mother. Lucas attended a Mandarin speech competition in 2006, which was attended by students from the whole of UK. Lucas' father practiced with him again and again and although he couldn't help him with his pronunciation, he gave him suggestions about how to present himself in front of an audience. Lucas was awarded second place in that competition.

Curtis' father often discussed with Curtis what he had learnt in Mandarin school and would try to learn some words and phrases from Curtis. He also attended the term assembly, in which each class would present a performance. Every year, in order to show his respect and care for the family in Taiwan, he would try to go to Taiwan to join Curtis, Ching-hui and the family there.

In this section, I have looked at how two sets of parents, in which one parent has and one does not have a Chinese background, determined to foster their children's Chinese identity and retain their Mandarin language ability. Immersed in a non-Chinese society and having one non-Chinese origin parent, it requires extra effort and cooperation from both of the parents. In this study, Curtis' and Lucas' parents were well aware of the effort they needed to make in order to motivate their child's learning Mandarin and perception of their Chinese identity; in both families, the parents worked together and supported each other to a great extent.

6.2.3 The families without any Chinese background

As mentioned earlier, integrative motivation is the desire of the learners to be closely identified with the people from the target culture and the desire to be able to communicate with them. The first two groups of families we discussed above, those with both parents of Chinese origin and those with one Chinese origin parent, have direct links with Chinese society. Those families have friends and relatives living in Chinese society and these parents used the links and kinship to foster their children's integrative motivation. However, in the families without any Chinese background, there are neither direct links nor kinship with people having Chinese background. In order to raise their children's motivation, the parents actively sought links with Chinese communities and encouraged their children to take part in the activities within the communities.
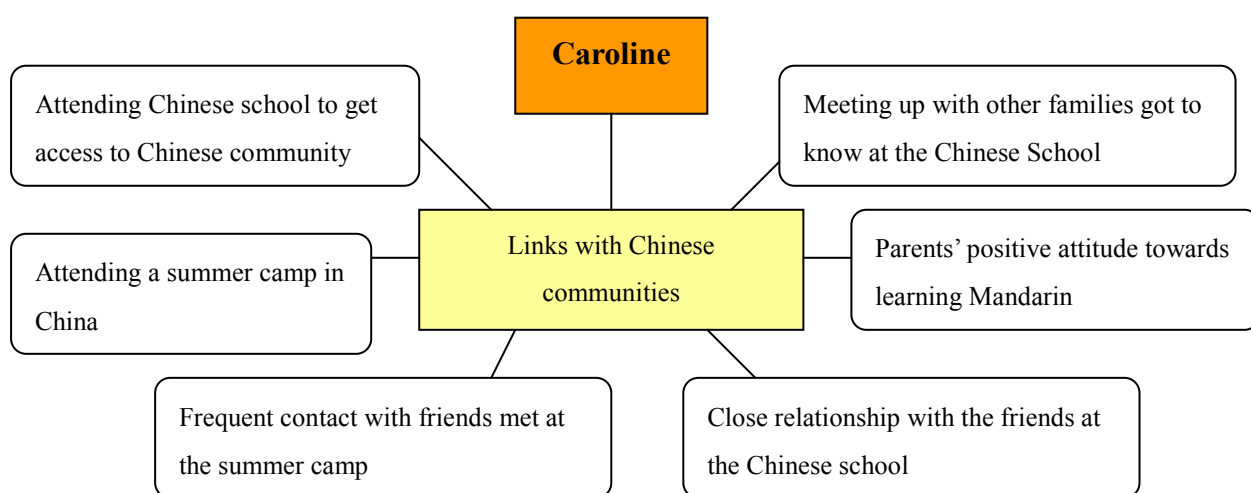
Figure 6.5 Methods that Caroline's parents applied to enhance motivation

Caroline's father is Australian; her mother is Thai.   The family stayed in Hong Kong for two years for the parents' work and then moved to London.   When the family was in Hong Kong, the parents witnessed the booming market in China and the growing interest in and importance of learning Mandarin.   When their children got the chance to choose another language to learn, they suggested that they should learn Mandarin.

For Caroline, unlike the other Modern Foreign languages she learnt in school, Mandarin was a very foreign and distant language.   She didn't have any friends or relatives who could speak Mandarin and she couldn't see the immediate purpose for learning Mandarin.   In order to motivate Caroline, her mother sent her to a complementary school to learn Mandarin as well as to get to know friends who were also learning Mandarin.

> "The Chinese school is like a small Chinese community for us and it was our first step to meet some Chinese speaking families.   I think Caroline needs to know Chinese speaking friends or friends with Chinese background. Then she will feel closer to the language.   Also she can get some chance to practice her Mandarin and get to experience Chinese culture."
>
> (Caroline's mother)

Caroline got to know some good friends at her Chinese school; one was from a family with Chinese background and one was from a family without any Chinese background.   Because they were of the same age and they went to the same mainstream school, they were very close to each other.   Before going to Chinese school every week, they got together to revise the work in Mandarin school and helped each other to complete the homework.   After Chinese school, the children

always stayed for a long time happily chatting with each other. The parents became good friends through their children and were very pleased to see their children's high motivation and involvement in learning Mandarin.

> "I like to go to Chinese school to learn Mandarin. I like my teacher and my friends there. We do a lot of different things in Chinese school, not just study Mandarin. I also got to know a lot of good friends there. I like to spend time with them." (Caroline)

Caroline attended a summer camp in China, at which she studied Mandarin and experienced Chinese culture; moreover, she got to know many friends from different countries who were also interested in learning Mandarin. Caroline's parents encouraged her to maintain contact with these friends. Caroline emailed and shared her experience and progress of learning Mandarin with these friends outside the UK. Caroline regularly met up with her UK based friends from the camp and they exchanged their opinions of learning Mandarin. This group of friends promised each other that they would go to China again together and their Mandarin should have improved a lot so as they could use it to communicate in China.

The other family without any Chinese background is Philip's family. Philip started to learn Mandarin because his best friend, Lucas, the boy we mentioned earlier, was learning the language. The two boys often played together at school and after school. At the weekends, because Lucas had to go to Mandarin school, he couldn't get together with Philip. Lucas told Philip about a lot of interesting things he did at Mandarin school. Philip had been very curious about the

"Mandarin school". He was very disappointed when Lucas told him that he couldn't go because the school was only for children like him, those who have Chinese background, and who needed to learn Mandarin in order to speak to their family in China. When their mainstream school started to offer after school Chinese club, Lucas joined in the club. Philip was very happy to learn that the club was for every student; he told his parents he wanted to learn Mandarin, like what Lucas did. Philip started to learn Mandarin at the after school club. His parents also arranged for him to attend Lucas' Mandarin school.

Philip's father stated:

> "We gave Philip a lot of support and we thought carefully before we decided to let him go to Chinese school. Mandarin has a lot of appeal when you think about it. Therefore, since Philip really likes to learn Mandarin, we do our best to support him."

In the Chinese school, Philip got to know a lot of friends; some of them had a Chinese background and some of them didn't. Philip's parents were very surprised to see the number of children, especially the children like Philip without any Chinese background, that were learning Mandarin. The parents got together very often and the children compared their recent achievement in Mandarin.

> "The school is like a big family. It doesn't matter that we don't have any Chinese background. We got to know a lot of Chinese families there. The parents there support each other and each other's children. We feel like family members and the parents and the children do a lot of things together."
>
> (Philip's mother)

"Some friends from English school want to play football with me; sometimes there are friends' birthday parties. I cannot go because I need to go to Chinese school…but I don't feel bad. I like to go to Chinese school. I have a lot of friends there. We learn Mandarin together. During the break time, we play football and some games together. It is really fun!" (Philip)

Moreover, Philip went to China with his parents. The trip to China had widened his perception of Chinese world and had enhanced his motivation of learning Mandarin.
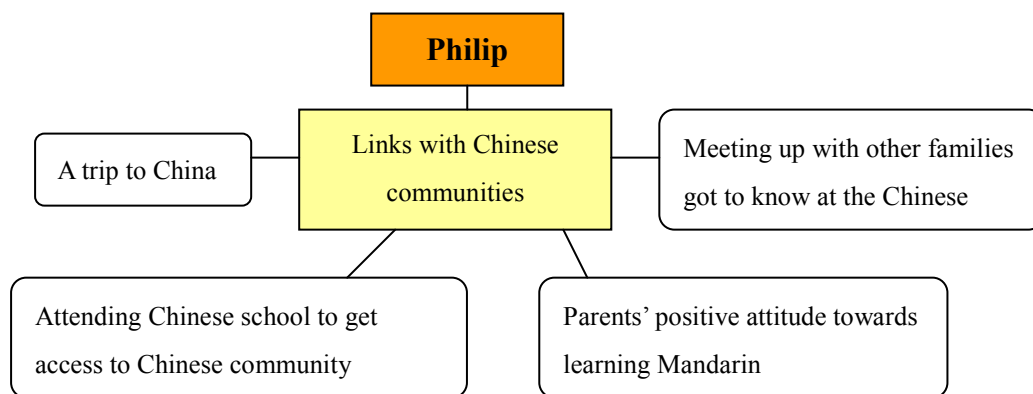
Figure 6.6 Methods that Philip's parents applied to enhance motivation

In this section, I discussed how the parents without any Chinese background supported their children's learning of Mandarin and what they did to reinforce the children's motivation. Because of the lack of direct links with the Chinese community, the parents actively sought access to it. The parents sent their children to Chinese school to learn Mandarin also with the hope of getting access to the Chinese community. In Chinese school, the families met not only families with a Chinese background but also those in the same situation as them. The two

families in this study got together with other families frequently in order to encourage their children to use Mandarin outside of the classroom. Moreover, the parents also wanted to keep a close connection with the Chinese community so that their children would feel less distant from Mandarin. Both Caroline and Philip had close contact with friends they had met at the Chinese school. They identified themselves as members of this society and took learning Mandarin as a necessary and a pleasant task to stay in this community.

Families	Methods	Application
Families of purely Chinese ethnic origin		
Sophie	Recognition of Chinese heritage and identity	1. Frequent contact with friends and relatives in China: telephone and letters 2. Chinese life style: having Chinese food
Kaixin	Recognition of Chinese heritage and identity	Weekly assembling of maternal relatives at Kaixin's home, experiencing family and community life
Mixed Chinese Western families		
Curtis	Recognition of Chinese heritage and identity	1. Mother speaking only Mandarin to him 2. Father's positive attitude towards learning Mandarin 3. Having Chinese food regularly 4. Frequent contact with friends and relatives in Taiwan 5. Annual trip to Taiwan and staying with his grandmother 6. Meeting up with other families got to know at the Chinese school 7. A variety of Chinese resources
Lucas	Recognition of Chinese heritage and identity	1. Mother speaking only Mandarin to him 2. Father's positive attitude towards learning Mandarin 3. Frequent contact with maternal relatives 4. Trip to Taiwan to visit great grandparents 5. Meeting up with other families got to know at the Chinese school
Families without any Chinese background		
Caroline	Close links with Chinese communities	1. Parents' positive attitude towards learning Mandarin 2. Attending Chinese school to get access to Chinese community 3. Close relationship with the friends at the Chinese school 4. Meeting up with other families got to know at the Chinese School 5. Attending a summer camp in China 6. Frequent contact with friends met at the

		summer camp
Philip	Close links with Chinese communities	1. Parents' positive attitude towards learning Mandarin 2. Attending Chinese school to get access to Chinese community 3. Meeting up with other families got to know at the Chinese school 4. A trip to China

Table 6.1 Methods applied by the parents to enhance their child's motivation

6.3 Cultural Awareness

"Language is one of the most observable expressions of culture" (Ellis, 1985). Language and culture have a very close relationship such that language has to be taught in relation to its culture. Language learning is regarded as a kind of "acculturation", as a process of familiarization or assimilation with a new culture including 'new codes of expression, new values, and new norms of conduct' (Ellis, 1985; Puente, 1997; Gieve, 1999). Language learners need to learn about the target culture as well as the language in order to learn how to communicate in the way the speakers of the target language do. The assimilation of the target culture which results in acculturation will encourage communicative competence and nurture positive attitudes towards the target language, hence facilitating its acquisition (Byram, 1997, 2008, 2012; Byram and Feng, 2004; Kramsch, 2005, 2010; Arens, 2009, 2010)

Schumann's model (1978a) of language acquisition linked proficiency in a second language to the level of acculturation. According to Schumann, second language learners who were low in acculturation to a target language community failed to progress beyond the early stages of language acquisition because the need for

language was for basic information exchange as opposed to social identification or the realization of personal attitudes (Ellis, 1994). In Schuman's Nativization model (1978b), he proposed that social and psychological distances mediated between acculturation and second language acquisition. Social distance refers to the equality of the social status of each culture and the social interaction between the language learner and the target language group. It was related to the integrative and instrumental motivation in learning the target culture, which in turn affects the attitude of the learner towards the target language. Psychological distance is the result of factors such as levels of language shock, culture shock, motivation and the ego boundaries of individual learners' (McLaughlin, 1987; Schumann, 1978b). It explains the language learner's comfort with the process of learning a new language. Language learning is therefore significantly affected by social and psychological distance. Exposure to the target culture can minimize this distance and enhance language learning.

6.4 The Definition of Culture

Cultural awareness is crucial to language learning as mentioned above. However, it is not easy to define what culture is. Both Nemni (1992) and Street (1993) pointed out that culture was difficult to define, particularly so in an increasingly international world. Nevertheless, the development of the incorporation of culture into language teaching has improved a current understanding of culture,

On a general level, Lado (1957) defined culture as "the ways of a people". This perspective incorporates both 'material' aspects of culture that are easily seen and 'non-material' aspects that are more difficult to observe. In terms of "culture" in

language teaching, Stern (1983, 1992) posited the cultural aspect in his three-level framework, which has great influence on current second language and foreign language pedagogy.   Stern's three-level framework for L2/FL teaching theory includes level one- a foundational level, level two- an inter-level and level three- a practical level.   The foundational level is based on the social sciences, including: linguistics, educational, anthropological, sociological and sociolinguistics theories. Ethnographic or cultural description of the target language is the essence of the inter-level.   The socio-cultural component is the foundation of the practical level. This framework emphasizes the inclusion of culture in language teaching.

Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi (1990, p. 3-4) defined culture shown in the materials for learning languages by outlining four senses of culture: aesthetic, sociological, semantic and pragmatic or sociolinguistic senses.   The aesthetic sense includes the media, the cinema, music and literature.   The sociological sense refers to the organization, family, home life, interpersonal relations, customs, material conditions, and work and leisure.   The semantic sense of culture is linked to a conceptual system of a culture, which in turn, conditions the perceptions and thought processes of the people in the culture.   Their pragmatic or sociolinguistic sense encompasses the background knowledge, social and paralinguistic skills, and language code which are necessary for successful communication.

In addition to raise children's motivation for learning Mandarin, the parents in this study also made a huge effort in developing their children's awareness of Chinese culture.   In the following section, I discuss how these parents enhanced the children's awareness of Chinese culture by adopting the senses of culture suggested by Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi (1999).   However, because the parents in this study

are not professional language teachers and their support of cultural awareness did not occur in classrooms, I investigate into the two general senses: the aesthetic sense and the sociological sense in this middle layer.
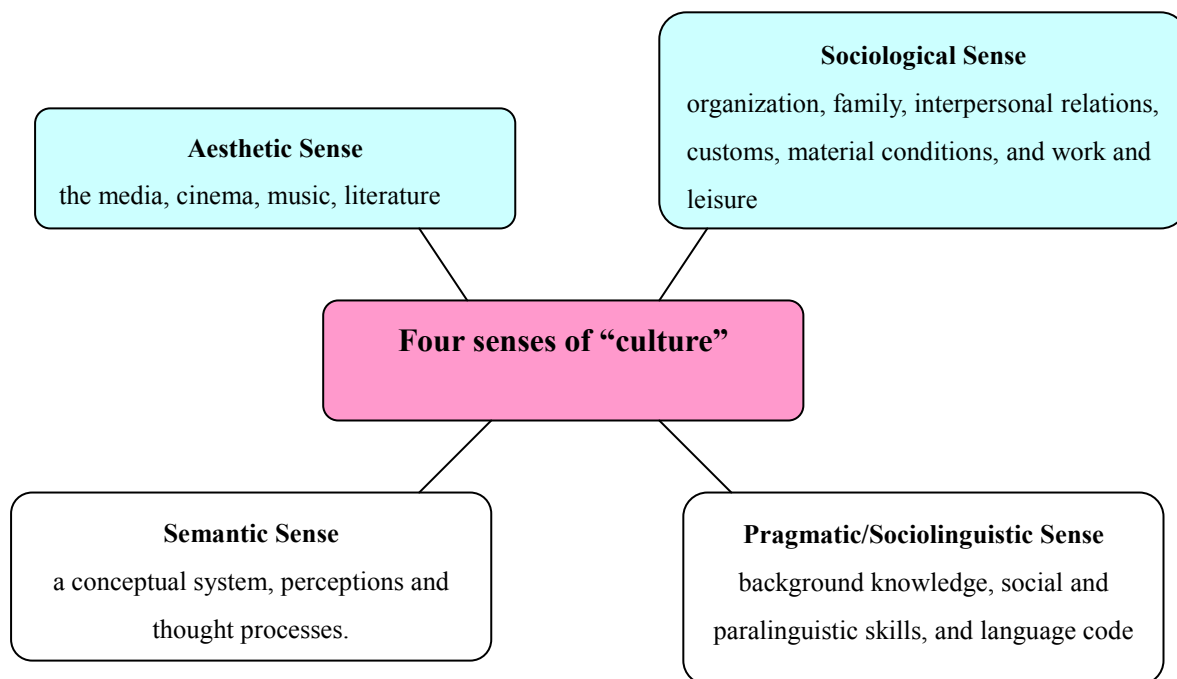
Figure 6.7 Four senses of culture (Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi, 1990, p. 3-4)

Families	Application of the aesthetic sense of culture
Families of purely Chinese ethnic origin	
Sophie	Media, Food, Literature
Kaixin	Food
Mixed Chinese Western families	
Curtis	Media, Internet, music, literature, cultural events, museums, exhibitions, traditional artistry, trips to Taiwan, Chinese food
Lucas	Media, music, literature, cultural events, museums, exhibitions, traditional artistry, trips to visit Chinese relatives
Families without any Chinese background	
Caroline	Media, Internet, music, literature, cultural events, museums, exhibitions, traditional artistry, Chinese food, trip to China
Philip	Media, literature, cultural events, museums, exhibitions, traditional artistry, Chinese food, trip to China

Table 6.2 The aesthetic sense of culture applied by the parents to enhance their child's awareness of
Chinese culture

6.4.1 Aesthetic sense of culture

In terms of the aesthetic dimension of culture, Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990) referred to the cinema, music, literature and the media. Here, I expand this dimension by adding the Internet, art and food into my discussion. With the popularity and ubiquitous use of computers and the Web, the Internet has become an important platform for learning languages. Chinese art and Chinese food have played an important role in Chinese culture and they have been important attraction and topic of interest for students learning Mandarin as a second or a foreign language. The background of the families in this study led to the different emphases on this dimension and in turn, employing various methods to raise the children's awareness of the aesthetic sense of Chinese culture.

The families with a Chinese background

For the families with both parents having a Chinese background, the aesthetic dimension was a natural context and occurred in their day to day surroundings. The parents didn't stress this dimension particularly because the parents thought the culture embedded in their daily family life was sufficient. In Sophie's family, Chinese food was the main diet. Sophie's parents insisted on providing Chinese food at home for their children to know Chinese food and get used to it. It has become part of their life and the children feel entirely normal to have only Chinese food at home. Sophie was very familiar with the food and was able to name almost every dish on the table. Similarly, in Kaixin's family, Chinese food is also the main sustenance. Kaixin's parents didn't have special intention to make this so but it had been their way of life in the family. Kaixin, like Sophie, had acquired a

very thorough understanding of Chinese food and the etiquette involved in having Chinese meals.

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                        │  Sophie  │
                        └──────────┘
          ┌──────────────────┼──────────────────┐
   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
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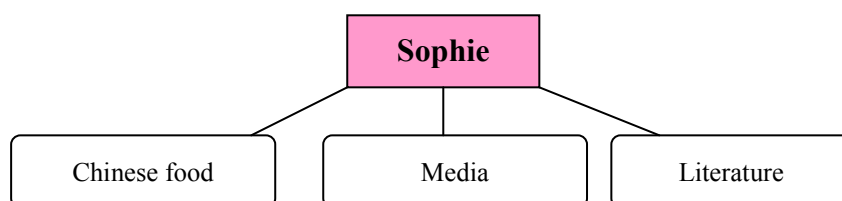
Figure 6.8 The aesthetic sense of culture applied by the Sophie's parents to enhance her awareness of

Chinese culture

Moreover, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Chinese programmes on cable television channels and Chinese films were another method of access to Mandarin and the Chinese culture for Sophie.　It was another setting that Sophie's parents used try to enhance Sophie's awareness of Chinese culture.

> "We usually watch Chinese programmes at home to be able to keep up to date with what is going on in China.　Sophie likes to watch these programmes with us.　We also watch DVDs of Chinese historical drama, which she especially likes.　I questioned how much she could understand but she can always remind me what happened in the previous episode.　We don't really want her to watch too much television but on the other hand, she has learnt a lot about Chinese history and society from these dramas.　Of course, she has learnt a lot of Chinese language from them as well." (Sophie's father)

In addition to the electronic mass media, Chinese books, newspapers and music were also part of their life. Sophie was used to be immersed in the environment. She sometimes picked up Chinese books to read and sang along with Chinese

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songs.

Due to their financial situation, Kaixin's family did not provide her with as many resources as Sophie's family.   Her parents were also very busy working and didn't have time to watch films or read books with Kaixin.   However, her parents thought their normal daily life provided Kaixin with continuous input of Chinese culture.

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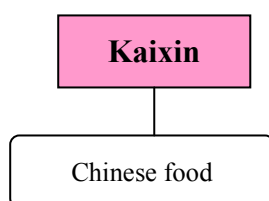
Figure 6.9 The aesthetic sense of culture applied by the Kaixin's parents to enhance her awareness of
        Chinese culture

The families with only parent having a Chinese background

In Curtis' family, electronic media had always been an important means of access to Chinese culture.   Curtis' mother, Ching-hui, bought various kinds of DVDs during the family's annual trip to Taiwan.   The DVDs included animations, Chinese films and educational films.   Curtis very much enjoyed watching these DVDs, especially the educational films.   The education DVDs contained short programmes featuring various themes covering different subjects, such as science, language, art, music, society, culture and daily life.   Those same educational DVDs are very popular with students in Taiwan.

"Curtis likes to watch educational films very much.   He is especially interested in watching the science part.   He has learnt a lot of different

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things from the films. When we go back to Taiwan, he discussed their content with his cousins." (Curtis' mother))

In addition to the DVDs, Ching-hui provided Curtis with CD-ROMs for learning Mandarin.　The CD-ROMs were composed and published by the Taiwanese government for children overseas to learn Mandarin as well as to understand Chinese and Taiwanese culture.　The CD-ROMs included animations, films and games as well as activities for learning Mandarin.　The Internet was also used in Curtis' family to learn Mandarin and to enhance his understanding of Chinese culture.　The website they used most frequently was that launched by the Taiwanese government to provide overseas Chinese and their children to get to know Taiwan and learn Mandarin.

Music was also used to develop Curtis' awareness of Chinese culture.　Apart from nursery rhythms and popular songs, Ching-hui also introduced traditional Chinese music to him.　Curtis is a violinist; he plays in the National children's orchestra and was awarded a scholarship by the orchestra.　He is very interested in music. Through learning about Chinese music, he had got a good understanding of Chinese instruments and has learnt many classic Chinese musicals, which were adopted from classical Chinese literature.

As for literature, Ching-hui regularly purchased books and magazines from Taiwan. These covered a wide range of themes, from Chinese classics to modern stories for children, from Chinese literature to science, and from books for leisure to school textbooks.　Ching-hui spent half an hour every day with Curtis before he went to bed to read these books together with him.　It was Curtis who chose the book that

they read every day. Through these books, Curtis enhanced his understanding of Chinese culture and society. Curtis attended a UK-wide Chinese reading competition in 2006, where he read his favorite story. Because he understood the story very well, he illustrated the story in a very animated fashion. He won first place in this competition. Moreover, thanks to these books he could follow what his cousins and friends in Taiwan were learning and then could talk to them and play with them.

Curtis' parents also encouraged him to join in cultural events or festivals held in the Chinese school, in museums and other organizations. For example, Ching-hui went to London Fo Guang Shan Temple regularly and sometimes took Curtis with her. The temple held different events, such as a tea ceremony, traditional Chinese music concerts, Food festival, Chinese Art workshops, etc.

> "I take Curtis to the temple to experience the Chinese and Taiwanese culture and atmosphere there. My family is Buddhist; going to a temple is a very common thing for us. Curtis also goes with us when we go back to Taiwan. My intention is to let him learn to respect different culture and different religions. Moreover, he has learnt a lot of different cultural things in the temple. It is very difficult to maintain our heritage culture in a different country. Therefore, I try different methods and different places."
>
> (Curtis mother)

At these cultural events, Curtis also got chances to experience and learn traditional Chinese artistry, such as calligraphy, papercutting, Chinese chess, Jian zi (shuttlecock) and Che ling (diabolo), etc.

"Chinese chess is my favorite. It is a bit similar to Western chess, but you need to learn the Chinese characters on each piece and then you can play. My cousins are very good at playing Chinese chess. We like to have competitions when we get together." (Curtis)

In addition to the reinforcement of the awareness of Chinese culture in the UK, Curtis' family goes to Taiwan every year as mentioned previously. There, Curtis was edified by Chinese culture directly and received direct influence by the media, literature, the Internet, the art and food culture.

```
   Media        Chinese food      Trips to Taiwan

   Internet                          Literature
                     Curtis
   Music                             Exhibitions

Traditional artistry  Cultural events   Museums
```

Figure 6.10 The aesthetic sense of culture applied by Curtis' parents to enhance his awareness of Chinese culture

In Lucas' family (the other family with only one parent having a Chinese background) the aesthetic sense was also stressed in order to raise Lucas' awareness of Chinese culture. The aesthetic sense was applied in a similar way to that adopted by Curtis' family, but to slightly different extent.

DVDs were important aids to enhance Lucas' cultural sense.   Here the DVDs were mainly animations, which included Chinese and Japanese stories and were dubbed in Mandarin.   Because of the historical and geographical background, Japan and Taiwan have a close relationship.   Japanese culture is prevalent in Taiwan and vice-versa.   For example, Japanese animations are very popular in Taiwan and Taiwanese programmes are also popular in Japan.   Lucas' mother, Miki, selected the stories she had been familiar with since she was a child.   Therefore, she could ensure the animations had appropriate content and would influence Lucas in a positive way.   Lucas also enjoyed watching as much English animations and he enhanced his awareness through them.

> "Yes, I like to watch the animations my mum and my grandparents bought for me.   My favorite is Doraemon.   He is very clever and brave.   He solved a lot of problems.   Everything is possible for him."   (Lucas)

Apart from media, Chinese nursery rhymes and Chinese books were also used regularly.   The family was also actively involved in cultural events and festivals either held by the Chinese school or by other organizations.   They also visited museums for Chinese related exhibitions.   These frequent cultural activities provided Lucas Chinese cultural stimuli and inspired his interest in Chinese art.

Through Miki's (Lucas' mother) father who is from Taiwan, Lucas also has direct cultural input from his grandparents and Chinese relatives.   As mentioned previously, Lucas' family went to America every year to visit his grandparents, who lived in the US most of the time.   Besides the grandparents, Miki's sister and brother also lived there.   Although outside the Mandarin speaking world, the

family activities they undertook together gave Lucas direct input of Chinese culture.

The fathers in both Curtis' and Lucas' families were very supportive in helping their children become familiar with Chinese culture. In doing so, the fathers also improved their understanding of Chinese culture.
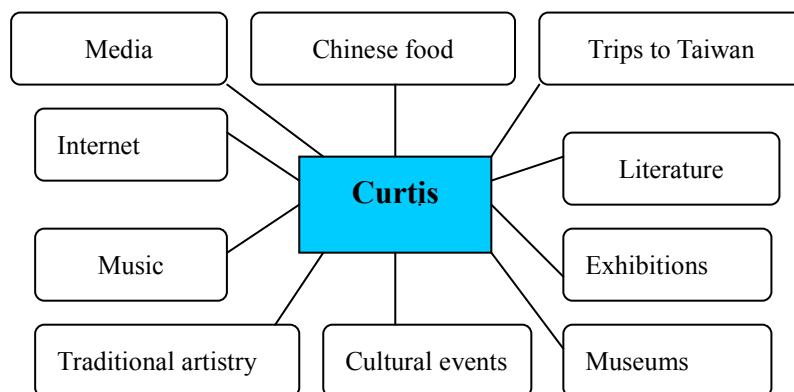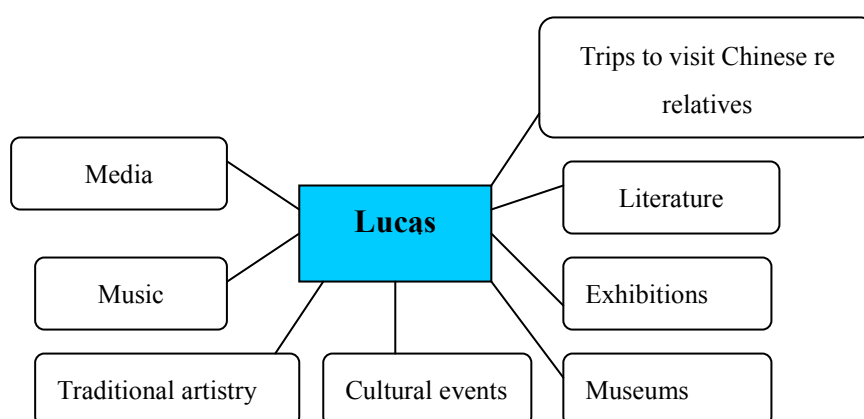
Figure 6.11 The aesthetic sense of culture applied by Lucas' parents to enhance his awareness of Chinese culture

Families without any Chinese background

For the families without any Chinese background, the aesthetic sense of Chinese culture is the most interesting and relatively easy aspect to tackle. The parents in this category sought access to Chinese culture actively and introduced Chinese culture to their children. The parents were aware that it was also essential for them to understand Chinese culture and so learnt about Chinese culture with their children. They didn't only enhance their children's understanding of Chinese culture but also extended their own knowledge of Chinese culture.

Caroline's parents used various resources to raise the family's knowledge of Chinese culture.   The father bought plenty of Chinese films and the family liked to watch them together.   The family discussed the films after having watched them.

"We always watch films together.   I bought a lot of famous Chinese films for us to watch together.   We were amazed by the Kung-fu type films, in which people can just fly everywhere.   The traditional costumes are very beautiful.   We were also struck about what the Chinese society was like during the Cultural Revolution.   These films have brought us closer to Chinese culture."   (Caroline's father)

In Chinese school, the teacher taught Caroline's class several Chinese popular songs. Caroline liked these songs and started to include Chinese songs in her daily life. She downloaded Chinese songs she liked from the Internet to her MP3 player and often listened to them.

"The melody and the lyrics are very beautiful in Chinese songs.   When I encounter some words that I don't know, I ask my Chinese teachers.   I can sing   some of the songs.   I share those songs with my friends in Chinese school and they also share theirs with me.   Sometimes we sing these songs together.   It is really good fun." (Caroline)

Caroline's parents tried to attend cultural and festival events with Caroline as often as possible.   Her parents regarded those events as a good opportunity to experience Chinese culture.   For example, the family attended a Dragon Boat Festival workshop where they learnt how to make "Zong zi" (rice dumpling), the traditional food Chinese people have at the Dragon Boat Festival.   They also watched a drama about the origin of the festival and a dance "The White Snake", which was

another Chinese classic about Dragon Boat Festival.

"We always learn a lot from these activities, not just Caroline but also us. We vaguely knew that Dragon Boat Festival was an important festival in Chinese culture but we didn't know the origin nor the related customs. After attending this workshop, we have got a very good understanding of this festival. Caroline was very interested and enjoyed herself on that day and also at other events as well. It is good to see that she enjoys Chinese culture and thus enjoys learning Mandarin." (Caroline's mother)
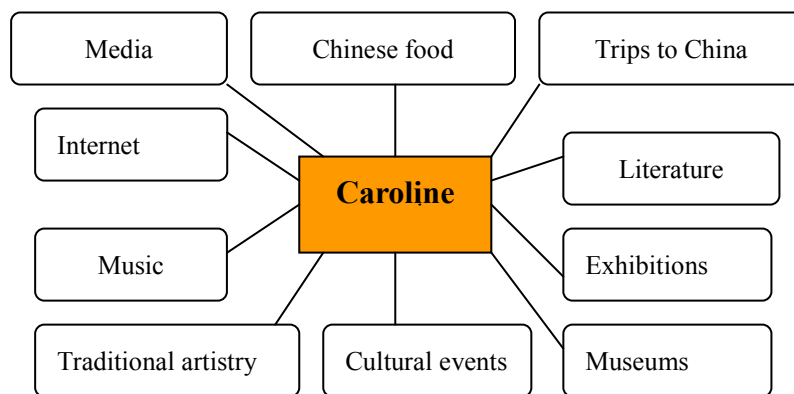
Figure 6.12 The aesthetic sense of culture applied by Caroline' parents to enhance her awareness of Chinese culture

At these cultural events, Caroline was also exposed to traditional Chinese art, amongst which her favorites were calligraphy and Chinese painting. Caroline's parents were in the process of arranging Chinese painting classes for her while this fieldwork was conducted.

Because Caroline's parents did not have a Chinese background, Chinese food was not eaten at home as regularly as in the previous two groups. Nevertheless, they

went to Chinese restaurants frequently.   Caroline's parents considered Chinese food to play an important role in Chinese culture and that it was also an art form. They believed it was crucial for Caroline to learn about Chinese food and appreciate the culture behind it.

In addition, Caroline's parents arranged for Caroline to participate in a Chinese camp, held in China, to learn Mandarin as well as for her to experience the culture directly.   According to Caroline, this experience had an important impact on her perception of Chinese culture and her attitudes towards learning Mandarin.   Before she went there, learning Mandarin was like learning ancient Latin.   It was very interesting but remote from real life.   Despite her attending a lot of Chinese events, they were still not related to her daily life.   Yet while she was in China, she had to use Mandarin every day and she was constantly immersed in Chinese culture.

> "It is a real world and a real language.   I want to go back many times and I hope I can just speak Mandarin there.   I need to work harder to learn Mandarin."   (Caroline)

In Caroline's family literature was not used as significantly as in the families in the two previous groups.   Caroline had some Chinese books for reference but not for regular reading.

Philip, the other child in this group, had his parents who support him in a similar way to that way in which Caroline's parents supported her.   Philip's parents also attended various cultural events with him, from which Philip and his parents got to better understand Chinese culture.   Similarly, Philip's family went to Chinese

restaurants regularly, and as mentioned earlier, Philip's parents arranged a family trip to China.   In their four weeks in China, Philip experienced Chinese culture directly and had to use his Mandarin in a Chinese speaking country.

"He was very excited when we got to Xi'an.   He is very interested in Terracotta warriors.   We had been to the exhibition in the British museum, but seeing those in China is very different.   Once we got there, he read about it and saw the real Terracotta lying there.   He was really interested in that and was very excited." (Philip's mother)

"I spoke to a Chinese man when we travelled on a boat.   He could not speak any English.   He thought I was only five and he taught me how to count to five.   I counted to twenty two and he was very surprised." (Philip)

This trip had also enhanced his interest in learning calligraphy and Chinese characters.   He saw a lot of Chinese art in China and he was most impressed with Chinese calligraphy.   His parents bought him some "Mao bi" (brush pens) and exercise books.   He sometimes practiced calligraphy at home.

The only difference between Philip's and Caroline's access to cultural stimuli was that Philip didn't have a big collection of Chinese DVDs.   He borrowed some animations from Lucas.
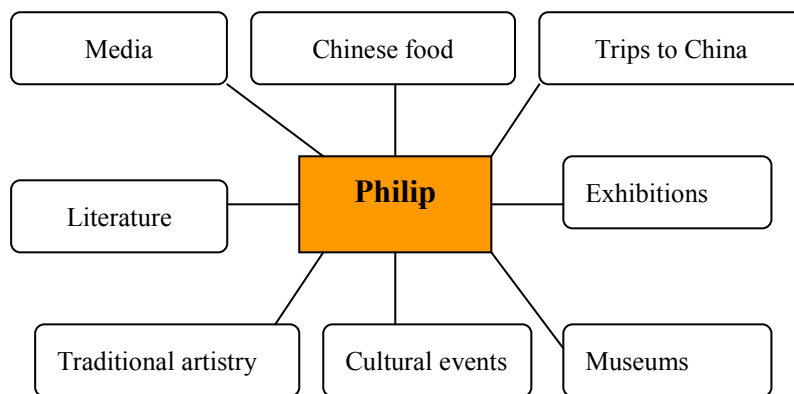
Figure 6.13 The aesthetic sense of culture applied by Philip's parents to enhance his awareness of Chinese culture

In this section, I examined how parents with different backgrounds drew on the aesthetic sense of Chinese culture and enhanced their children's awareness of Chinese culture.

The stress on the aesthetic sense of Chinese culture can be seen more prominently in the families with only one parent having a Chinese background and parents without any Chinese background.   Both groups consider the aesthetic dimension as an essential and interesting way to enhance their children's understanding and perception of Chinese culture.   In the group of Chinese families, the aesthetic sense of Chinese culture was embedded naturally within the family life.

Moreover, the data collected have shown that there are mainly three differences between the families with only one parent having a Chinese background and parents without any Chinese background.   Firstly, the families of mixed western-Chinese background had easier access to Mandarin speaking countries and the resources directly from those countries than these families without any Chinese background. Secondly, the perceptions of Chinese culture were different; the former hold an

insider's view while the latter hold an outsider's view.   Finally, the delivery of
Chinese culture in the mixed families tended to be one-way, from the mothers to the
children; the delivery was both ways between the parents and the children in the
families without Chinese background.

6.4.2 Sociological sense of culture

The sociological sense is another dimension of culture that the parents in this study
drew on to enhance their children's cultural awareness.   The sociological sense of
culture is associated with the organization and nature of family, home life,
interpersonal relations, work and leisure, customs and institutions.   As mentioned
earlier in this chapter, this study is focused on parental support and involvement,
which occurred outside of language classrooms.   Therefore, my discussion
includes family, home life as well as "community".   Moreover, because the
children in this study were very young, from seven years old to eleven, "work" was
a comparatively irrelevant element and is not going to be included in the discussion.
In this section, I discuss how parents raised their children's awareness of Chinese
culture in the following categories: family; home life and community; institutions;
leisure and customs.

Family, home life and community

González et al. (2005 p. ix) suggested that "learning does not take place just
between the ears, but is eminently a social process.   Students' learning is bound
within larger contextual, historical, political, and ideological frameworks that affect
students' life."   They introduced the concept "funds of knowledge", which was the

strategic and cultural resources that a household contains. Daily activities are a manifestation of a particular historically accumulated fund of knowledge that households possess. These funds not only provide the basis for understanding the cultural systems in each family and community but also can be important and useful assets in the classroom. They examined the importance of "funds of knowledge" and looked into how educators can make good use of the resources from families in schools and classrooms.

The resources possessed in families and communities are not only important for school education but are also beneficial to families both within and outside those communities. In this study, the parents with a Chinese background drew upon the children's existing "funds of knowledge" to enhance their children's awareness of Chinese culture as well as their learning of Mandarin. The parents without a Chinese background created opportunities for the children to gain the knowledge themselves. Both Chinese families and the mixed families drew on resources available to them from their families and the Chinese community while the families without any background only had access to the resources in the community.

In both Sophie's and Kaixin's families, daily life provided the authentic Chinese life style. Both children were immersed in Chinese culture and had gained a good understanding of Chinese life and Chinese culture. In Kaixin's family, the extended family also played a crucial role in contributing resources. They got together every weekend in Kaixin's home where the women were in charge of the cooking while the men were in charge of other duties, such as doing repairs and playing with the children. One of the aunts was responsible for the children's learning of Mandarin. She helped them to complete their homework. This kind

of life can be considered as traditional and typical Chinese life. In early Chinese society, families lived together and had meals together. People shared housework and looked after each other's children.

In the mixed families, life had to accommodate the fathers' Western way of living. Therefore, the life-style was not solely Chinese. However, parents made a lot of efforts to provide a Chinese way of living to some extent. For example, Chinese arts and decoration could be seen in these families regularly. They had Chinese meals at home regularly. Moreover, both of the mothers were full time homemakers and spent a long time with the children. These two families actively sought links to the community. As discussed previously, the families kept close contact with the other families they had got to know in Chinese school. The families were also involved in activities occurring in the community. These families contacted and visited their extended Chinese families abroad frequently.

In the two groups of families discussed above, the social exchange between these families, clusters of households and kinship networks continued to provide individuals access to cultural funds of knowledge.

The families without any background did not provide the Chinese life style as the other two groups did nor did they have kinship networks to rely on. However, they sought access to the community, which included Chinese families and mixed families but also families like themselves without any Chinese background yet interested in learning Mandarin and Chinese culture. As soon as they gained the entry to the community, they obtained support and resources from them.

Institutions

Institutions had played a crucial role in the children's learning of Mandarin and Chinese culture as well as in sustaining the parents' support for their children's learning.   For the families in this research, the most important institution across all three categories was the Chinese school.   The Chinese school was more than a place which taught Mandarin; it was the centre of the community, which linked the people who shared a common goal.   The goal was to learn Mandarin and understand Chinese culture.   Apart from the resources for learning Mandarin, the Chinese school also provided a variety of resources for Chinese culture and invisible funds of knowledge.

The Chinese school served the different needs of the children and the parents.   The families with different backgrounds held different attitudes towards the Chinese school.   For the Chinese families in this study, going to Chinese school was as important as going to mainstream school.   In Chinese culture, schools and teachers hold a supremely high status.   Attending schools punctually and regularly is a way in which to express your respect for learning.   The parents also believed that in Chinese school, there should be teachers with experience and qualifications such that they could teach their children better than themselves.   Therefore, going to a Chinese school to learn Mandarin and Chinese culture was necessary, even though it was held on Sundays.   The parents in this group also expected that the school hours should be longer.

In the case of the families without any Chinese background, attending Chinese school was more like an extracurricular activity.   The parents hoped that the

children could learn some Mandarin there as well as enjoy being surrounded by Chinese culture. Moreover, the Chinese school was considered as a good opportunity to socialize with other families who were also interested in learning Chinese language and culture. Therefore, the parents would have preferred that the Chinese school hold more cultural activities, involving the parents.

In terms of the mixed families, the attitude towards attending Chinese school was between the previous two groups. On the one hand, the parents stressed the importance of attending classes and completing learning activities. On the other hand, they also would like to have frequent cultural activities and so that the school was not boring and put off their children from going to class on Sundays.

Leisure

Leisure was used as a means by which the parents raised the child's motivation as well as enhance their awareness of Chinese culture. As in the previous discussion, I examined the different learning and cultural activities in which the families were involved. For example, watching Chinese films and attending festival events were common occurrences in all of the families. The parents also encouraged the children to try various forms of Chinese artistry and the children found it interesting and would like to have done it more frequently. Curtis and Lucas, for example, liked to play Chinese chess. In order to be able to play Chinese chess, they needed to learn the Chinese character on each piece, as this represents the role of the piece. Most of the Chinese characters were very difficult for them and beyond their level of comprehension. However, they tried very hard to remember the characters and enjoyed playing chess. Each week they played chess in Chinese school during the

break time al.   Playing Chinese chess had become one of their favorite leisure time activities and they also taught other friends how to play.   When they were at home, they sometimes asked their mothers to play chess with them.   Another example here is the trip to a Chinese speaking country.   The students with a Chinese background were encouraged by their parents that Mandarin was a necessary tool to communicate with their relatives in China or Taiwan.   Trips to China or Taiwan were used as source of encouragement and goal for learning.   For the students without a Chinese background, Caroline and Philip, the parents took them to China to experience the life and culture there.   After their visits, both of them were amazed and fascinated by Chinese society and culture.   Both sets of parents promised another trip when they improved their Mandarin.

Customs

Customs were also employed in order to extend the understanding of the Chinese world.   Because of the long historical and geographical remoteness from the Western world, Westerners often have a hard time understanding the customs and formalities in the Chinese world.   In this study, the parents made efforts to provide their children with information and experience related to Chinese customs.

For example, not only the food but also the customs of eating are very different from the Western or English style.   Chinese meals are served at round tables and people use chopsticks and bowls.   The families with a Chinese background believed it was essential to understand the customs in order to behave properly when they ate with their Chinese relatives.

> "We have opportunities to have dinner parties with other Chinese families and when we go back to China, we will eat with our families and friends there. It would be awkward and not respectable that our children cannot hold chopsticks and eat properly." (Sophie's father)

The families without a Chinese background also thought it was important for their children to be able to use chopsticks properly and understand the Chinese etiquette. It would help the families to act properly in Chinese related occasions.

> "There are a lot of important things I have learnt about Chinese customs of eating. I am very happy that I got to know these before I went to China for the summer camp. Otherwise, I would offend the people and make them feel unhappy. For example, when we use chopsticks, chopsticks should never stand upright or vertical in your bowl. This gesture is to honour the dead or deceased family members. If I didn't know that and did it even accidently, the people who ate with me would feel offended." (Caroline)

Another example here is the way in which Chinese address people. In Chinese names, surnames go before given names. In this case, it is confusing for Chinese to be asked about their first names and the last names. When Chinese introduce themselves, they mention their surnames and then their given names. This also causes confusion if the people involved in the conversation are not aware of the customs. Moreover, it is not appropriate to call Chinese people by their given names when people have recently got to know each other. In work-related situations people address each other by their title; in social situations "Mr.," Mrs.," and "Miss" are used; at home people often refer to each other by nicknames or terms of kinship.

In addition, terms of kinship are also often used for close non-relatives. People who are in the same generation but older than the addresser will be addressed as "big brothers" or "big sisters". If they are in a different generation, they will be addressed as "uncles" or "aunts". The parents in this study believed that this custom was of great importance in order to socialise within Chinese community.

> "Most of our relatives are in the UK; and there are a lot of us, about 40 people. Some people would think that since we are in a Western society, we don't need stick to the traditional way of addressing each other. However, I think it is very important to teach my children the proper way to address their relatives, especially the older ones. It sounds very rude to me if they just call them by their names." (Kaixin's mother)

Another custom that the families found interesting is the Chinese Zodiac, which is a scheme that relates each year to an animal and its reputed attributes, according to a 12-year cycle. The zodiac traditionally begins with the sign of the Rat, and there are many stories about the origins of the Chinese Zodiac which explain why this is in the order of "Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, cockerel, Dog, and Pig." The 12 animals are also linked to the traditional Chinese lunar agricultural calendar.

In Chinese society, people refer to the Chinese zodiac very often. When people try to figure out each other's age and they don't want to be rude to ask directly, they would ask each other's zodiac instead. Then they can calculate out the age.

> "The Zodiac is very interesting. I know all of these twelve animals. I can tell my friends what animal they are. They like to know what they are! I

also teach them how to say that in Mandarin" (Curtis)

In this section, we looked at how parents drew on the sociological sense of Chinese culture to enhance the students' awareness of Chinese culture. The sociological sense of culture was regarded by the parents as an important key to socializing in Chinese society and community. The parents, according to their background, applied the resources they could obtain, from family, home life and community, institutions, leisure and customs in different ways to foster their children's understanding of Chinese culture. The data have shown that the children got a good understanding of Chinese culture.

6.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the middle layer of the data, the methods and strategies the parents adopted to help their children learn Mandarin. I examined the parents' support from two important factors affecting language learning, motivation and cultural awareness. Because of the different background and Mandarin ability, the parents in this study adopted different methods to raise their child's motivation and foster their awareness of Chinese culture. In the families of exclusively Chinese origin and the mixed Chinese Western families, the parents enhanced their child's perception of their Chinese ethnic identity in order to raise their motivation. For example, they kept close contact with their Chinese relatives. They also made trips to visit those relatives. In addition, the parents also tried to live a Chinese life style, such as speaking Mandarin to their child and having Chinese food. The children in these families undoubtedly identified with their Chinese origin. As for the families without any Chinese background, the parents

actively sought access to Chinese communities. By sending their children to Chinese school, they got to know not only families with a Chinese background but also some families in a situation very similar to their own. The families met up frequently. The children in these two families happily interacted with people in the Chinese community. Moreover, the two families without any Chinese background made a trip to China for their child to experience the life and culture in China.

The parents also made a lot of effort to enhance their child's awareness of Chinese culture. The aesthetic sense and the sociological sense were discussed in this chapter. The parents drew on the aesthetic dimension of culture, such as the media, music, literature and traditional art, to develop their child's understanding of Chinese culture. On the other hand, the sociological sense of culture, which is associated with family, home life, leisure, customs and institutions, was also applied by the parents to strengthen their child's understanding of Chinese culture.

The data have revealed that the children's motivation and cultural awareness were reinforced by the varied means by which their parents supported them.

Chapter 7

Data Analysis-Inner Layer

Chapter 7 Data Analysis-Inner Layer

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Preparing for Learning Sessions

7.2.1 Tools

7.2.2 The learning environment

7.2.3 Gestures and postures

7.2.4 Sound volume

7.3 During Learning Sessions

7.3.1 Session opening and learning material

7.3.2 Teaching Chinese characters

7.3.3 Activities

7.3.4 Correction and feedback

7.4 Post Learning Session Discussion

7.5 Summary

Chapter 7 Data Analysis-Inner Layer

7.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I discussed the outer layer and the middle layer of the analysis.   In the outer layer, I examined the social and cultural background of these families, the linguistic background and their access and the history of learning Mandarin.   In the middle layer, I discussed the methods and strategies the parents adopted to help their children learn Mandarin from two perspectives: motivation and cultural awareness.

In this chapter, I discuss the inner layer of the analysis: the pedagogic methods used by the parents.   Because of the social and cultural backgrounds, the parents in this study held different opinions of their child's learning of Mandarin.   They also adopted different methods to support their child's learning.   Apart from enhancing the children's motivation and cultural awareness, discussed in Chapter 6, the parents set up special learning sessions at home.   In the families with a Chinese background, it was mainly the mothers who taught their child Mandarin.   In the families without any Chinese background, the parents had private tutors to teach their child and the parents were also involved in the learning sessions.   In Sophie's, Curtis' and Lucas' families, the learning sessions occurred every day while in the other families, the learning sessions occurred once every week.   The pedagogic methods will be discussed from three perspectives: how the parents prepared their child and the environment for the learning sessions, the teaching methods the parents adopted in the learning sessions and the discussion after the learning sessions.

	Families of purely Chinese ethnic origin		Mixed Chinese Western families		Families without any Chinese background	
	Sophie	Kaixin	Curtis	Lucas	Caroline	Philip
Preparing for learning sessions						
Tools	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Learning environment	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Gestures and postures	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Sound volume	✓	✓	✓	✓		
During learning sessions						
Session opening & learning Material	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Teaching Chinese characters	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Activities			✓	✓		
Correction & feedback	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Post learning session discussion						
Extra private tuitions					✓	✓
Involvement in tuitions					✓	✓
Discussion with child					✓	✓

Table 7.1 Pedagogic methods applied by each family

7.2 Preparing for Learning Sessions

The learning sessions we discuss here are the special time the parents set up at home to teach their child Mandarin. The parents regarded the learning sessions as formal and serious class hours. They set a fixed time and a specific place for the learning sessions. Before they started the learning sessions and during the learning sessions, the mothers and an aunt (in Kaixin's case), who acted as the teachers in this study, made sure the children and the environment were properly ready to carry out the lesson. In the following section, I look at four aspects: the tools, the environment, the gestures and postures and the sound volume, which did not only take place before the learning sessions started but also carried on through the classes. Nevertheless, as

for the families without any Chinese background, because the learning sessions were carried out by private tutors and in the tutors' places, I will only discuss how those parents helped their child prepare for the tuition.

7.2.1 Tools

Confucius is the oldest and the most respected teacher in Chinese culture. The morals he taught have been deeply rooted in Chinese society and in Chinese people's thought for centuries. In *The Analects of Confucius*, Confucius lectured "Gong yu shang qi shi, bi xian li qi qi-工欲善其事 必先利其器"--When a workman wishes to get his work done well, he must have his tools sharpened first. Therefore, it has been a very important and firm belief in Chinese culture that good tools are prerequisite to the successful execution of a job. When analysing the social and cultural background of each family in this study, we discussed the educational background of the parents in each family. In the families with both parents and one parent having a Chinese background, the parents received higher education. Kaixin's parents were exceptional since they only completed secondary education. Nevertheless, all of these parents with a Chinese background had received their education in Chinese society. Therefore, they were familiar with what a classroom was like in Chinese society and what they needed to do to prepare for a learning session.

When learning Mandarin, learning to recognize and write Chinese characters is a very important process. Therefore, proper pens, pencils, books and exercise books are essential. Here are some example transcripts from the video data of how the mothers made sure the children get these ready.

Sophie's mother asked her to sharpen her pencils when they were about to practice Chinese characters.

Mother: 你的筆呢？

    Where is your pencil?

       (Sophie got her pencil out and started to write.)

       (Mother looked at the pencil.)

Mother: 你看看你的筆，這像學生的筆嗎？ 換一支！

    Look at your pencil!　Is it the way a student's pencil should be? Get another one!

       (Sophie got all of her pencils out and tried to choose a sharper one.)

Sophie: 都一樣…

    They are all the same.

Mother: 那應該怎麼辦呢？

    What should you do?

       (Sophie went to get her sharpener and sharpened her pencils.)

Sophie: 這樣可以嗎？

    Is it ok like this?

Mother: 好多了，開始寫吧！

    That is much better!　Start writing then!

Kaixin's aunt, who usually taught her Mandarin at the weekends, helped Kaixin arrange her text and exercise books.

Aunt: 書放那邊，寫字本放這邊。

Put your textbook over there and the exercise book here.

(Kaixin did what her aunt told her to do.)

Aunt: 好，開始寫。

Good!   Let's start to practice writing these characters.

(Kaixin started to write but she made a mistake.)

Kaixin: 阿，寫錯了！

Oh!   I made a mistake!

(Kaixin got her eraser out and erased the wrong character.)

Aunt: 要擦乾淨一點，寫字本要保持乾淨。

Erase it totally.   You should keep your exercise book tidy!

Lucas' mother helped Lucas check the books and stationary he needed for the learning session.

Mother: 你的鉛筆和橡皮擦要拿出來，放在桌上，媽媽看看。

Put you pencils and eraser on the desk.   Let me check.

(Lucas got his pencils and eraser out and put them on the desk.)

Mother: 你的鉛筆不尖了，我們削一削。

Your pencils are not sharp enough.   Let's sharpen them.

(Lucas sharpened his pencils.)

Mother: 我們今天要練習寫字，還要做作業，把寫字本還有學校的書拿出來。還有字典也拿出來喔！

We are going to practice writing Chinese characters and do the homework from Chinese school.   Get your exercise book and the textbook out and put them on the desk.   Don't forget your dictionary.

Lucas' mother noted in the interview that Lucas could get distracted very easily. Therefore, she always asked him to prepare everything he needed before they started learning sessions to stop him from leaving the learning scene.

Caroline and Philip didn't have learning sessions from their parents since their parents were unable to speak Mandarin. However, their parents checked if they finished their homework before they went to Chinese school and before their private tuition. The parents also made sure that they took everything they needed to Chinese school and their tuition.

7.2.2 The learning environment

Photo 7.1 Sophie and her mother

The data have shown that apart from the tools for learning, the environment was another important aspect to which the mothers paid great attention before they started

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the learning sessions.   Sophie's learning session occurred at the dining table in their kitchen after school.   Sophie's mother could also prepare dinner when Sophie was practicing writing on her own.   Before they started the session, Sophie's mother tidied up the dinning table and adjusted the light.   She stood next to Sophie and started to teach her.   When asked why she stood up instead of sitting down, she suggested that it would be easier for her to move around in the kitchen to prepare dinner at the same time.

Photo 7.2 Kaixin and her aunt

Kaixin's learning sessions were held on Saturdays when her relatives got together. Kaixin's aunt took the responsibility to teach Kaixin and the other children Mandarin. The learning sessions took place at Kaixin's desk in the living room.   Kaixin's aunt asked Kaixin to clean the desk and turned the lamp on.   Like Sophie's mother, Kaixin's aunt also stood behind Kaixin because she also needed to help prepare dinner.

Photo 7.3 Curtis and his mother

Curtis' learning sessions took place in his room every day after school.   Curtis tidied up the desk before his mother came in and then Curtis mother prepared the materials that they were going to use, such as the textbooks, exercise books and pens.   She also prepared a mini white board on which they were going to practice Chinese characters and some markers.   She sat to Curtis' right in order to show Curtis how to write characters clearly.

Lucas' learning sessions were held in the sitting room, where they had a big table for dining as well as for work.   The learning sessions also occurred every day after school.   Lucas' mother removed unrelated items and put the learning materials on the table.   She got some drinks for Lucas and herself before they started.

Photo 7.4 Lucas and his mother

7.2.3 Gestures and postures

Calligraphy plays an important part in Chinese culture and language. In Chinese society, children start to learn calligraphy when they are very young. The first thing students need to learn about calligraphy is the sitting posture. The most appropriate sitting posture when doing calligraphy is "head should line up with the backbone upright and straight; arms and elbows should rest on the table; legs should open as wide as the shoulders." Teachers always remind students about these principles and students are requested to bear these principles in mind in order to do calligraphy properly. After sitting properly, the next important thing is to hold a pen and a brush pen properly.

The mothers and aunt we discussed above also drew on their experience of practicing calligraphy from their education in Chinese society and were very strict about the

children's sitting posture and the methods of holding pens.   Through the learning sessions observed, the mothers and the aunt paid great attention to the children's sitting posture and methods of holding pens; they kept on reminding the children and correcting them.

Sophie's mother was helping Sophie practise writing new characters.   Sophie's mother showed Sophie how to write them on a piece of paper and Sophie started to copy them into her exercise book.   Sophie leaned forward and held her pencil tightly writing characters.

Mother: 頭抬高， 身體坐直！

     Raise your head and sit up!

Sophie sat up a little bit and continued to write.   Sophie's mother adjusted Sophie's body to the proper position and she also arranged Sophie's hair for Sophie to be able to see clearly.   Sophie continued writing and the mother went off to do some housework.   When the mother went to check Sophie, she reminded her again:

Mother: 頭抬高，頭離桌子太近了！

     Raise your head!   Your head is too close to the table!

(The mother moved Sophie's head to proper position and arranged her hair again.)

Similar conversations also occurred in Lucas' learning session.   Lucas' mother reminded him several times about his posture and his method of holding pens.

Mother: 頭抬起來。

      Raise your head.

(Lucas sat up and raised his head immediately.)

Mother: 很好，要保持這個姿勢。

      Very good.　Keep it that way.

Mother: 筆拿好，握上面一點。握緊。

      Hold your pencil properly.　Move your fingers up a little bit.　Hold it tight.

(The mother pressed Lucas' exercise book down for him and moved Lucas' fingers to a proper position.)

Mother: 寫得很好！頭再抬起來一點。

      You are doing very well.　Raise your head up a bit more.

(Lucas raised his head and also tried to adjust his method of hold his pencil.　They continued to work on Chinese characters.)

Mother: 寫中文字的時候，左手要怎麼樣？

      When you are writing Chinese characters, what should you do with your left hand?

Lucas: 要放好。

      Put my hand at the right position.

Mother: 放哪裡？

      Where should you rest it?

Lucas: 放在桌上，壓住書。

      I should put my left hand on the table and on the book to keep the book open

properly.

Mother: 對，很好，不要忘記！

That is correct!　Well done!　Don't forget about it.

The learning session lasted for an hour, during which Lucas' mother reminded Lucas about the correct posture and method of holding pens six times.

Like the other mothers, Kaixin's aunt and Curtis' mother reminded the children to take the proper sitting posture.　They also emphasized the importance of the method of holding pens.　Both of them showed the children how to hold a pencil properly and adjusted the children's fingers several times when they were practicing writing Chinese characters.　Apart from drawing on their past experience in school, Curtis' mother also related these principles to cultural awareness, which we discussed in the previous chapter. She suggested:

"It is very important for Curtis to know how to hold a pen properly.　Curtis tends to hold pens too tight and so his hand gets very sore and tired after just writing a few characters.　The proper method of holding pens is one of the key principles of writing Chinese calligraphy.　Curtis should be very clear about this since it is part of the Chinese culture."

7.2.4 Sound volume

The last common feature observed in those learning sessions is that the mothers demanded the clear and loud sound volume from the children.

Sophie's mother and Sophie were working on text from a Chinese newspaper, which had a special column for children to learn Mandarin.　There were some short articles

written by other children who were also learning Mandarin.　Sophie's mother asked Sophie to read out one of the articles.

Mother: 這個小朋友跟你一樣年紀，這是他寫的文章，我們來念念看。

　　　　This child is the same age as you.　This is his article.　Let's read this.

Sophie: 我的名字叫….

　　　　My name is…

(Sophie looked at her mother for help because she didn't recognize those characters.)

Mother: 彥博

　　　　Yan Bo

Sophie: 彥博

　　　　Yan Bo

Mother: 從頭再念一次。

　　　　Start from the beginning.

Sophie: 我的名字叫彥博。彥是有學問的人。

　　　　My name is Yan Bo.　Yan means a learned person.

Mother: 念大聲一點。第二句再一次。

　　　　Read it loudly. Read the second line again.

Sophie: 彥是有學問的人。

　　　　Yan means a learned person.

Mother: 很好。

　　　　 Very good

Sophie: 博是豐富的意思。

　　　　Bo means erudite.

Mother: 很好。

Very good

Sophie: 因為媽媽….

Because when my mother…

Mother: 懷

Huai

Sophie: 因為媽媽懷我時

Because when my mother was pregnant with me…

Mother: 念慢一點，大聲一點！

Read slowly and loudly!

Photo 7.5 Sophie's learning material: Chinese newspaper

The same feature was also captured in Lucas' learning hour and it occurred even more frequently.   Lucas' mother explained:

"I always ask Lucas to read and reply to my questions loudly and slowly.   I want him to speak properly and pronounce accurately.   When he didn't feel confident enough to say some words, he would lower his voice.   I hope he can be confident and can try to say words clearly and so I always ask him to speak

up.   It is just like what we do in school, isn't it?   My teachers always asked us to speak loudly and clearly.   I also want Lucas to be serious about our learning hour although it is happening at home and I am teaching him.   He should be as serious as he is in school."

In this session, I discussed the preparation work the mothers and Kaixin's aunt did before and through the learning sessions.   The data have shown that although these mothers and the aunt were not professional teachers, nor had they received any training for teaching Mandarin, they drew on their experience of being a student in Chinese societies when setting up and conducting the learning sessions.   Moreover, they also took the chance to reinforce Chinese culture, which had a profound impact on them.   The mothers discussed above asked their children to prepare the essential equipment, such as sharpened pencils, textbooks, exercise books and other related materials.   They also made sure the surrounding environment was appropriate for carrying out a learning session.   Moreover, they reminded the children to retain the correct sitting posture and the way of holding pens.   The also requested their children to raise their volume when they spoke Mandarin to express themselves clearly.

7.3 During Learning Sessions

After discussing the preparation work those mothers did for the learning sessions, in the following paragraphs, I look at the pedagogic methods these mothers adopted to teach their child during the learning session.   Despite not being professional teachers, they drew on their experience of being a student and learning a language as well as exchanged ideas and sharing experience with other parents.   Here, I discuss how

they instructed their child's learning of Mandarin and how they arranged and structured the learning activities.   I will discuss the teaching from four perspectives: session opening and learning materials, teaching Chinese characters, activities and feedback.

When analyzing the learning sessions, some features of "guided participation" (Rogoff, 1990) have been observed.   As discussed in Chapter 4 Sociocultural Research, Rogoff (1990) examined cultural similarities and variations in how toddlers and their caregivers from cultural communities collaborate in shared activities. Rogoff termed the process "guided participation": Children's development occurs by active participation in cultural activities in which children, together with their caregivers and other companions, learn and extend the skills, values, and knowledge of the community.

"This process involves both direct communication and the arrangements of activities in which children participate; bridging between the participants' interpretations of a situation and the partner's mutual structuring of their involvement, to be evidenced by joint engagement (with variation in who takes a leadership role and in the means of engagement) and by caregivers' and toddlers' joint contributions to managing the activities."

(Rogoff, et al., 1990, p. 3)

The similarities they found across these different cultural communities had to do with the collaboration between children and their caregivers in bridging between the individual understandings of the situations at hand and in their structuring of each other's participation.   They directly shared the responsibility in problem solving as

well as in their decisions about their own and each other's participation in activities. Moreover, the process of guided participation that they have found as universal is the process to make connections between the known and the new. Children seek connections between the old and new situations or knowledge in caregivers' cues or instructions.

In the following discussion of session opening and learning materials, teaching Chinese characters, activities and feedback, I will also explain the features of "guided participation" occurring in the learning sessions.

7.3.1 Session opening and learning material

Warming up before each learning session was observed in this study. According to the mothers, the warming up when a learning session was about to start was very important. Warming up was not only an introduction to the learning session but also a sign marking that a special occasion was going to occur. Lucas' mother noted:

> "In my opinion, warming up is very important. It is like when you do some exercise, you need to warm up your body. Lucas has been in an English speaking environment for the whole day. We need to get his brain and mind ready for the Chinese learning session. On the other hand, warming up is also to let him know that this learning session is a serious task, not just some activities for fun." (Lucas' mother)

Even though all of these mothers did warming up when they started the session, each of them had different ways of approaching it. Sophie's mother and Kaixin's aunt

adopted a more straightforward and traditional way to open the learning session.   As stated earlier, Sophie's learning session occurred every day; Sophie's mother warmed up the learning session by discussing with Sophie what they had done on the previous day.   Kaixin's learning sessions were held once a week; her aunt started the learning session by asking what the teacher taught in the Chinese school the previous weekend as well as what the homework was.   There is the initial bridging between Kaixin and the aunt of the learning situation.

Aunt: 你今天想做什麼？ 學校有沒有功課？

What do you want to do today?   Is there any homework from the Chinese school?

Kaixin: 老師說要寫字，還要念書。

The teacher said the homework is the Chinese characters and we need to read the text in the book.

Aunt: 好，那你要先做什麼？

OK.   What do you want to start with?

Kaixin: 嗯…先寫字。

Well…. I would like to write the Chinese characters first.

Then Kaixin opened the page where the homework was and pointed out the first character she should write.

Kaixin: 這個字。

This character

Curtis' mother and Lucas' mother, on the other hand, used the warming up as a means by which to stimulate the children's motivation. Curtis' mother recounted some Chinese short stories or talked about some cultural activities.

"I recall that when I was a student, I enjoyed one course when I did my Master's degree in the UK. The lecturer always started the class with some interesting examples or stories and this experience is very different from my experience in traditional Chinese classrooms. It is like when you eat, you have starters, which stimulates your appetite for the main course. I like to give Curtis different starters when we start a lesson." (Curtis' mother)

As for the learning materials in the learning sessions, Sophie's mother and Kaixin's aunt worked on the textbooks and exercise books from Chinese school.
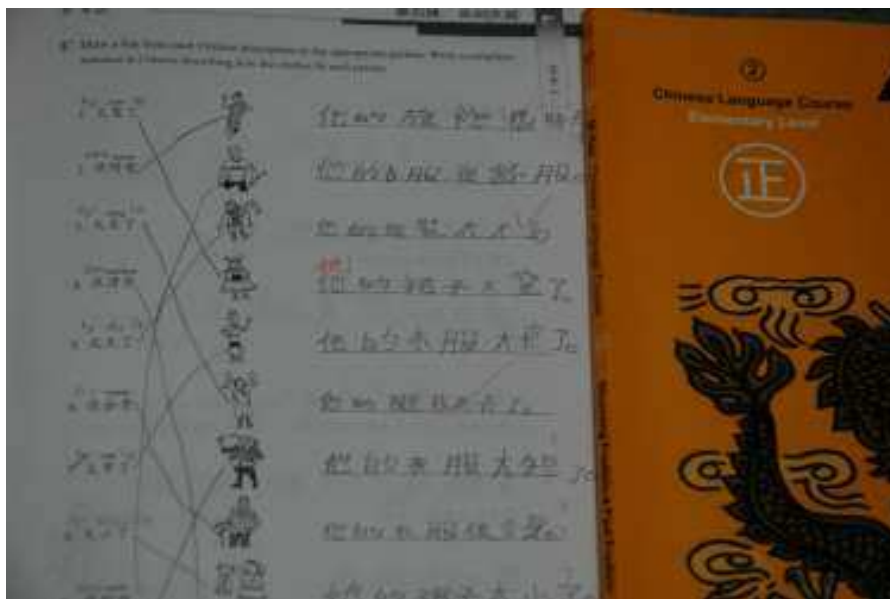
Photo 7.6 Kaixin's textbook and exercise book from Chinese school

In addition to the material from the Mandarin school, Sophie's mother provided her with a Chinese newspaper to work on. Both Lucas' and Curtis' mothers used a variety of materials and resources: a wide range of books with different topics from different places and different types of activities.

Photo 7.7 Lucas' learning materials

7.3.2 Teaching Chinese characters

The parents in this study considered the characters to be the most difficult aspect for their child learning Mandarin. The mothers and the aunt discussed here spent the majority of the time in the learning sessions helping the children to learn Chinese characters: recognizing characters, writing characters and establishing the meanings of characters.

Recognizing Chinese characters

In order to help the children to recognize Chinese characters, the mothers and the aunt applied several techniques. One of the common techniques found in all learning sessions was to use radicals to explain characters.

Traditional Chinese lexicography divided characters into six categories. A phono-semantic character usually consists of a semantic radical and a phonetic element. They form by far the greatest majority of Chinese characters—over 90% (different statistics claim from 60% to about 90%). Semantic radicals indicate a semantic field, or what they are associated with. The phonetic element provides some clue to the pronunciation of the compound (Ramsey, 1989; Zhang et al., 2010). Therefore, radicals are essential when learning Chinese characters. The mothers and the aunt in this study emphasized radicals when helping the children.

Semantic/radical /meaning	Phonetic component	P-S compounds	Meaning
氵 water	木 *mù*	沐 *mù*	To wash oneself
氵 water	曷 he	渴 ke	thirsty
口 mouth	曷 he	喝 he	To drink

Table 7.2 Examples of Phono-semantic characters

The first example was from Curtis' learning session.

Mother: 下一個字是"打"

       The next character is "da", which means to hit.

The mother used her hand to hit the desk when she said the word.

Curtis: 打

       da

Curtis copied her; he also hit the desk and followed what his mother had just said.

Mother: 對，"打"。我們剛才用什麼打桌子？

       That's right. "da" What did we just use to hit the desk?

Curtis: 用手打

       We used our hands.

Mother: 對，所以你看這個 "打"，它的左邊是手部。就是用手的意思。

       That is correct. Therefore, look at this character. The left part is the

        radical "hand", which means this character has something to do with using

        hands.

Curtis: 打屁股!

       Hit the bottom!

Curtis hit his own bottom.

Mother: 用手打，對不對？所以有個手。

       You used your hand to hit your bottom, didn't you? Therefore, the character

       has a hand in it.

Curtis: 這個字也有手！

       This character also has the hand radical in it!

Mother: 對，這個字是 "拉"。

      Yes, this character is to "pull"

The other example is from Kaixin's learning session.

Kaixin: 我家門前有小 " ？"

      There is a "what?" in front of my house.

Aunt: "河"。我家門前有小 "河"。

      "River" There is a "river" in front of my house.

Kaixin: 我家門前有小 "河"。

      There is a "river" in front of my house.

Aunt: "河" 這個字有水部。

      This character has the "water" radical in it.

Kaixin: 水在這裡。

      Here is the "water" radical.

Aunt: 對，很好！

      Correct! Well done!

Apart from introducing radicals, another common strategy is to make connections between the known and the new.　As Rogoff (1990) found in the guided participation, children seek connections between the old and new situations or knowledge in caregivers' cues or instructions, the mothers and the aunt also helped the children to make connections between the new words and the words the children already knew. In the learning sessions, the mothers and the aunt helped the children to make connections between the new words they were teaching and the words the children already knew.

Mother: 好，這個是什麼？ 在 "什麼"?

　　　Right! What is this? At "…"?

(Lucas looked at the ceiling and tried to figure out what the character was.)

Mother: 看著這個字。

　　　Look at this character.

Lucas looked at the character.

Lucas: 在花….?

　　　At flower "…."?

Mother: 很好，最後一個字你以前學過了。

　　　Very good.　You have learnt the last word.

Lucas: 嗯….我想不起來。

　　　Well, I don't remember.

Mother: 你喜歡去哪裡踢球？

　　　Where do you like to go to play ball?

Lucas: 阿，我知道了，公園！

　　　I know!　It is "park"!

Mother: 對，所以這個是 在…..?

　　　Correct! Therefore, this is "at …."?

Lucas: 在花園！

　　　At the flower park!- Garden

Mother: 很好！

　　　Well done!

The mother used the same strategies to teach him several new characters.　She commented:

"I have found that in Lucas' learning Mandarin, writing and recognizing Chinese characters are the most difficult for him. He can speak very well and can understand most of what I say to him. However, even though he knows the terms in Mandarin, he cannot write nor recognize these terms in written form. I think the only way to improve his literacy in Mandarin is practising the characters every day. I have also found that it is quite helpful if I give him some examples when teaching him some new words, especially those examples he already knows…" (Lucas' mother)

Writing Chinese characters

When the mothers and the aunt taught the children to write Chinese characters, like the way they were taught in school in Chinese society, the prime focus was on the different types of strokes and stroke order. There are eight basic strokes in Chinese characters; "The Eight Principles of Yong" are commonly referred to when teaching Chinese characters (Zhang et al., 2010).
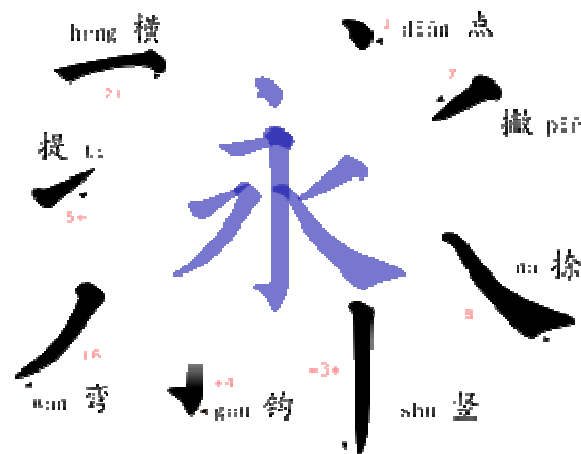
Figure 7.1 The Eight Principles of Yong

The rules for writing Chinese characters are intended to smooth hand movement and to promote faster and more beautiful writing.   The basic stroke order is from left to right and from top to bottom.   Because writing characters in the official stroke order can greatly facilitate learning and memorization, children are required to learn and use it in school.   All of the children in this study were also asked to follow the order strictly.
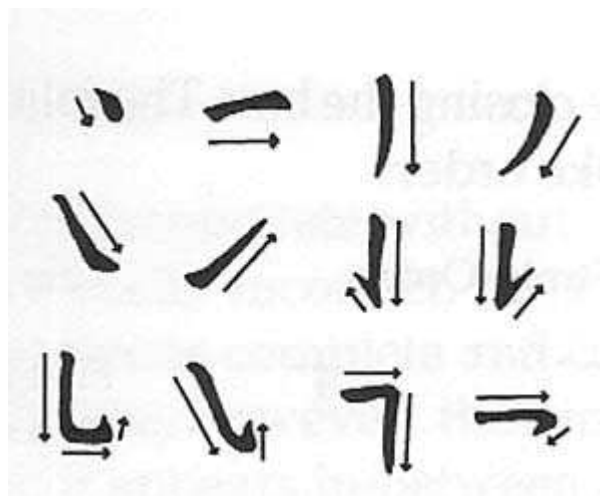
Figure 7.2 Directions of basic strokes

Figure 7.3 Examples of stroke orders of Chinese characters

Mother: 你寫這一個字。

Write this character.

(Lucas started to copy a character to his exercise book.)

Mother: Lucas, 你的筆劃錯了！

　　　　Lucas, your stroke order is not correct.

(The mother erased the character Lucas had written wrote.)

Mother: 我來告訴你。

　　　　Let me tell you the right order.

(Lucas tried to write the character again.)

Mother: 很好！

　　　　Very good!

Mother: 好，我們接下來寫這一個字。

　　　　Next, let's write this character.

Lucas: 是先寫這裡嗎？

　　　　Is this the first stroke?

Mother: 你以前寫過了，你翻前面看看。

　　　　You wrote this before.　Let's check the previous pages and see if you can

　　　　find it.

(Lucas found the character and looked at it carefully.)

Mother: 從這一點開始，記不記得？然後長長的一橫…

　　　　From this dot, remember? Then the long horizontal line…

Photo 7.8 Lucas' character exercise book- basic stroke

Photo 7.9 Lucas' exercise book for Chinese characters

Despite all of the mothers' and the aunt's emphasis on stroke order, they adopted different styles to guide and demonstrate how to write Chinese characters.   In

comparison, Sophie's mother and Kaixin's aunt used a more traditional style than Curtis' and Lucas' mother. They showed the children how to write a character and asked the children to copy it to their exercise books and repeat several times until they filled an entire line in their exercise book with that character. The following interaction can illustrate this.
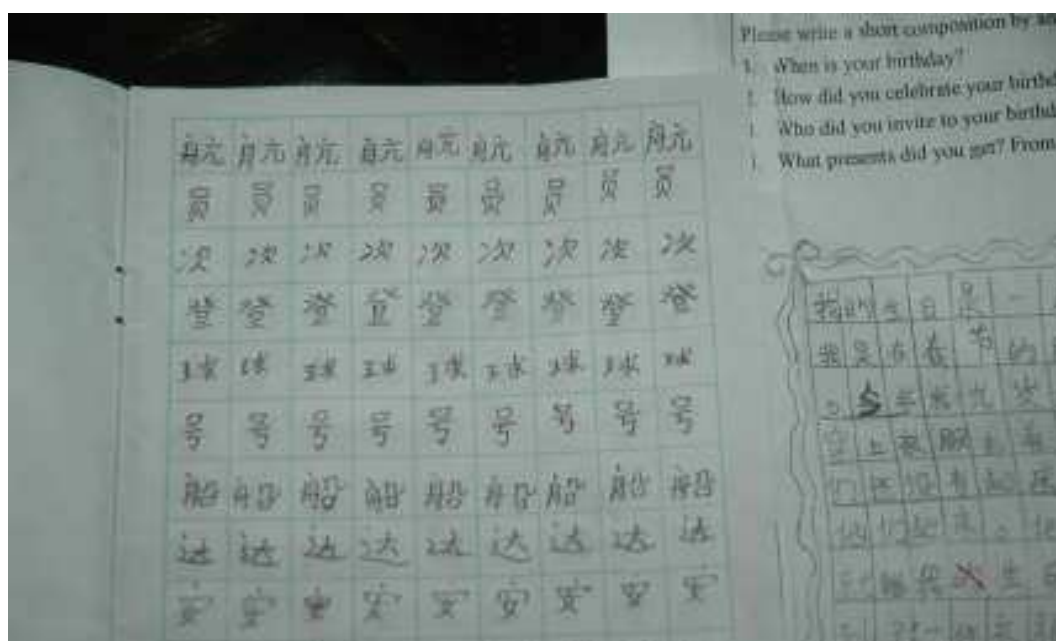
Photo 7.10 Sophie's exercise book for Chinese characters

Kaixin was going to write some new Chinese characters she learnt in the Chinese school. Kaixin's aunt described the stroke order for Kaixin and told her how she should write the character. She also used her finger to show her the order in the air as well as showing her on a piece of paper.

Aunt: 先寫這裡，這一點，然後這個長的，然後一橫…….

這是 "所"以的 "所"， 記得 "所以" 嗎？

Start from here, this dot, and then this long stroke, and then the horizontal

line……

This is "suo", in "suo yi", which means "therefore".　Do you remember "suo yi"?

Kaixin: 記得。

 Yes, I remember.

Aunt: 我再寫一次給你看，左邊是窗"戶"的"戶"，你以前寫過的。

 右邊是一"斤"的"斤"，計不記得？

 "戶　斤"　就是　"所"

 ……　這樣會寫了嗎？

Let me show you how to write it again.　The left side is the word of window. You have learnt this word already.　The right side is the word of kilogram. Do you remember this character?

…….Do you know how to write it now?

Kaixin: 會了。

 Yes.

Kaixin nodded her head.

Aunt:　你自己寫一次看看。

 Ok. Try it by yourself.

(Kaixin continued to write the character ten more times.)

Kaixin's aunt stated:

"Kaixin should have the basic idea of how to write a Chinese character already.

Therefore, I hope she can take the responsibility for learning; that is to figure

out how to write a Chinese character correctly without my instruction.   Of course, she sometimes encounters difficult words and she might be confused.   In this situation, I would give her some instructions.   I would remind her how to write those words by giving her some old characters she can write already.   This strategy is always very useful.   She can write the new and difficult character on her own in the end."

Kaixin's aunt and Sophie's mother asked the children to repeat writing each character at least ten times.   Sophie's mother suggested:

"When we were in school, our teachers didn't tell us the origin of each word.   They just asked us to practise again and again.   I can still remember that I used to write the same character on the exercise book fifty times.   It was a very common assignment for us.   "Practice makes perfect."   That is how we learnt Chinese characters in school."

On the other hand, Curtis' mother and Lucas' mother were influenced by the education they received in western societies and so they used slightly different methods to instruct the children to learn to write Chinese characters.

Different from the other mothers, Curtis' mother didn't ask Curtis to practise characters on a piece of paper but on a mini white board instead.   Curtis' mother sometimes took him to have their learning session in a park and practiced the Chinese characters on the ground by using a twig.

"Learning to write Chinese characters has always been the most challenging task for Curtis.   The traditional way of copying characters again and again onto an exercise book can be very boring for such a young boy.   Therefore, I

try to use different methods to make the writing become more interesting and fun.   Curtis enjoys learning to write Chinese characters so far."

(Curtis' mother)

As she did when helping Curtis to recognize characters, Curtis' mother explained the structure of each character, the origin and evolution to help him remember characters more easily.

Establishing meanings

In order to help the children remember Chinese characters more effectively, the mothers and the aunt applied many strategies to establish meanings of characters. The common strategies used by all of them were breaking down phrases into words and using words to make phrases and sentences.

The following example occurred when Sophie and her mother worked on idioms; Chinese idioms are combinations of four characters.   The example shows how the mother established meanings of new words and idioms for Sophie as well as how the mother and Sophie negotiated each other's engagement in the learning activity.   It also illustrated how the mother connected the new concept to what Sophie had learnt before.

Mother: 你先念念這些成語，有很多是你已經學過的字

Read these idioms first; you have learnt a lot of these characters already.

Sophie: 鳥語花香， (niao yu hua xiang)，

家喻戶曉，(jia yu hu xiao)，

250

不….?? (bu……??)

Mother: 不 "知" 不 "覺"， (bu zhi bu "jue")

"知" 知道的知，

It is "zhi", know something, be aware of something.

"覺" ，感覺的 "覺"，覺得的 "覺"，

It is "jue"; the same word for feeling, "Gan jue", "jue de"

記得嗎?

Do you remember?

Sophie: 喔，不知不覺

Ok, bu zhi bu "jue"

是什麼意思呢？不知道也不感覺？

What does it mean?　You don't know and you don't feel?

Mother: 對阿，就是你不知道也沒有感覺的時候，事情一下就過去了。

That is right.　It means something happening quickly without your knowing it.

Sophie: 下一個是什麼？？

What is the next one?

Mother: "花" 言巧語 ， 開花的花

"Hua" yian qiao yu.　It is "hua"，the same as flower "hua"

Sophie: 花….喔 對， "花" 言巧語

"Hua"….Right!　"Hua" yian qiao yu.

是什麼意思？

What does it mean?

Mother: "言語" 就是說的話

"Yan yu" means the words people say.

"巧"是聰明的意思

"Qiao" means clever or cunning.

你猜猜是什麼意思。

Can you figure out what this idiom means?

Sophie: 聰明的話，像花一樣的話…..

Clever words, words like flowers?

Mother: 花漂亮嗎？

Are flowers beautiful?

Sophie: 很漂亮！

Very beautiful!

Mother: 聰明的話，是好聽的話還是難聽的話？

When words are used cleverly, do they sound pleasant or unpleasant?

Sophie: 好聽

Pleasant.

Mother: 所以四個字合在一起就是 把話說得很漂亮，很好聽的意思。

Therefore, the four-word idiom means that someone used words cleverly in order to please people or persuade people, such as "flattery".

Sophie: 我知道了！

I got it!

These idioms are very difficult for a young child to learn. Sophie's mother was aware of that. However, when asked why she started to teach Sophie the difficult

idioms, she suggested:

"The idioms are very important in the language of Mandarin as well as in Chinese culture. These idioms are not only for writing but they are also very common in daily conversation. I think it is better for her to learn these as early as possible. Back in China, all children start to learn these idioms when they are very young; sometimes when they just start to learn to talk. Children recite these idioms without knowing what they mean. When they get older, they get to know the meaning anyway. Sophie has learnt some of these words before; therefore, I think it won't be too difficult for her to learn... If she doesn't know the meaning of a new idiom, I usually explain the characters individually. I also remind her that she has learnt some of these words already and then she can guess what the idiom means. I also think it is a good practice to review what she has learnt." (Sophie's mother)

After the first activity, Sophie's mother asked her to write down all of these idioms.

Mother: 你把這些成語寫一下。

　　　　Now write down all of these idioms.

Sophie: 可是這些字我寫過了。

　　　　But I wrote most of these words before.

Mother: 以前是一個字　一個字寫，這些是成語不一樣。現在連成語一起寫，四
　　　　個字　四個字　一起寫。

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We wrote those words separately before; however, they are now in different

idioms.   It is different.   We need to write four characters together as in an

idiom.

Sophie: 可是有些字 我不知道怎麼寫。

　　　　But I don't know how to write some of them.

Mother: 沒關係，我會教你。

　　　　It is ok.   I will teach you how to write these words.

Sophie's mother broke up the four-word idioms and explained them word by word

and she gave clues to Sophie to enable her to connect the known to the new.

Another example is Lucas and his mother.   In the following interactions, we can see

Lucas' mother reinforced meanings of some words by asking Lucas to make phrases

and sentences.   We can also find the similar pattern here that the caregiver, Lucas

mother, helped Lucas to connect the new to the known.

Lucas' mother pointed out one character in the practice booklet and asked Lucas to

copy that character.

Mother: 這個字是什麼字？

　　　　What is this character?

Lucas: 牙 。

"*Ya*"　　(which means tooth and teeth.)

Mother: 有什麼詞裡面有 "牙" ？

　　Can you think of any phrase with "Ya"?

Lucas: 嗯…. "牙" 齒 ， "牙" 膏….

　　Well…..Tooth, tooth paste!

Mother: 很好！再想想還有什麼？

　　Well done!　Can you think of anything else?

Lucas: …..想不起來….

　　……Can't think of anything….

Mother: 你睡覺以前要做什麼？

　　What do you always do before you go to bed?

Lucas: 喔，刷 "牙" ！

　　Oh! Brush "teeth"!

Mother: 很好，那你 "牙" 齒痛，我們去看 "牙" 醫，對不對？

　　Very good!　When your teeth have some problems, we go to see a "dentist",

　　right?

……

Mother: 這是什麼字？

　　What is this character?

Lucas: 門。

    "*Men*"   (which means door)

Mother: "門"有什麼詞？

    What phrases have "*men*"?

Lucas: 大 "門"，開 "門"，關 "門"

    Big gate, open the door and close the door.

An example in the case of Curtis, his mother's asked him to make phrases by using words he had recently learnt as well as making sentences.

Curtis mother was reading a story with him, in which he came across some new words. The mother explained these new words to him.

Curtis: 樹

    "*Shu*" (which means tree)

Mother: 對，很好。你要不要造一個詞？

    That is correct. Well done! Do you want to make a phrase?

Curtis: …(Trying to think of some phrases)…

(Mother gave Curtis a hint by using her hands suggesting something big.)

Curtis: 喔！大樹！

    Oh, a big tree!

Mother: 對！大樹！還有呢？

    Right! A big tree! Anything else?

Curtis: 嗯…

   Well…

Mother: 不同的樹阿，像松樹？

   What about different kinds of trees? Such as a pine tree?

Curtis: 蘋果樹，橘子樹！

   An apple tree! An orange tree!

Mother: 對了！ 真棒！

   That's right! Great!

(Curtis smiled happily after he found some phrases.)

Mother: 你用 "樹"造一個句子，好嗎？

   Can you make a sentence by using "tree"?

Curtis: 公園裡有很多樹。

   There are a lot of trees in a park.

Mother: 非常好。那用 "種樹" 來造句好嗎？

   Very good!   How about using "planting trees" to make a sentence?

Curtis: 媽媽在種樹。

   Mother is planting a tree.

Mother: 非常好。

   Very good!

Curtis' mother suggested that making phrases and sentences were very helpful for Curtis to understand and remember new words.

   "I always ask Curtis to make phrases and sentences by himself when we learn

      new words.   On the one hand, I can check if he really understands what the

      word means; on the other hand, he feels that he can use the new words he has

just learnt, which is great.   I learnt English in this way and I found it very

helpful.   That is why I also apply this method to teach Curtis."

<div align="right">(Curtis' mother)</div>

The learning activities discussed above illustrate how the mothers helped the children

establish meanings of new words by breaking down the words and making phrases

and sentences.   The mothers all believed that their methods helped the children to a

great degree.   When breaking down the words into separate characters, the mothers

could link them to the words they already knew so as that the children got to

understand the new words easier.   When making phrases and sentences, the children

themselves could use the words with which they were familiar and made links to the

new words.   The children felt more confident and enjoyed creating new

combinations by using both the words they already knew and the words they had just

learnt.

In addition to breaking words down and making phrases and sentences, some of the

mothers referred synonyms and antonyms to emphasize the meaning of new words.

Some mothers established meanings by drawing on examples in daily life.

In the example below, Curtis and his mother were working on a nursery rhyme;

Curtis' mother was explaining some new terms.

Mother: 你知道什麼是 "院子"?

    Do you know what "*yuan zi*" is?

Curtis: 我知道。

    Yes, I know what it is.

Mother: 什麼是 "院子" 呢？

Can you tell me what it is?

Curtis: Garage!

Mother: Garage 是車庫，"院子" 是開放的，open 的。

Garage is for cars; "*yuan zi*" is an open space.

Curtis: Pavilion?

Mother: 不是，你想想，像外婆家後面那個地方，有時在房子的前面。

No, it is like the space behind Taiwanese Grandma's house.　Sometimes it can be in front of a house.

Curtis: 我知道了，像我們學校前面那一個，courtyard!

I know!　It is a courtyard, like the courtyard in front of my school!

Mother: 對了，很接近了。就是 yard!

That's right. Very close!　It is a yard.

Curtis: 喔！我知道，就是外婆家，我和表哥在跑的那裡。

Oh!　I got it!　It is where I always run with cousins at Grandma's place!

In this section, I discussed how the mothers and the aunt helped the children with Chinese characters: to recognize, to write and to remember their meanings.　Making connections to the known and the unknown and emphasizing radicals were used widely to foster the recognition of Chinese characters.　For writing Chinese characters, the mothers and the aunt focused on the stroke order.　Moreover, they drew on their personal experiences of learning Chinese characters in school and applied different ways of modeling and guiding.　I have also looked at the strategies they adopted to establish meanings of new words for their child, such as breaking words down into a single character and making phrases and sentences by using new words.　In addition, they made good use of examples from their daily lives to

enhance the child's understanding of the meaning.

7.3.3 Activities

Apart from the serious learning activities of reading and writing, the mothers designed various interesting activities for their children to make learning more fun.   These activities included songs, stories, games and other creative work.   Because of the mothers' background and learning experience, these activities were only observed in Curtis' and Lucas' learning sessions.

Curtis' fishing game

"I have read some books about children's learning; I have also found it true in my own experience: when young children start to learn a word, the word is like a picture for them instead of meaningful text, especially for Chinese ideographic characters.   I started to teach Curtis Chinese characters when he was three years old.   I apply the ideographic feature to teach Curtis…. In order to keep him interested and motivated, I often play different games with him and use various strategies.   He has found learning Chinese characters interesting and these games leave him with a vivid impression of Chinese characters…"

(Curtis' Mother; Chung in Gregory, 2008)

Curtis' mother used many interesting activities with Curtis to help him learn Chinese characters.   The fishing game is one example of these creative and fun activities.

Curtis' mother put paper fish on the floor, each of them having a Chinese character

written on it.   Curtis was holding a fishing rod and trying to fish.

Photo 7.11 Curtis' fishing game

Mother: Curtis 哪一個字是金？
               Curtis, which one is GOLD?

Curtis' eyes darted between the "fish" until they rested on the fish with the correct character on it.

Curtis: 我找到了！ 這一個是金！ 我要把他釣起來！
               I have found it!   This one is GOLD.   I will catch it!

Mother: 好棒阿！ 這是金， 什麼詞裡面有金呢？
                Great!   That's correct.   Can you give me a phrase with a GOLD in
                it?"

Curtis: 金魚的金！
                Goldfish!

Mother: 金魚！很好，你知道"魚"是哪一個字嗎？

Goldfish! Very good!　　Do you know which character is "fish"?

Curtis:　　　　　我知道！我找一找！
　　　　　　　　I know!　　Let me get it!

Curtis found the character for fish and he was very proud of himself.

Photo 7.12 Curtis fished the character for "fish"

Curtis could remember most of the characters written on the fish.　　However, there were still some he was confused of and he made some mistakes.　　Curtis' mother gave him some hints by pointing out the radicals of those characters.

Curtis' story poster

In addition to various activities for characters recognition, Curtis' mother spent a great amount of time reading Chinese story books with Curtis.　　She explained:

　　"I believe that reading is very good for his reading ability as well as writing

ability.　　We do a bit of reading everyday.　　I have noticed that he has improved his Chinese writing.　　He doesn't write like he is talking.　　He starts to use more phrases and terms he learns in books now."

(Curtis' Mother)

Photo 7.13 Curtis and his mother read a story together

Curtis' mother also tried different activities to make reading more interesting. One of the activities was story poster.　　Curtis' mother and Curtis read one of his favorite books together- a story of crayons.　　Curtis was very familiar with the story; he can recognise more than ninety percent of the characters in the book.　　This was a story about crayons escaping from their box to draw a picture together on a blank poster. Different coloured crayons draw different things; the yellow crayon draws the sun and an island, etc.　　Curtis' put up a poster; she had cut out some pieces of coloured paper matching objects from the story, such as a yellow island, a green tree and a little boy,

etc.　Curtis read the story with his mother's help and then as the story progressed he was supposed to stick the relevant parts to the poster.

Curtis:　　　….黃蠟筆說：　我是太陽的顏色，　所以我要畫大太陽。

　　　　　　….Yellow crayon said: I am the colour of the sun; so I am going to draw a big sun.

Curtis read aloud and then picked up the yellow sun, walked to the poster and stuck it on.

Curtis:　　　接下來呢？　這個是什麼字？　"？"到我了？

　　　　　　And then?　What's this word? My something?

Mother:　　輪…，　輪到我了

　　　　　　It is "turn".　It is my turn.

Curtis looked at the word closely and carefully again.

Curtis:　　　喔！　對！　輪到我了！　咖啡色的蠟筆說，　我要畫站在島上的孩。

　　　　　　(Oh! Right! It is my "turn".　The brown crayon said "I am going to draw a boy standing on the island.)

Curtis continued to read:

　　　　　　咖啡色蠟筆還畫了兩根樹幹呢！

　　　　　　(The brown crayon drew two trunks as well.)

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Mother:　　　　念得真好， 現在要貼什麼呢 ？

　　　　　　　You read very well.　What are you going to put on the poster now?

Curtis:　　　　我要貼小男孩還有樹幹

　　　　　　　I am going to put on the little boy and the trunks.

Curtis:　　　　等一下我要貼樹葉

　　　　　　　I am going to put on the leaves for the trunks later.

……..

Curtis:　　　　為什麼男孩看起來很傷心呢 ？

　　　　　　　Why does the boy look very sad?

Curtis frowned to mimic a sad face when he read this line.　Curtis' mother said she always used gestures and facial or vocal expression to help to illustrate the stories.

By the end of the story, Curtis had completed his picture.　He enjoyed the entire process very much, devoting himself to the reading and the activity.

(Chung, in Gregory, 2008)

Photo 7.14 Curtis completed his story poster

Lucas' short drama

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, Lucas' mother and grandparents bought Lucas many animated DVDs, narrated in Mandarin. Lucas was very interested in the DVDs, amongst which Monkey King and Doraemon were his favourites. Monkey King is the main character from a classic of Chinese literature: *Journey to the West*. Doraemon is a Japanese cartoon series about an earless robotic cat named Doraemon, who travels back in time from the future to help a schoolboy, Nobita Nobi. Doraemon was sent back by Nobita Nobi's great-great grandson to improve Nobita's circumstances so that his descendants might enjoy a better future. Nobita was a miserable and misfortunate boy manifested in the form of poor school achievement, physical disasters, and bullying throughout his life. Doraemon had a pocket from which he produced many gadgets, medicines, and tools from the future. The more

famous ones include the "bamboo-copter", a small head accessory that allows flight; the "Anywhere Door", a door that opens up to any place the user wishes; and the "Time Machine".

Lucas' mother frequently performed role play with Lucas in their learning sessions. They took turns to play the roles of Doraemon and Nobita.

"Sometimes I am Doraemon and Lucas is Nobita and some sometimes we swap our roles.　When I started this activity, I set the storyline and Lucas just replied to my questions.　Now his Mandarin is good enough to say what he wants to say; I leave the story open and we create the short drama together."

(Lucas' mother)

Mother: 你今天是 Doraemon　還是　Nobita?

　　　　Are you Doraemon or Nobita today?

Lucas: 嗯…我是 Nobita.

　　　　Well… I am Nobita.

Mother: 好，你今天想要做什麼？

　　　　Ok, what do you want to do today?

Lucas: 我想要去朋友的生日派對。

　　　　I want to go to a friend's birthday party.

Mother: 好，我把我的任意門拿出來。你的朋友住在哪裡？

　　　　No problem.　I will get my "anywhere door" out.　Where does your friend live?

Lucas: 哈哈哈！他住在…嗯…樹裡！

　　　　(Laughing) He lives …well.. in a tree!

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Mother: 他住在樹裡嗎？

        Does he live in a tress?

Lucas: 很多樹的那個地方。

        The place with a lot of trees.

Mother: 你是說森林裡嗎？

        Do you mean in the forest?

Lucas: 對！是森林！

        Yes, forest!

Mother: 好，過這個門，你就到森林裡了！

        No problem.　Go through this door and then you will be in the forest.

Lucas: 可是，我還沒有買生日禮物還有卡片。

        But I haven't got any birthday present and card.

Mother: 好，那你想去哪裡買禮物和卡片？

        Ok, where do you want to go to get presents and a card?

Lucas: 嗯…去買玩具的地方。

        Well….Go to a place where you can buy toys.

Mother: 是 玩具店

        It is "*wan ju dian*", a toy shop

Lucas: 好，玩具店！

        Ok, a toy shop

Lucas' mother also noted:

"Lucas likes to do this kind of role play with me.　He always tries to give me challenging different tasks, like he saw in Doraemon.　I think this is a good activity because he can use the words and sentences he knows and learn some new words as well.　In the Chinese school, they were working on the topic of

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"Happy Birthday". That is why he wanted to talk about birthday today. In school, he learnt birthday, birthday presents, cards and toys, etc. He used many of those words today."

Photo 7.15 Lucas' Doraemon DVDs

7.3.4   Correction and feedback

Another strategy observed is how the mothers (and Kaixin's aunt) corrected mistakes and gave feedback. An Ran (2000) examined how the Mainland Chinese mothers in Reading, UK, responded to their children when they taught their children to read and write Mandarin. These mothers' reponses to the children were both negative and positive. An Ran noted that the mothers' use of praise was direct and might be perceived by a western audience as unenthusiastic. This was attributed to a cultural phenomenon and is reflected to some examples in my data.

Sophie's mother and Kaixin's aunt tended to promptly point out every mistake the children made in writing and speaking and corrected them.   They believed that by doing so, the children would learn the words clearly without any ambiguity.   They also both agreed that this method worked best for their children.

On the contrary, Curtis' and Lucas' mother didn't correct every mistake.   They chose what they thought was an appropriate time to point out the mistake.   Instead of telling the children the answer, they encouraged the children to look for the right answer.

> "Curtis is a shy boy and won't take any risk nor try adventurous things.   I
> know if I keep on correcting him every time he made mistakes, he would lose
> enthusiasm to explore new things.   So when he made a mistake, I would wait
> for a better time to tell him and also encourage him to try different ways."
>
> (Curtis' mother)

Moreover, the data have also shown that Lucas' and Curtis' mother complimented the children more frequently than Sophie's mother and Kaixin's aunt did.

> "I think it is because the way I was taught in Chinese society.   My teachers
> and my parents didn't really compliment me in any occasion.   When I moved
> to England, I realized Western parents and teachers compliment children a lot.
> This is something I need to learn and adjust myself.   Now I always remind
> myself to acknowledge and compliment Sophie when she achieves something.
> Even though I am not good at saying good things about her, I always buy her
> presents when she performs well."
>
> (Sophie's mother)

In this section, I discussed the pedagogic methods the mothers adopted to teach their child during the learning session. The pedagogies they used were affected by their background as well as their experience of learning in school. The mothers valued the importance of the learning sessions and wanted their children to feel the same. They carefully choose the materials they used in the sessions and signaled that a serious and formal session was going to start.

All of the mothers and the aunt regarded learning Chinese characters as the most difficult yet implies the important task. They spent a great amount of time helping the children recognize, write and understand Chinese characters such as focusing on radicals, stroke orders and explaining words separately as well as making new sentences. Nevertheless, Sophie's mother and Kaixin's aunt applied more traditional Chinese methods of instruction compared to Curtis' and Lucas' mother, who received education in western societies and had experienced different style of teaching. Lucas' mother and Curtis' mother designed various interesting activities in order to make the learning session fun. They incorporated painting, a fishing game, role-play and singing into their learning sessions.

Another issue observed is the timing and the way the mothers and the aunt corrected the children and gave them feedback. The different methods of correcting and feedback were the result of the mothers' and the aunt's background and learning experience. Nevertheless, these different methods appear to have worked well helping the children's learning.

7.4 Post Learning Session Discussion

In the previous two sections, I discussed for the families with a Chinese background how the mothers and the aunt acted as Mandarin teachers for the child studied. They set up learning sessions at home and applied different techniques for teaching Mandarin. Those families without any Chinese background, because of limited Mandarin ability, organised private tutors to teach their children instead. The parents prepared their children for the private tuition, such as making sure the children completed the homework and were well-prepared for their tuition sessions. In this section, I look at another strategy the parents without any Chinese background, (Caroline's and Philip's parents) applied: showing the support and interest in the children's learning progress and achievement.

Caroline's parents

Caroline's father cannot speak Mandarin and her mother only had very basic level of Mandarin; therefore, they couldn't provide direct linguistic help in the same manner as the other mothers discussed above. Instead, as mentioned in the outer layer of analysis, they arranged learning opportunities, such as Mandarin school, trips to China and private tuition. During the private tutoring, Caroline's mother always sat at the back of the room and listened to what the teacher taught.

> "Even though I don't understand what the teacher says exactly, I can get some ideas about what the teacher covers in that class and what the homework is. When we go back home, I can make sure she does her homework both for Chinese school and for the tutor. I can also make sure

that she is well prepared for these classes." (Caroline' mother)

The parents regularly discussed her learning situation with Caroline. The mother sometimes asked Caroline to read the textbook out loud in front of her. Although Caroline knew that her mother couldn't understand anything, she appreciated the mother's interest and positive attitude towards her learning of Mandarin.

"My mother always cares about what I did in Chinese school and the private classes I do on Saturdays. She is very interested in what I learn and wants me to teach her as well. She also offered to check my homework for me and sometimes she listens to my reading. I am very happy that she is very pleased with my work." (Caroline)

Photo 7.16 Caroline and her parents
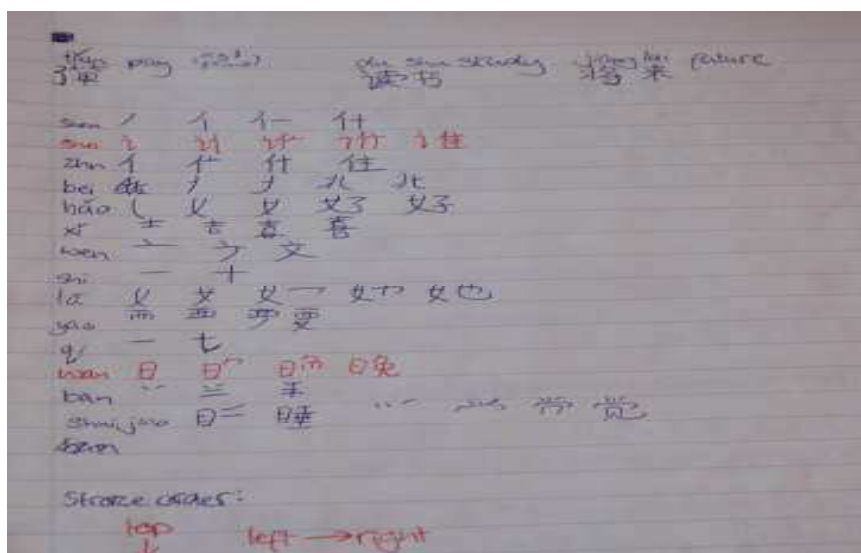
Photo 7.17 Caroline's character exercise book

Philip's parents

Philip's parents, similar to Caroline's, cannot speak Mandarin at all. They could not provide teaching sessions themselves. Therefore, in addition to Chinese school, Philip's parents also had a private tutor going to their home to teach Philip. In fact, having extra private tutoring was Philip's idea because he wanted to catch up with Lucas in Chinese school. The tutor went to teach Philip one hour per week; she mainly reviewed what had been taught in Mandarin school and made sure Philip understood everything. Philip's mother sometimes sat next to him and tried to learn some Mandarin at the same time. Philip's parents tried their best to keep up with Philip's learning progress by communicating with the teacher in the Chinese school as well as the private tutor.

> "I cannot help directly teaching him how to write or how to read. I make
>
> sure he completes his homework before he goes to Mandarin school. I
>
> sometimes ask him to tell me what he did in class that week and show me if

he can say anything."   (Philip's mother)

Philips' parents showed the value they perceived and interest in Philip's learning of Mandarin by discussing with him what he did in Mandarin school.   They also asked Philip to teach them some phrases and some Chinese characters.

Photo 7.18 Philip and his Chinese textbook

Photo 7.19 Philip's character exercise book

7.5 Summary

In this chapter, I analysed the inner layer of the data: the pedagogic methods used by the parents. The parents with a Chinese background set up special learning sessions at home and the mothers (the aunt in Kaixin's case) acted as teachers. The parents without any Chinese background supported their child's learning by having a private tutor to teach their child and being involved in the tuition. I discussed the pedagogic methods from three perspectives: preparing for the learning sessions, during learning sessions and discussion after learning sessions. When preparing for the learning sessions, the mothers and the aunt focused on the tools, learning environment, gestures and postures and volume. The mothers and the aunt had different perceptions and methods in dealing with these issues resulted from their social and cultural background discussed in the outer layer of data analysis. During learning sessions, the mothers and the aunt drew on their experience of learning to choose learning material and teach Chinese characters. Bearing in mind the importance of motivation and cultural awareness as discussed in the middle layer of data analysis, the mothers used different activities to foster the learning.

In the families without any Chinese background, although the parents couldn't provide direct teaching, the parents arranged the private tutors for their child. They showed their value of and interest in their child's learning by discussion their child's learning progress with them.

Chapter 8

Schools at Home

Chapter 8 Schools at Home

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Schools at Home

8.2.1 Question 1: Whether and if so in what ways do parents of different backgrounds support their children in learning Mandarin as a second or a foreign language?

8.2.2 Question 2: How was the parental support affected by social and cultural as well as parents' own educational experiences?

8.2.3 Children's attitude towards learning Mandarin and achievement

8.3 Contributions to Theoretical Perspective

8.4 Implications in Practice

8.4.1 For parents

8.4.2 For teachers and Chinese community schools

8.5 Future Research

8.6 Summary

Chapter 8 Schools at Home

8.1 Introduction

Inspired by my personal experience: the parental support I was given while learning Mandarin and English and having witnessed parental support of my students at the Hua Hsia Mandarin School in London, I investigated how parents of various backgrounds supported their children learning Mandarin as a second or foreign language.   This study was intended to answer two questions:

1 Whether and if so in what ways do parents of different backgrounds support their children in learning Mandarin as a second or a foreign language?

2 How is this affected by social, cultural as well as the parents' own educational experience?

I have argued, with the support of empirical data, that the parents, regardless of their backgrounds (whether or not they have a Chinese background), employed various methods and resources to support their children in learning Mandarin; I have further argued that the methods they used were affected significantly by their social and cultural background as well as their own educational experiences.   The strategies they applied at home were like setting up a small school in the home.   With the aid of parental support, the children in this study were highly motivated to learn Mandarin and were high achievers.   In this concluding chapter, I summarize the findings of this study.   Furthermore I discuss how this study contributes to the development of theory as well as practice.   Finally, I suggest possible scope for future research.

8.2 Schools at Home

The six families studied in this research were categorized into three groups: in Sophie's and Kaixin's families: both parents have Chinese background; Curtis' and Lucas' families: have one parent of Chinese background; while Caroline and Philip have no Chinese heritage. Sophie's, Kaixin's, Curtis' and Lucas' parents set specific Chinese learning time at home for their children and the mothers (or in the case of Kaixin, her aunt) acted as teachers. Caroline's and Philip's parents arranged private tutors to teach them. As discussed in Chapter 2-Home Support, Hannon (1993) argued that home learning was usually shaped by interest and need, while school learning was shaped by curricular objectives. Home learning was often spontaneous, flexible in duration and rarely formally assessed. School learning was timetabled, of fixed duration and often formally assessed. Griffiths and Hamilton (1987) suggested that learning at home can take place at any time and might be called "incidental learning". However, in my study, instead of being spontaneous and flexible in duration and in addition to "incidental learning", the parents had fixed timetables for their children to learn Mandarin at home. In Sophie's, Curtis' and Lucas' families, the learning sessions occurred every day, while in the other families, the home learning sessions occurred once every week. The parents regarded the learning sessions as formal and serious class hours. They set a fixed time and a specific place for these sessions. The teachers (the mothers and the aunt) made sure the children and the environment were suitable prepared to carry out the lesson. They tried to recreate the classrooms of their own childhoods. Therefore, the learning events in my study, although home-based, were school-like. In the following section, I summarize the findings in order to answer the two main questions.

8.2.1 Question 1: Whether and if so in what ways do parents of different backgrounds support their children in learning Mandarin as a second or a foreign language?

As reviewed in Chapter 2- Home Support, parental teaching styles can be direct and indirect.　When the parents have enough supporting knowledge and ability, they can teach their children directly.　Of the parents in this study, those with a Chinese background had sufficient knowledge and linguistic ability to teach their children Mandarin directly.　Their ways of direct teaching were discussed in Chapter 7- the inner layer of the data analysis: pedagogic methods.
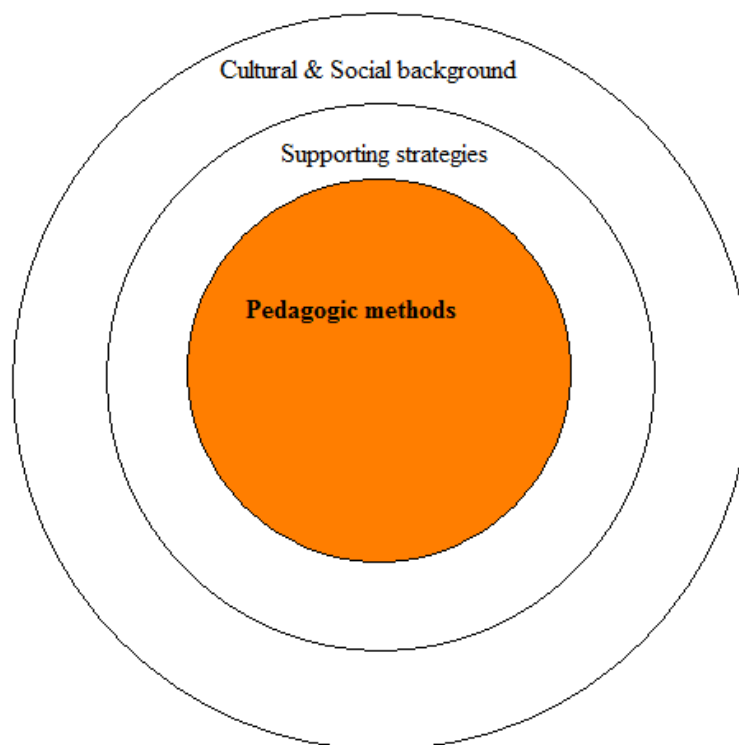
Figure 8.1 Inner layer:-Pedagogic methods in multi layering of analysis

The mothers and the aunt, who acted as teachers, applied various pedagogic methods

in preparation of and while conducting the learning sessions. They ensured that the stationery and the learning environment were properly prepared for the lessons and that the child's gesture and posture were correct for learning and writing. The mothers and Kaixin's aunt asked the children to speak and reply their questions loudly and clearly. In addition to the school work each child took home from the Chinese school, the mothers and the aunt selected materials which suited their child the best. Similar to a school teacher, they started each learning session with warming up activities. Teaching Chinese characters was an essential part of the learning sessions. The mothers and the aunt employed many methods to help their children to recognize and write Chinese characters, as well as to remember their meanings. The strategies included introducing radicals of characters, making connections between known characters and new ones, emphasis on stroke order, explaining the composition, the origin and the evolution of a character, breaking down phrases into words and using those words to build other phrases and sentences. Additionally, Curtis' and Lucas' mothers added in interesting activities to enhance the children's motivation for learning, such as fishing games, story posters and short drama. All of these strategies were from the mothers' and the aunt's own experiences of learning Mandarin at school. Some of these strategies were affected by Chinese culture and society, a topic I discuss in my answer to the second question.

In addition to direct teaching, parents can indirectly create opportunities and facilitate their children's learning by providing access to other people and activities. They can create opportunities for their children to spend time with siblings, other adults and extended family members. In this study, the parents without a Chinese background adopted this method to create opportunities for their children to learn Mandarin. A well know moral phrase in Chinese goes: 潛移默化- to affect unobtrusively and

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imperceptibly.   The parents who were able to provide direct teaching also provided

indirect teaching at the same time.
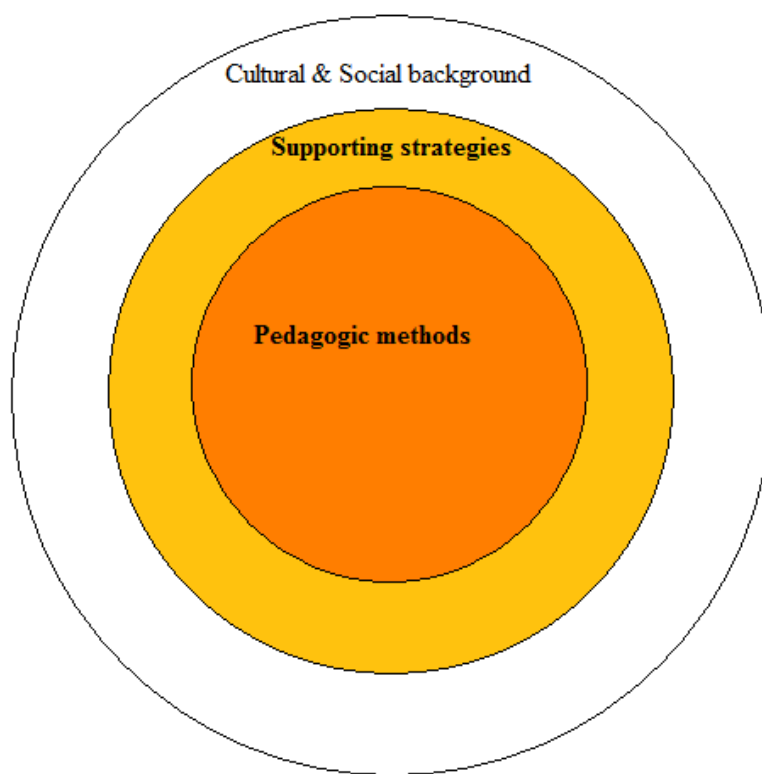
Figure 8.2 Middle layer:-Supporting strategies in multi layering of analysis

The middle layer of data analysis- supporting strategies- best illustrated how the

parents indirectly created the access to and opportunities to learn Mandarin, which

enhanced the children's motivation and cultural awareness.   The common supporting

strategy, across three groups, was sending the children to the Chinese community

school.   The parents of a Chinese background enhanced their children's motivation

by helping their children to recognize and understand their Chinese ethnic origin.

These families kept frequent contact with friends and relatives in Chinese society.

Moreover, they also ate Chinese food regularly and some of them made trips to China,

Taiwan and the US to see their Chinese relatives.   In addition to retaining access to

Chinese society, Curtis' and Lucas' families also maintain regular contact with the

families they got to know at the Chinese school.   The families without any Chinese background, Caroline's and Philips' families, got access to the Chinese community by attending the Chinese school and maintained close links with the families they got to know there.

In addition to raising the children's motivation, the parents also made a great effort to develop their children's awareness of Chinese culture.   Hancock (2006) indicated that acquiring Chinese literacy was considered to be connected with the transmission of traditional Chinese cultural values by the parents in the study (discussed in Chapter 2).   In this study, all parents used Chinese culture to teach Mandarin and the mothers who acted as Mandarin teachers also transmitted cultural values when they taught. The varying backgrounds of these families led to different emphases on Chinese culture and the employment of various methods, which I analyzed both from the aesthetic sense: the media; cinema; music; literature; the Internet; art and food as well as the sociological sense: family; home life and community; institutions; leisure and customs.

In terms of the aesthetic sense of culture, the parents of Chinese heritage background did not stress this dimension since the culture was embedded in their daily lives. The other parents provided plentiful resources, such as access to Chinese TV programmes and films, Chinese literature, attending cultural events and Chinese related exhibition in museums, learning traditional artistry and making trips to China or Taiwan.   An unexpected finding, in this perspective, was that all of the families regarded Chinese food as an important part of Chinese culture and all regularly ate Chinese food either at home or in restaurants.

As for the sociological sense of culture, the parents of Chinese descent drew on their children's existing "funds of knowledge" and the resources available to them from their families and the Chinese community. They drew on these resources to enhance their children's awareness of Chinese culture as well as to aid their learning Mandarin. The parents without a Chinese background created opportunities for their children to gain the knowledge themselves. All of the families sent their children to the Chinese school, which was considered as important as mainstream school by the Chinese parents. By the parents without any Chinese background the Chinese school was regarded as a good opportunity to socialize with other families who were also interested in learning Chinese language and culture. Chinese customs were also introduced by the parents to not only motivate the children but also to understand Chinese culture better.

Apart from employing different resources to motivate the children and enhance their cultural understanding, another crucial method adopted by all was in the value they showed they placed on and the expectations they had of their children's Mandarin learning.

In this section, I summarized the methods the parents used to directly and indirectly support their children's learning of Mandarin in order to address my first research question. The parents, whether or not they were of Chinese descent, made good use of their knowledge, understanding and resources to support their children's learning.

8.2.2 Question 2: How was the parental support affected by social and cultural as well as parents' own educational experiences?

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Heath (1983) suggested that what and how children learn at home can vary significantly with the culture and values of their family background and communities.   In Chapter 5, 6 and 7, I analyzed the data from the outer layer-cultural and social background, and the middle layer – supporting strategies and to the inner layer – pedagogic methods.   The data have shown clearly that the support the parents provided and the way they delivered their support were significantly affected by their social, cultural and educational background.
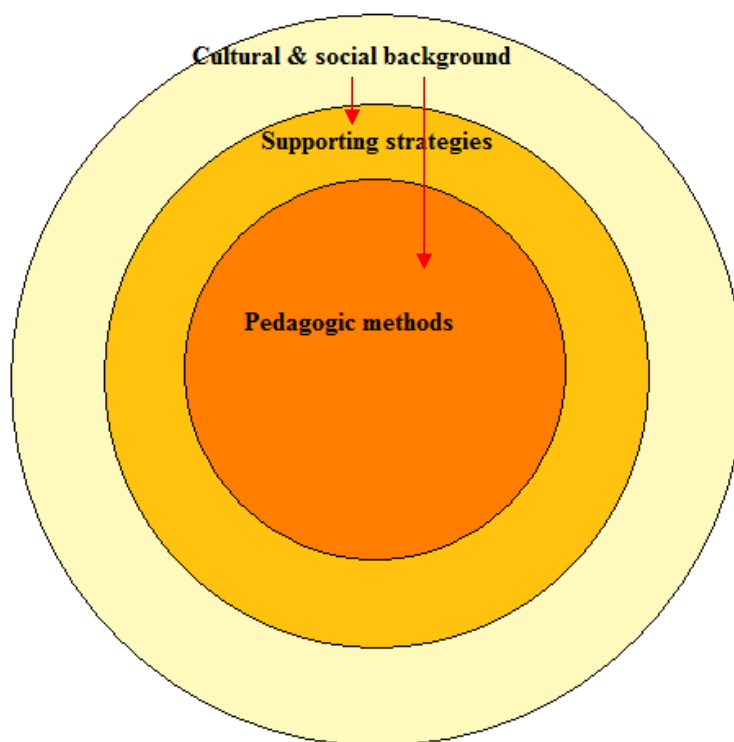
Figure 8.3 Outer layer:-Cultural and social background affecting parental support

As discussed in Chapter 2, An Ran (2000) suggested that many Chinese parents found that they have sole responsibility for teaching their child to read and write Chinese. They took a highly structured instructional approach and used their own experience of learning to read and write when they helped their child learn Mandarin.   In this study, the parents with a Chinese background not only insisted that their children should

retain Chinese language and culture but also took responsibility for teaching their children formally. In addition to sending their children to the Chinese school, the mothers taught their children regularly because they believed that the instruction once per week at the Chinese school was insufficient and that it was their responsibility to help their children to learn Mandarin and Chinese culture.

Although holding the same belief, the data show that the parents of Chinese background assisted their children in different ways, both in enhancing the children's motivation and cultural awareness and in pedagogic methods. These differences can be attributed to their own social and educational background. Both of Sophie's parents are from China; Kaixin's father is from Hong Kong and her mother is from Malaysia. These two sets of parents used a more conservative and traditional methods of supporting their children comparing to the other parents in this study. Although they didn't provide their children with plentiful resources for learning Mandarin, they ensured that their children had sufficient access to Mandarin and Chinese culture, for example in ensuring their children maintained regular contact with Chinese relatives and friends. Regarding pedagogic methods, Sophie's mother and Kaixin's aunt (also from Malaysia) adopted a relatively strict method and emphasized repetitive copying and practice, based on their own experience of learning in schools.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the mother's education is related to her attitude and behaviour toward her children, which, in turn, may affect children's attainment in school (Durkin, 1966, Laosa, 1978). They suggested that the more educated mothers may provide their children with more resources and opportunities that promote literacy; moreover, those mothers may be more directly involved in their children's

education.   In this study, Curtis' mother and Lucas' mother are from Taiwan; both were partly educated in Western societies and both were married to a Western husband. Their spouses didn't have a Chinese background and were not able to speak Mandarin, both mothers needed to seek their husbands' agreement and support as well as a solution to cater for the deficiency of the father's linguistic input.   Both Curtis' and Lucas' mothers only spoke Mandarin to their child and provided numerous resources and opportunities to learn Mandarin and Chinese culture.   In terms of pedagogic methods, the mothers incorporated both traditional and more creative methods to teach their child. They adopted a more flexible, less dictatorial, teaching than Sophie's aunt and Kaixin's mothers.   They also used various fun learning activities to assist their children's learning as well as to compete with the fun activities in which the child could engage with his father- in that language with which the child was more familiar.   Despite Curtis' and Lucas' father inability to speak Mandarin, their attitude played a crucial role.   They showed great interest in and placed great value on their children's learning Mandarin, they regularly discussed progress and performance with their child.

Those parents without any Chinese background sought various opportunities and resources for their child because they lacked Mandarin ability and Chinese background themselves.   They encouraged their children and became involved in their learning activities.   Amongst the parents without any Chinese background, Caroline's mother (who is from Thailand) became involved in Caroline's learning sessions with her private tutor.   Moreover, because she used to work in Hong Kong, she was also interested in learning Mandarin.   She tried to learn Mandarin both with Caroline and from Caroline.   She also showed her enthusiasm for learning Mandarin by attending the adult class offered at the same Chinese school.

8.2.3 Children's attitude towards learning Mandarin and achievement

"My mummy is my Chinese teacher.　I have a teacher at home.　She is very clever; she knows everything in Chinese.　I like to have Chinese class at home." (Lucas)

The parents' efforts had great influence on their children's Mandarin learning.　All of the children expressed that they very much enjoyed learning Mandarin as well as getting to know Chinese culture.　With their parents' support, they got a deeper understanding of the language and the culture than they may otherwise have done.　As Lucas stated, the children were also very pleased with their learning opportunities at home, those arranged by the parents.

In addition to their high level of motivation, these children also had impressive records of achievement in learning Mandarin.　All of the children actively participated in learning activities at the Chinese school and performed very well the majority of the time.　In 2007, Curtis was awarded the first place in the Reading competition and the Essay/story writing competition in the "Native Group" within the Chinese school.　He represented the Chinese school at the UK National Chinese Essay/Story Competition and the Reading Competition held by the University of Sussex and the UK Association for the Promotion of Chinese Education (UKAPCE). He won the outstanding award in both competitions.　Caroline won the same awards in the Non-native Group in the same year.　Both Kaixin and Lucas were awarded second place in the Reading competition in the Chinese school within the "Native Group".　Winning the awards doesn't necessarily mean that with the parents' support,

the children's ability in Mandarin exceed others' ability. Nevertheless, it does illustrate that this group of children spent a lot of time preparing for competitions, which were not in the school curriculum. The parents' support and the children's own efforts led to their success.

Philip and Sophie didn't get a chance to attend any competition but their achievement was acknowledged by the teachers in the Chinese school. Philip's teacher commented that Philip seldom missed classes and always took initiative in class. She stated:

> "Philip is the only student who doesn't have Chinese background in my class and he joined in the class quite late. I was worried that he would not be able to catch up with other students. He asked me if he came come to school half an hour early for him to ask some questions and to preview what I would cover in the following class. I was very surprised because this was his own idea and he arranged it with me by himself. We did what he suggested every time before we started our class. He was able to catch up with other students easily. I have to say that I am very impressed and I am very happy to see that he enjoys himself in class very much." (Philip's teacher)

Sophie's teacher also commented that Sophie performed very well in class. Her Mandarin ability was the best in the class; she volunteered to help other students and participated in learning activities actively. The teacher stated:

> "Sophie's Mandarin ability is by far the best in my class. She has extensive vocabulary and knowledge of history and culture. I thought she might feel

bored in class but she always tried to help other classmates and was very

enthusiastic in class." (Sophie's teacher)

In this section, I concluded the findings, which answered my two main questions. This study argues that regardless of Mandarin ability and background, the parents, who placed a high value and expectation of their children's learning of Mandarin, could support their children in various ways. At the same time, their social, cultural and educational background contributes and affects the methods in which they support their children to a great extent. The children in this study had a very high level of motivation for learning Mandarin and all were high achievers.

8.3 Contributions to Theoretical Perspective

As discussed in the literature review chapters, there are many research papers investigating parental support in children's general development and literacy development (Sewell and Hauser, 1976; Spenner and Featherman, 1978; Marjoribank, 1980; Hewison and Tizard, 1980; Goodman, 1980; Tizard, Schofield and Hewison, 1982; Parkinson et al., 1982; Heath, 1983; Seginer, 1983; Epstein, 1983; Teale and Sulzby, 1986; Epstein, 1986; Griffiths and Hamilton, 1987; Anderson, Wilson and Fielding, 1988; Wolfendale, 1989; Snow et al., 1991; Hannon, 1994; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Gregory, Long and Volk, 2004). There is also research examining parental support in bilingual families (Gregory, 1994; Saxena, 1994; Martin- Jones and Bhatt, 1998; Hirst, 1998; Kenner, 2000; Sneddon, 2000). However, there is lack of completed and in-depth research considering parental support in learning Mandarin as a second or a foreign language especially in what ways parents with different social, cultural and educational background can support their children's learning in London

context.   In my study, I detailed how parents of various backgrounds assisted their children's learning Mandarin and explained how the support benefitted their children. I discussed, in Chapter 2, that Barren-Hauwaert (2004) listed the top 10 strategies employed by bilingual families to retain their heritage culture and language.   In addition to those strategies, I can add several important strategies to the list:

- arranging learning sessions at home;

- using the one parent one language method - Curtis' and Lucas' mother only spoke Mandarin to Curtis and Lucas (while their fathers spoke only English);

- immersing children in the culture by any means possible (one example is by regular eating Chinese food).

In terms of sociocultural research, this study has also illustrated several important issues.   The parents in this study acted as a mediator of Chinese culture and Mandarin language and prolepsis (Stone, 1993, Cole, 1996, Gregory, 2008) occurred between the parents with a Chinese background and their children.   In Kaixin's case, prolepsis also took place between Kaixin's grandmother and Kaixin as well as between Kaixin's aunt and Kaixin.   The data of the inner layer- pedagogic strategies have shown the way in which the mothers scaffolded the learning sessions.   Guided participation (Rogoff, 1990, 1991) was observed in each learning session.   The mothers arranged different kinds of literal and cultural activities and encouraged their children to connect their existing knowledge and ability to the new forms. Syncretism (Gregory and Williams, 2000) was observed in the learning sessions. Moreover, synergy (Gregory 2001) also took place in this study.   When Kaixin learned Mandarin from her aunt with her cousin, who was older and had better Mandarin ability, the cousin helped Kaixin to learn words that she had already learnt; when on occasion, the cousin forgot a word which she had learnt long time ago

Kaixin reminded her.   Synergy was also seen in the interactions between the parents without any Chinese background and their children.   When they discussed with their children about the children's progress in learning Mandarin, the parents learnt some Mandarin from their children.   Occasionally, the children also shared with their parents the cultural related knowledge they acquired in the Chinese school.

Among the many strategies employed by the parents, drawing on funds of knowledge played an essential role.   The parents of a Chinese background drew on funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) to support their children's learning.   Their children were also encouraged to access the funds of knowledge.   The parents without any Chinese background gained access to the Chinese community by attending the Chinese school and got to know other families.   These parents and their children made good use of the opportunity to interact with other families and participate in learning and cultural activities.

This study has contributed to the literature on parental support by researching the parental support given to children learning Mandarin as a second or a foreign language.   This study also provided an illustration of important concepts in sociocultural theory, in particular: prolepsis; guided participation; syncretism; synergy and funds of knowledge.   In the following section, I discuss how this study contributes to practice.

8.4 Implications in Practice

In the previous section, I concluded what contributions this study makes in the theoretical perspective.   In this section, I discuss how this study can contribute in

practice from the parents', the teacher's and the Chinese community schools' perspectives.

8.4.1 For parents

This study has provided good examples of parental support, which can be applied to learning Mandarin as well as to learning any language as a second or a foreign language. The results have proved that regardless of social, cultural and educational backgrounds, parents can provide different kinds of support. This support can be either direct teaching or indirect support. The study has also detailed the various strategies employed by parents of different background; these strategies can be a reference for other parents when they help their children in learning Mandarin or another language.

This study has shown that when parents have sufficient linguistic ability and knowledge of the target language, they can do more than "making time to sit down and work together ….using books and other materials sent home by school" (Griffiths and Hamilton, 1987, p. 5). Parents can arrange a regular learning session as the mothers in this study did. Parents can draw on their own linguistic ability to act as a teacher at home, working on materials taught in school as well as other resources. The parents in this study were not professional language teachers. They used their experience and memories of their own schooling; they shared and discussed ideas with other mothers in search of suggestions and learned new methods. This connection within the community has been illustrated in this study.

In this study the parents without any Chinese background displayed the different

kinds of support they could provide.   This is a useful example for parents without heritage background but who hope to assist their children in learning a foreign language.   This group of parents can seek access to the related community and maintain close contact and regular interactions within this community.   Through the community, the parents are able to obtain various resources and opportunities for their children in learning the language and its culture.

Moreover, the study has also shown that these parents with or without the heritage background enhanced the children's motivation by showing the value they gave and the enthusiasm they had for their children learning Mandarin.   In addition to providing resources, parents can encourage children's learning by showing their interest in that process, discussing their progress and attending relevant learning activities and cultural events.

In conclusion, this study has detailed the strategies employed by both parents with and without the heritage background.   These strategies include the indirect supporting strategies and the direct teaching pedagogy.   I believe this study provides an encouraging example to parents in similar situations, who are keen to help their children learn Mandarin or another language.   This study has illustrated that there were many parents who devoted time and effort to successfully support their children learning Mandarin as a second or foreign language. Moreover, this study can be a reference for parents who are trying to help their children learn Mandarin, or another language, but who don't know how to do so successfully and want inspiration or advice.

8.4.2 For teachers and Chinese community schools

At the initial stage of this research, questionnaires were used to obtain an overview of the families attending the Chinese school, including their nationalities, ethnic background and their ability in Mandarin. "British Nationality" and "Other Nationalities" accounted for the majority of the parents'. Regarding the ethnic background groups, 42 respondents (over 60 respondents) were of Chinese ethnicity from Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. Among the spouses of the respondents', 28 of them had Chinese ethnic background.

These data provide evidence of the variety of the parents' ethnicities and linguistic backgrounds, although these statistics will clearly vary from school to school and year to year. However, the data illustrated the huge variety of the families' backgrounds. With the popularity of Mandarin, there are increasing numbers of learners both those of Chinese heritage and those without. Chinese community schools and the teachers in these schools should appreciate the multiple backgrounds of their students and be able to provide a suitable learning environment and appropriate support. At present, most Chinese community schools use teaching materials imported from China or Taiwan. These textbooks are designed for teaching children of a Chinese background living abroad and the entire content is written in Chinese. As the parents pointed out in this study, this kind of textbook made it difficult for the children without Chinese background to cope; the parents without Chinese background couldn't directly assist their children with their school work. In order to cater the different needs and the diverse background, Chinese community schools and teachers should adjust the school curriculum and teaching material according to the students' background. In addition, schools and teachers should also consider offering additional guidance and assistance if possible.

On the other hand, this study has demonstrated the importance and benefit of funds of knowledge at home and in the community.   Community schools and teachers should recognize how funds of knowledge can contribute to children's learning and create opportunity for parents and families to participate in relevant activities.   In this way, the interaction between families and between families and schools can be encouraged. This can not only create an active, positive atmosphere but also provide a chance for parents to communicate with each other and share experiences.

8.5 Future Research

I have three questions I suggest should be considered in future research.   Firstly, families with parents of Chinese background, yet without Mandarin ability, have not been studied and should be included in future research.   In the original research design, I included four groups: families with both parents of Chinese background; families with only one parent of Chinese background; those with parents of non Chinese background as well as families with parents of Chinese heritage neither of whom could speak Mandarin.   I had two families within this last group.   In one family, both parents were third generation British (the grandchildren of Chinese immigrants), neither could speak any Mandarin.   In the other family, the mother was second generation British (the daughter of Chinese immigrants) and the father was an American.   The mother could speak very little Mandarin.   Both of these families dropped out during the fieldwork because, in both cases, one of the parents' jobs moved overseas and the families moved.   I believe that these parents would apply different methods, to those used by the groups I have studied, since they are familiar with Chinese culture but lack Mandarin language skills.

Secondly, how parental support strategies change as children get older should be

investigated.   During my study, Curtis' and Lucas' mothers were worried that they would not be able to apply their strategies as their child grew older.   On the one hand, there would be less time available for sitting down for a formal lesson since the work in their mainstream schools would get more difficult and time consuming.   On the other hand, the activities they were using would also need to be adjusted to remain entertaining to an older child.   The adjustments parents make to their strategies would make an interesting topic for future research.

My final suggested question for future research is: Whether developments in digital technology can be harnessed as a means of further support. These would include bridging learning in home-school contexts as well as formal and informal contexts and as a means of "edutainment".   In this study, digital technology was used to motivate the children as well as in the provision of various on-line activities (for both teaching and entertainment).   However, with developments in digital technology, there may be further uses or different ways to use this aid, including the connection of learning in home and school as well as in formal and informal settings.

8.6 Summary

This study has investigated "schools at home", providing examples of the various strategies and methods applied by parents of different social, cultural and educational background to support their children learning Mandarin as a second or a foreign language.   These parents were determined to assist their children's learning and employed different methods of support, including direct teaching and indirect support by providing access to resources, cultural activities and events.

The parents set aside time for formal, serious, regular learning sessions – as if at school.   The support the parents provided was affected significantly by their social, cultural and educational background.   Nevertheless, their effort and the methods all enhanced their children's motivation and their learning achievement.

This study has contributed both to the theoretical perspective and in practice with practical methods used by parents to support their children.   In the theoretical perspective, the study has tackled the parental support for children learning Mandarin as a second or foreign language, which was rarely addressed in the literature.   It has uncovered several strategies used by the parents, which were not mentioned in literature.   Moreover, the study has illustrated several important issues in sociocultural research in learning.   In terms of practical use, the study has provided good reference for parents who are keen to support their children in learning Mandarin or in learning another language.   This study also offered community schools and the teachers a new aspect to consider and to address: how best to harness the support of the parents.

> "Teaching him Mandarin is my responsibility and my expectation of him.   The teacher in Chinese school is very good but that is only two hours per week. Mandarin is the language I use every day and I hope he can understand me and the culture I am from.   I know my own child very well.   Therefore, I think I can be the best teacher for him.   This is something I can give him naturally.   I hope he can learn a lot from me and he can thus appreciate how much effort and value I have for his learning Mandarin."   (Curtis' mother)

Epilogue

I came to the UK to start my research degree in 2004.   With my parents' full support and blessing, I started this long journey.   Living abroad alone doing a research degree was, at times, very stressful and lonely for me.   In Taiwan I was accustomed to being close to my family and to having good relationships with both my students and colleagues.   In order to maintain a link with home I applied for a teaching position at the London Hua Hsia Chinese School; there I made many good friends in the London Chinese community.

While I was teaching, I got to know many enthusiastic parents, who were actively involved in school activities and were devoted to helping their children to learn Mandarin.   These parents were often the first people to arrive at school to unlock the door and the last to leave locking the door behind them.   During class time, these parents were busy discussing cultural activities and how they could help at the school. Some of them, with good command of reading and writing Mandarin, helped by reading and correcting the students' diaries.   (The students were encouraged to keep diary in Mandarin at least once a week).   During the break time, some parents volunteered to provide refreshments while others watched over the pupils' safety in the playground.   During the last five minutes of my class, I would typically see these parents standing outside my classroom, listening carefully to what that week's homework would be.   After class, the parents came to talk to me about their children's performance in class as well as to ensure that they understood the assignment.   I recall that one time a father came to ask me about a Chinese idiom. He wanted to make sure that he got both the correct meaning and characters.   The

father was British, as was the mother; they had lived in China for ten years and spoke fluent Mandarin.   This couple hoped that their daughter would retain the ability to speak Mandarin.   In addition to attending my class, they helped her to learn Mandarin at home.   The father wanted to make sure that he was teaching his daughter the correct words.

Another time, a mother came to apologise to me before we started our lesson.   Her twin sons had chickenpox and were unable to attend the class that day.   She asked me what I was going to cover that day and if she could take her children's exercise books so that she could help them to practice at home.

I was very impressed by the parents' enthusiasm and determination to help their children to learn Mandarin.   These parents reminded me of my own parents who over the years have supported me and helped me to a great extent.   Without their help and support, I would not have been able to enjoy my learning in school nor would I have had the opportunity to pursue a further degree overseas. As I began to see the great benefits that parental support brought my pupils I decided to investigate the extent to which and methods by which families of different backgrounds supported their children.

When I started this study, my role, in addition to being a researcher, was that of one of the Mandarin teachers at Hua Hsia.   I visited each family in this research as a teacher and a researcher but in each case we ended up as friends. The families shared their life stories with me, discussed their expectations and concerns with me as well as asking me for suggestions to help their children learn Mandarin language and Chinese culture. During the study, I not only witnessed their effort but also learnt a lot from them.   As

a teacher, I realized the diversity of backgrounds of students' families and the different Mandarin ability of the parents.   Before the study, I assumed that all of the students had either Chinese heritage or had some connection to Chinese society and that this would be the reason for them to attend the Chinese community school. However, some students had no Chinese background whatsoever but were nevertheless interested in learning Mandarin and their parents supported them as much as possible.   This has taught me that I should adjust my teaching methods, materials and should involve the parents in the children's Mandarin learning more often.   I was very impressed with the extensive resources and connections the parents provided for their children.   It occurred to me that in the future, I should organize workshops or meetings for parents to share their experiences and methods as well as support each other.

During the course of this research, my role has changed from that of Mandarin teacher to that of mother of two young children.   My husband is British and our family is settled in the UK at the moment.   Living abroad far away from my family in Taiwan sometimes makes me feel very lonely and frustrated.   Although the UK is a country of multi-races and cultures, it is still inevitable that I am considered a foreigner here. It has been difficult for me to make friends and in some situations to be treated as a native person.   While I am trying hard to integrate into this society, I am also very keen to make friends from my own country of origin with whom I can speak our native language.   Moreover, I very much hope that I can communicate with my own family using Mandarin, especially our two daughters.   I hope they can acknowledge my, and their part-Taiwanese origin and that they will be happy and comfortable speaking Mandarin.   Similar to the fathers in my study, my husband has been very supportive and considerate; he respects my culture and supports my teaching our

daughters Mandarin.　We adopt the "one person one language" rule at home. Similar to the parents in this study, I only speak Mandarin to our daughters, although my husband, while trying to learn Mandarin, speaks Mandarin to our daughters occasionally.　Since they are very young (one and three), I currently concentrate on their listening and speaking. I read them stories in Mandarin and try to get other resources for them, such as CDs of Mandarin nursery songs and stories and DVDs of children's television programmes.

When on occasion I run out of ideas or lose faith in continuing with this mission to teach my daughters and to speak to them only in Mandarin, I would think of the parents who participated in my study and who also encountered the same difficulties yet never gave up.　I am always revitalized and armed with fresh ideas every time I revisit this study.

This study is not only an academic achievement for me but also benefits me greatly in my daily life.　I sincerely hope it can also help parents who are in a similar situation to both my own current situation, as well as that of the parents who participated in this study.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam

This questionnaire forms part of a research project investigating the present situation of students attending Mandarin schools in the UK. It is concerned with the influence of the family factors in learning Mandarin. It is designed with the intention of being used to help improve the provision of Mandarin education. The information obtained will be used only for this research and your anonymity is guaranteed. All information you provide will be treated as completely confidential.

There are two parts to this questionnaire. The first comprises closed-ended questions. Please tick the applicable answer, or write in the blank given if none of the choices is relevant. The second part comprises open-ended questions. Please state your opinion in the blank given and add any other comments on an extra sheet of paper.

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

Yu-chiao Chung

Part I. Please tick the appropriate box/es.

1. Are you male or female?
   ☐   Male   ☐   Female

2. What is your nationality?
   ☐ British   ☐ Taiwan   ☐ China   ☐ Other _____

3. What is the nationality of your spouse's?
   ☐ British   ☐ Taiwan   ☐ China   ☐ Other _____

4. Which category best describes the ethnic group/s to which you belong?
   ☐ White   (☐ U.K.   ☐ U.S.   ☐ Other European Country_____
               ☐ Other _____)
   ☐ Chinese (☐Taiwan ☐China ☐ Hong Kong ☐ Other _____)
   ☐ Other Asian/Asian British Background(Please specify details_____)
   ☐ Mixed   (Please specify details_____)
   ☐ Other ethnic background (Please specify details _____)

5. Which category best describes the ethnic group/s to which your spouse belongs?
   ☐ White   (☐ U.K.   ☐ U.S.   ☐ Other European Country_____
               ☐ Other _____)
   ☐ Chinese (☐Taiwan ☐China ☐ Hong Kong ☐ Other _____)
   ☐ Other Asian/Asian British Background(Please specify details_____)
   ☐ Mixed (Please specify details_____)
   ☐ Other ethnic background (Please specify details _____)

6. How long have your family lived outside of the Mandarin speaking world?
   ☐ less than one year   ☐ 1~ 5 years   ☐ 6~10 years   ☐ more than 10 years

7. How long will your family stay outside of the Mandarin speaking world?
   ☐ less than one year   ☐ 1~ 5 years   ☐ 6~10 years   ☐ more than 10 years

8. What is the reason for your family to live in the UK?
   ☐ Permanent Immigration   ☐ Temporary Work Dispatch
   ☐ Further Education   ☐ Other
   _____

9. What is your mother tongue?

☐ English ☐ Mandarin ☐ Cantonese ☐ Other _____

10. What is your spouse's mother tongue?

☐ English ☐ Mandarin ☐ Cantonese ☐ Other _____

11. What is the main language used for communication within your immediate family?

☐ English ☐ Mandarin ☐ Cantonese ☐ Other _____

12. What other languages are used within your immediate family (apart from that given in question 11)?

☐ English ☐ Mandarin ☐ Cantonese ☐ Other _____

13. What is the first language of your child/ren?

☐ English ☐ Mandarin ☐ Cantonese ☐ Other _____

14. Please indicate the level of your ability in Mandarin.

Speaking: ☐ Excellent/Mother tongue standard   ☐ Good/Fluent   ☐ Basic
☐ None ☐ Other _____

Listening: ☐ Excellent/Mother tongue standard   ☐ Good/Fluent   ☐ Basic
☐ None ☐ Other _____

Reading: ☐ Excellent/Mother tongue standard   ☐ Good/Fluent   ☐ Basic
☐ None ☐ Other_____

Writing: ☐ Excellent/Mother tongue standard   ☐ Good/Fluent   ☐Basic
☐ None ☐ Other_____

15. Please indicate the level of your spouse's ability in Mandarin.

Speaking: ☐ Excellent/Mother tongue standard   ☐ Good/Fluent   ☐ Basic
☐ None ☐ Other _____

Listening: ☐ Excellent/Mother tongue standard   ☐ Good/Fluent   ☐ Basic
☐ None ☐ Other_____

Reading: ☐ Excellent/Mother tongue standard   ☐ Good/Fluent   ☐ Basic
☐ None ☐ Other_____

Writing: ☐ Excellent/Mother tongue standard   ☐ Good/Fluent   ☐Basic
☐ None ☐ Other _____

Part II   Please state your opinion in the blank given and add any other comments on an extra sheet of paper.

16. How many people live within your immediate family?
    Please indicate the relationship each has to you.

    _____

    _____

17. Why do you want your child/ren to learn Mandarin?

    _____

    _____

18. How long has/have your child/ren been learning Mandarin?

    _____

19. Why do you send your children to Mandarin School?

    _____

    _____

20. How long have your children been learning Mandarin at a Mandarin School?

    _____

21. Do your children take other Mandarin courses, such as private tutoring or attending other language centres?
    If yes, please specify the mode of education and the frequency of lessons.

    _____

    _____

22. Do you/your spouse help your child/ren to learn Mandarin?
    If yes, please state how you usually help your child/ren and roughly how many hours per week you help your children.

    _____

    _____

    _____

23. In your opinion, what are the most important factors affecting your child/ren's learning of Mandarin?

    _____

    _____

24. Are you satisfied with the learning progress of your child/ren?

    _____

    _____

25. What aspects do you believe need most to be improved in Mandarin education in a foreign country?

    _____

    _____

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.   For more information please contact jojo.chung@gmail.com

Appendix 2 Questionnaire Data

Questions	Number of People
1. Gender	
Male	18
Female	42
2. Respondents' Nationalities	
British	25
Taiwan	4
China	3
Other	28
3. The Nationalities of the Spouses'	
British	27
Taiwan	2
China	1
Other	30
4. The Ethnic Group of the Respondents'	
White	8
Chinese	42
Other Asian	6
Mixed	4
Other	0
5. The Ethnic Groups of the Spouses'	
White	26
Chinese	28
Other Asian	3
Mixed	3
Other	0
6. The Length of the Families Living Outside of the Mandarin Speaking World	
Less than one year	0
1~5 years	3
6~10 years	5
More than 10 years	52
7. The Expected Time that the Families Will Remaining Outside of the Mandarin Speaking World	
Less than one year	0
1~5 years	7
6~10 years	4
More than 10 years	49
8. The Reasons for Living in the U.K.	
Permanent Immigration	39
Temporary Work Dispatch	14
Further Education	3
Other	4

Questions	Number of People
9. The Respondents' Mother Tongues	
English	16
Mandarin	6
Cantonese	25
Other	13
10. The Spouses' Mother Tongues	
English	28
Mandarin	3
Cantonese	10
Other	19
11. The Main Languages Used for Communication within the immediate Families	
English	50
Mandarin	2
Cantonese	6
Other	2
12. Other Languages Used for Communication within the immediate Families	
English	6
Mandarin	5
Cantonese	3
Other /None	46
13. The Children's First Languages	
English	59
Mandarin	8
Cantonese	15
Other	5
14. The Respondents' Proficiency in Mandarin	
Speaking:	
Excellent/Mother tongue standard	8
Good/Fluent	10
Basic	32
None	10
Other	0
Listening:	
Excellent/Mother tongue standard	9
Good/Fluent	11
Basic	34
None	6
Other	0
Reading:	
Excellent/Mother tongue standard	11
Good/Fluent	29
Basic	12
None	8
Other	0

Writing:	
Excellent/Mother tongue standard	3
Good/Fluent	10
Basic	20
None	27
Other	0
15. The Level of the Spouses' Abilities in Mandarin	
Speaking:	
Excellent/Mother tongue standard	2
Good/Fluent	5
Basic	12
None	41
Other	0
Listening:	
Excellent/Mother tongue standard	3
Good/Fluent	7
Basic	11
None	39
Other	0
Reading:	
Excellent/Mother tongue standard	5
Good/Fluent	3
Basic	10
None	42
Other	0
Writing:	
Excellent/Mother tongue standard	5
Good/Fluent	3
Basic	9
None	43
Other	0

Questions	Number of People
16. The Number of People Living in the Immediate Family	
3 (The parents and 1 child)	28
4 (The parents and 2 children)	22
5 (The Parents and 3 children)	5
More than 5 (The Parents, children and other relatives)	5
17. The Purpose of Sending the Children to Learn Mandarin	
Maintaining the ethnical heritage	40
Plan to move back to the Mandarin speaking world	10
For Academic Reasons (The children are taking/will take Mandarin class in main stream schools.)	8
Consideration for future career	9
Pure Interest	4
Present trend	3
18. The Length of the Children's Learning Mandarin	
Less than 1 year	11
1~2 years	22
2~3 years	18

3~4 years	6
More than 4 years	3
19. The Reasons for Choosing a Mandarin Schools as a Learning Channel	
Meet other children with similar background	35
Better teachers and teaching materials	10
Various class contents (language class and culture learning)	20
Immersion in a fully Mandarin speaking environment	37
Be able to meet and interact with other families and increase the social events for speaking Mandarin	8
20. The Length of the Children Attending a Mandarin School	
Less than 1 year	11
1~2 years	23
2~3 years	17
3~4 years	6
More than 4 years	3
21. Whether the Children Take Extra Mandarin Courses (Private Tutoring/ Language Centres)	
No	35
Yes	25
Private Tutoring	20
Language Centres	5
22. Frequency with Which the Parents Help the Children to Learn Mandarin	
None	12
Sometimes	32
Very Often	16
23. The Most Important Factors affecting the Children's learning of Mandarin in the Respondents' Minds	
High learning motivation	38
A fully Mandarin speaking learning environment	30
Parents' attitudes toward and value of Mandarin learning	32
Having chance to use Mandarin in daily life	29
Parents' support and help at home	27
The recognition from outside world of the children's learning Mandarin	4
Appreciation of the practical purpose of speaking Mandarin	10
Interesting learning materials and activities	15
Mandarin teachers' instructions	4
24. Respondents' Satisfaction with Children's Learning Progress in Mandarin	
Satisfied	40
Not satisfied	16
Other	4
25. The Aspects need to be Improved the Most in Mandarin Education in a Foreign Country	
Learning Environment	20
Parents' Involvement and Support	32
Increasing the learning of Chinese traditional culture	15

The Chinese community's cooperation, involvement and support	26
The access to Mandarin speaking TV programmes or films	10
The availability of authentic learning materials and supplementary readings and other materials	5
Qualified and well trained Mandarin teachers	4

Appendix 3 Interview Excerpts

Sophie's family (Both parents with a Chinese background)

Social and cultural background	Yu-chiao：兩位都是從中國來的嗎？ Father： 對，一九八八年來的，將近二十年了。 Yu-chiao：來很久了。 Father:： 對。 Yu-chiao: Are both of you from China? Father: Yes, we came here in 1988. It has been twenty years. Yu-chiao: You have been here long. Father: Yes.	28/09/07
Linguistic background	Father： 我們都是福建人 Yu-chiao：你們都是福建人，那麼除了中文，你們還會講什麼方言？ Father： 我會講浦田話，我的老家在浦田。 Yu-chiao：蒲田話和閩南語不一樣？ Father： 不一樣，它介於福州話和閩南語之間，蒲田縣有的一些 　　　　話語比較特別，蒲田話只有兩個地方的人會說。 Yu-chiao：所以會說蒲田話的人口很少？ Father： 人口不少，雖然蒲田話只有兩個地方的人會說，但是人 　　　　口非常密集，只 　　　　有一個浦田的人口，就有好幾百萬人，我想至少有五百 　　　　萬人。而且從浦 　　　　田移居到別的地方的人也相當多。 Yu-chiao：那人口相當多也很密集。那媽媽呢？你會說什麼方言？ Mother： 我會說福州話。我在福州長大。 Father: We are both from Fujian Province. Yu-chiao: You are both from Fujian. Then, apart from Mandarin Chinese, what other dialects do you speak? Father: I speak Putian. My hometown is in Putian. Yu-chiao: How different is Putian from Min Nan (South Min) dialect? Father: Very different. Putian is within Puxian group; it is a very restricted regional dialect. Only the people in Putian can speak Putian dialect. Yu-chiao: So there are not a lot of people who can speak Putian? Father: The population in Putian is very highly concentrated. Therefore, there are about five million people speaking Putian dialect. Yu-chiao: (To Sophie's mother) What dialect do you speak? Mother: I speak Fuzhou dialect.	28/09/07
Social and Cultural background	Yu-chiao：你們到這裡將近二十年了，當初為什麼想來英國？ Father： 我是來唸書的，後來就一直留在這裡。應該早點回去的 　　　　（哈哈哈） 　　　　沒有下決心回去，一恍神，時間過得很快，都已經二十 　　　　年了。 Yu-chiao：那媽媽呢？當初為什麼想來英國？ Mother： 我是來陪讀的！（哈哈哈）然後一邊賺錢。 Yu-chiao: What did you come to UK originally? Father: I came here for my further degree and stayed here since then. Time flies. Yu-chiao: (To Sophie's mother) And you?	28/09/07

	Mother:	I came here with him.	
	Yu-chiao：當初在這裡的生活怎麼樣？ Father： 住在國外很不容易的。當時我的獎學金只夠付學費，我太太必須做全職 的工作來供應我們的生活費。我們一直很想家，可是沒錢回去阿。生活 很辛苦，但是我了解這個出國唸書的機會是很珍貴的，我只能拼命用功 念書，讓家裡人以我為榮。我父母一直很以我為榮，連整個村莊都是。 你知道我們的文化，教育是最重要的。 Yu-chiao: What was your life like when you just arrived this country? Father: Living abroad was not easy. The scholarship did not allow for much left over after paying the tuition fee. My wife came here to work full time to support our life….we have always missed our home country, our family in China. We were too poor to go back to China to see our family when I was still a student. It was hard, but I knew this chance was very precious. What I could do was to study hard to honour my family. My parents were very proud of me; the whole village was very proud of me, too. You know our culture. Being educated is the most important thing and is the highest valued priority."	28/09/07
Linguistic background	Yu-chiao：Sophie 的第一語言是什麼？她是在英國出生的嗎？ Father： 因為他出生 接觸的就是我們，還有一些華人保姆，所以我想他的第一語言可以說是中文。上學以後才開始說英文。 Mother： 他開始上幼兒園的時候，兩歲多才開始說英文。 Yu-chiao： 所以她一開始是說中文的，到了上學以後，才開始講英文？ Mother： 對。不過因為那時她還小，一起上學的小朋友年紀也都很小，雖然一開始語言不同，不過看起來沒什麼隔閡或障礙，也都玩在一起。兩歲多也都還是在學語言的階段，所以很容易就跟上了。 Yu-chiao: What was Sophie's first language? Was she born in the UK? Father: She was born here. However, we got her a Mandarin speaking Nanny. Being with us and her Chinese nanny, I think her first language is Mandarin. She started to speak English when she went to a nursery school when she was two. Yu-chiao: So Sophie spoke Mandarin first and then started to learn English when she went to nursery school? Father: That's correct. But she started to go to nursery when she was two, when she started to learn to speak. It was very easy for her to catch up with other children's English.	28/09/07
Linguistic background	Yu-chiao：你們對 Sophie 和她姊姊的中文要求，是不是有什麼不一樣？ Father： 對，姊姊來這裡，她一開始去上小學 有點障礙。她一到學校 什麼都聽 不懂，也不懂得怎麼表達，所以對著老師一直哭。但在這融入的過程裡，英文越學越好，她的中文就慢慢忘記。	12/10/07

	Mother: 她的中文到後來都忘掉了！ Father: 挺可惜的…. Mother: 忘掉以後，要再補起來，就很難了。 Father: 如果一開始，我們兩種語言都讓他講的話，估計她兩種語言都能夠接收，也都能說，像現在 她中文已經忘記，也習慣講英文，再要他補起來，就比較困難了。 Yu-chiao: Do you have different requirement in Sophie and her sister's learning Mandarin? Father: Yes. Her sister came to the UK when she was eight. She had difficult time when she went to primary school here. She couldn't understand anything and couldn't express anything. Therefore, we helped her in learning English instead maintaining her Mandarin. Mother: She has lost her Mandarin ability. Father: It is such a pity. Mother: Once she lost it, it is difficult to get it back. Father: If we had helped her speak both languages at that time, she would be able to use both languages now.	
Attitude and Value	Mother: 有時候 Sophie 很沮喪，因為大家會問她是從哪裡來的？英文怎麼那麼好？但是他自己不認為跟其他同學有什麼不一樣。我們中國人說的，落葉歸根，我們告訴她，她要以她的祖國為榮。但是她住在倫敦，我們也希望她能夠融入這個社會，和其他在這裡成長的孩子一樣。 Mother: Sometimes Sophie is upset because people ask her where she is from and why her English is so good. She doesn't think she is different from other students except for her appearance. As a Chinese saying goes, we cannot forget our roots. Falling leaves go back to the root eventually. We told her that she should be proud of her Chinese origin. However, she is living in London now. We want her to feel that she is also part of this society and she is the same as other kids who grow up here.	12/10/07
Parental support in school work	Yu-chiao: 除了中文之外，你們也會指導她學校的功課嗎？ Mother: 會的，平常我們也都會指導她學校的功課。我們發現這裡除了教育系統和中國不一樣，老師的指導方式和定位也不一樣。平常我們指導她，到了學校 老師都說很好很好，但是我們發現，有些方面其實不太好，所以有時候，我們也蠻困惑的，所以我想家長對於小孩的學業及學習，自己要有深刻的瞭解，才有辦法真正幫助到她。 Yu-chiao: Apart from Mandarin, do you help her with school work in mainstream school? Mother: We help Sophie with her school work very often. We hope that she can have good academic achievement. We contact Sophie's school teacher and try to find out what we can do to help Sophie. The school teacher always tells us that Sophie is learning very well and has done a very good job. However, we have realized that she is not good in some subjects. We feel very confused' we hope the teacher could just tell us the truth and then we can help her. Therefore, we cannot just rely on the school teacher. We need to keep a close eye on her and pay more attention to her and then we can get to know what we can do to help her.	12/10/07
Parental support in learning Mandarin	Yu-chiao: Sophie 去上學以後，開始學英文，那麼你們在家怎麼指導她中文？讓她能夠繼續保持中文能力？	12/10/07

	Father: 我們在家通常都是看中文的節目，有很多 DVD，她也很愛看，所以她也從當中學到很多中文，平常家裡的環境，也都是中文比較多。 Mother: 我們有很多中文的連續劇，有一整個抽屜！她就是經常看，翻過來倒過去的一直看。比我們還熟悉所有的劇情！已經倒背如流了！ Yu-chiao： 所以你們就是給她一些中文的資源和管道，讓她有機會接觸中文。 Father: 對！ Yu-chiao: How do you help Sophie learn Mandarin at home? Father: We usually watch Chinese programmes at home to be able to keep up to date with what is going on in China. Sophie likes to watch these programmes with us. We also watch DVDs of Chinese historical drama, which she especially likes. I questioned how much she could understand but she can always reminded me what happened in the previous episode. We don't really want her to watch too much television but on the other hand, she has learnt a lot about Chinese history and society from these dramas. Of course, she has learnt a lot of Chinese language from them as well. Yu-chiao: So you provide her with some Chinese resources and access to Chinese. Father: Correct.	
Attending Chinese school	Yu-chiao:為什麼要送他去中文學校呢？ Father: 第一是讓她有一個環境，可以去說中文，用中文表達，第二到中文學校的好處是，老師都已經備好課，教學有一定的進度和標準，比較有系統。 Mother: 還有最主要的一個原因是，她心裡會有一個壓力，她是在上學，我必須學好這些，要好好學。在家裡面，她就不大一樣，沒有什麼壓力。 Father: 而且去上中文學校，她可以接觸到除了我們之外的說中文的人，也可以多認識一些朋友，比較有幫助。 Yu-chiao: Why do you send her to a Chinese school? Father: First of all, it is another Mandarin speaking environment apart from home, where she can be immersed in Mandarin. Secondly, the teaching method and material are systematic and professional. Mother: Moreover, she would feel more pressurized because it is a formal school. Father: She can also get to know friends who speak Mandarin.	12/10/07
Resources provided for learning Mandarin	Father: 因為我們發現書對她吸引力不大，沒有一些情節和視覺上的效果，她不愛看。我們給她買過一些書，但是她不愛看，裡面的東西也很快就忘記，沒什麼吸引力。要是看電視的話，她能夠記住情節，還有裡面的人物說過什麼話，她很喜歡。 Yu-chiao：這些她愛看的節目都是什麼樣的節目呢？是卡通嗎？ Father: 卡通比較少，都是普通成人的連續劇。 Father: 中國的那些古裝劇。 Mother: 像歷史劇那一些。古代的比較多。 Father: 比如說像花木蘭那一些 Father: We have found that she is not as interested in Chinese books as in Chinese TV programmes. When she watches Chinese	12/10/07

	dramas she can easily remember the plots and lines. Yu-chiao: What are these Chinese dramas? Are they children's programmes, like cartoons? Father: No, they are dramas for adults. Mother: A lot of tem are historical dramas such as Mulan.	
Contact with Chinese society	Yu-chiao: Sophie 有沒有回去過中國？ Father: 她只有回去過一次，她四歲的時候。我父母住在一個小村子，可能是因為天氣的關係還有衛生條件，她 一回去就生病。等她大一點，我們會再帶她回去，現在比較困難一點。但是我們不要她忘記她的祖父母，叔叔還有堂兄弟姊妹，所以我們常給他們打電話和寫信。她以前很害羞不知道要說什麼，現在她習慣了，很喜歡跟他們講電話。我們也教他要怎麼撥電話回中國還有怎麼寄信，她喜歡找我們的電話簿，幫我們撥電話回去。 Yu-chiao: Has Sophie been to China? Father: Sophie has only been back to China once when she was four years old. My parents live in a small village. Sophie was very ill because of the weather and the unhygienic conditions. We will take her back again when she is older but it is not easy now. But we don't want her to forget her grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins in China. We call them and write to them very often. She was very shy and didn't know what to say to them before but now she likes to speak to them. We also taught her how to make a phone call to China and how to post a letter to China. She likes to look up the number in our address books and dial the number for us.	01/11/08
Personal experience of learning in school	Mother: 我們以前在學校學寫字的時候，我們的老師沒有教我們字是怎麼演變來的，就叫我們一遍又一遍練習。我還記得我每天練習寫同一個字，要寫五十遍。熟能生巧，我們就是這麼學的。 Mother: When we were in school, our teachers didn't tell us the origin of each word. They just asked us to practise again and again. I can still remember that I used to write the same character on the exercise book fifty times. It was a very common assignment for us. "Practice makes perfect." That is how we learnt Chinese characters in school.	01/11/08
Personal experience of learning in school	Mother: 我想是因為我受的教育方式的影響，我的老師我的父母很少稱讚我。當我來到英國以後，我發現西方父母和老師常稱讚孩子，這是我要學習的地方。我現在常提醒我自己要稱讚 Sophie 當他有好的表現的時候，但是我實在不太會稱讚人，所以我總是會買一些禮物給他。 Mother: I think it is because the way I was taught in Chinese society. My teachers and my parents didn't really compliment me in any occasion. When I moved to England, I realized Western parents and teachers compliment children a lot. This is something I need to learn and adjust myself. Now I always remind myself to acknowledge and compliment Sophie when she achieves something. Even though I am not good at saying good things about her, I always buy her presents when she performs well.	01/11/08
strategies	Mother: 我們常有機會和其他的中國家庭吃飯，以後回中國時，也必須跟朋友家人吃飯，如果連筷子都不會用，就很沒有禮貌了。 Mother: We have opportunities to have dinner parties with other Chinese families and when we go back to China, we will eat with our families and friends there. It would be	01/02/08

	awkward and not respectable that our children cannot hold chopsticks and eat properly.	
Child's feeling of resource provided by parents	Yu-chiao: 你喜歡看什麼節目？ Sophie: 我喜歡看歷史劇，很有趣。我一開始不能全部了解，我要看字幕或是要問爸爸媽媽。我現在看了好多次了，我都知道等一下要說什麼了。 Yu-chiao: What kind of programme do you like to watch? Sophie: I like to watch these historical dramas.　They are very funny.　I couldn't understand everything at the　　beginning.　I need to read the subtitles or ask my parents.　Now I have watched them so many times that I can almost guess what the next line will be.	12/10/07
Child's feeling of resource provided by parents	Yu-chiao: 你在學校都是媽媽帶飯嗎？ Sophie: 　對。 Yu-chiao: 都是帶什麼呢？ Sophie: 　帶家裡吃的，帶中國菜。 Y-chiao: 　那你會不會不好意思，跟同學吃的都不一樣？ Yu-chiao: Does your mother prepare lunch box for you? Sophie: 　Yes. Yu-chiao: What sort of food does she prepare for you? Sophie: 　The food we have at home, Chinese food. Yu-chiao: Do you feel embarrassed having different food from your friends? Sophie: 　I don't feel embarrassed that I have different food from my friends.　I am very proud of the lunch my　mum prepares for me.　My friends in school　always ask me what those are and what they taste like.　I am very happy to share with them.　I sometimes take extra food to share with my friends	07/03/08
Child's attitude towards learning Mandarin	Sophie: 我認為我是中國人也是英國人，我也很高興我可以是中國人也是英國人。我有兩個學校，有不同的朋友和老師，我都很喜歡，我很高興我會說中文也會說英文，我可以幫我的堂哥學英文，他們問我的時候，我可以用中文解釋。 Sophie: I think I am both (British and Chinese) and I am very happy I am both…I have 　two schools to go to; one is my English school and one is my Chinese　　School...They are different.　I have different teachers and friends and I like them all…I am happy that I can speak both English and Mandarin.　I can help my cousins in China with their English.　Sometimes they ask me some English words and I can explain to them in Mandarin.	07/03/08

Kaixin's Family (Both parents with a Chinese background)

Social and cultural background	Yu-chiao: 妳是從哪個國家搬來英國的？ Mother: 　我是從馬來西亞來的。 Yu-chiao: Kaixin 的爸爸呢？ Mother: 　他是香港人。 Yu-chiao:妳是馬來西亞的華僑嗎？ Mother: 是，我們是馬來西亞華僑。 Yu-chiao:你們家原來是中國什麼地方人？ Mother: 我不太清楚，我的祖父母好像是客家人，不過我們有福建的姓。我們姓蔡。 Yu-chiao: Where are you from originally?	04/10/07

	Mother: I am from Malaysia. Yu-chiao: How about Kaixin's father? Mother: He is from Hong Kong. Yu-chiao: Are you Malaysian Chinese? Mother: Yes, we are. Yu-chiao: Where about in China were your ancestor from? Mother: I am not sure. My grandparents might be Hakka but we have a Fujian family name, Chua.	
Social and cultural background	Yu-chiao:妳來英國多久了？ Mother: 我來十八年了。 Yu-chiao:妳從馬來西亞直接就來英國了還是還有到其他地方？ Mother: 我讀完書，去了新加坡工作了兩年，就來英國，因為我的姊姊在這裡念書。她覺得英國的環境和教育都比較好，後來我們家的人就全部一起過來了。 …. Yu-chiao：那妳的先生來這裡多久了？ Mother: 他來這裡三十幾年了吧！ 他從小就過來了。 Yu-chiao: How long have you been in the UK? Mother: 18 years. Yu-chiao: Did you come to UK directly from Malaysia? Mother: After my school, I worked in Singapore for two years and then I came here. My sister did her degree here and she thought the living condition and education were very good here. All of my family moved here together. … Yu-chiao: How about your husband? Mother: He has been here for more than 30 years. His family moved here when he was very young.	04/10/07
Linguistic background	Yu-chiao:妳的第一個語言是什麼？ Mother: 是華語。 Yu-chiao:妳的第一語言是華語？ Mother: 對，不過還有廣東話，小時候家裡也講廣東話。 Yu-chiao:為什麼家裡會講廣東話呢？ Mother: 因為我們住的那個 Town 是有分地區的。有些區是講客家話，客家人多，有些區是講福建話，我們住的那一區是講廣東話。 Yu-chiao:所以你們從小在家，還有在附近社區就是說廣東話和華語？ Mother: 對。 Yu-chiao:妳的媽媽也會說華語嗎？ Mother: 是的。 Yu-chiao:那妳的先生呢？他的第一語言是什麼？ Mother: 是廣東話。 Yu-chiao:那他會說華語嗎？ Mother: 他是會說華語，可是有很重的廣東腔調。五音不全 (哈哈哈) Yu-chiao: What is your first language? Mother: Mandarin. Yu-chiao: Mandarin is your first language? Mother: Yes, but we also speak Cantonese at home. Yu-chiao: Why do you speak Cantonese at home? Mother: Because the town we lived in has different areas. Some are Hakka areas and some are Fujian areas. The area we were	01/11/07

	in was Cantonese area. Yu-chiao: So you spoke Cantonese at home and in the neighborhood? Mother: Yes. Yu-chiao: Does your mother speak Mandarin? Mother:　Yes. Yu-chiao: How about your husband?　What is his first language? Mother:　Cantonese. Yu-chiao: Does he speak Mandarin? Mother:　Yes, he does but he has very strong Cantonese accent.	
Linguistic background	Yu-chiao:你們平常在這個家裡用什麼語言溝通？ Mother:　Kaixin 和我媽媽 (她的外婆) 都是用國語，Kaixin 的弟弟也是和外婆說國語，他們跟他爸爸用廣東話，跟我就說英語。 Yu-chiao: What language do you usually use at home now? Mother:　Kaixin speaks Mandarin to my mother and so does Kaixin's little brother.　They speak Cantonese to my husband and speak English to me.	01/11/07
Linguistic background	Yu-chiao:Kaixin 的第一語言是什麼？ Mother: 我想應該是英語，因為她一生下來，我都跟她說英語，不過就像剛剛說的，外婆說華語，爸爸說廣東話，所以也很難界定，不過現在因為外在的環境，我想她主要的語言應該是英語。 Yu-chiao: What is Kaixin's first language? Mother:　I think it should be English.　I always speak English to her as soon as she was born.　However, the grandmother speaks Mandarin to her and Father speaks Cantonese to her.	01/11/07
Linguistic background	Yu-chiao:你的華語的程度怎麼樣？聽說讀寫的能力？ Mother: 我想應該都可以，因為我念的是華語學校。 Yu-chiao:有些馬來西亞的學校是用華語教學嗎？ Mother: 我讀的就是華人的學校，所以主要是用華語教學。 Yu-chiao:那 Kaixin 的爸爸呢？他的華語聽說讀寫的程度怎麼樣？ Mother: 他是香港人，所以寫和讀當然沒問題，不過聽和說就沒有特別好，就像我剛剛說的，他說華語有很重的腔調。 Yu-chiao: How is your Mandarin? Mother:　My Mandarin is fine.　I went to a school which lectured in Mandarin. Yu-chiao: Are there schools in Malaysia used Mandarin to teach? Mother:　Yes, like the one I went to. Yu-chiao: How about your husband's Mandarin ability? Mother:　He is from Hong Kong.　Therefore, his reading and writing are no problem at all.　However, listening and speaking are not native speakers' standard.　He has very strong accent.	01/11/07
Social and cultural background	Yu-chiao:現在這個家裡一共幾個人住？ Mother: 一共五個，我們四個還有我媽媽。 Yu-chiao:那其他親戚呢？ Mother: 我的姊姊們和有哥哥也都在倫敦，我先生的父母及其他的家人也都在倫敦。 Yu-chiao: How many people live in this household? Mother:　Five in total.　We and two kids with my mother. Yu-chiao: How about your relatives? Mother:　My sisters and brothers are also in London.　My parents in law and their family also live in London.	04/10/07
Attending	Yu-chiao: Kaixin 在中文學校上課上多久了？	01/11/07

Chinese school	Mother: 大概有四五年了，他四歲的時候開始上，他今年九歲 Yu-chiao: 你為什麼想送他去中文學校學中文？有什麼好處呢？ Mother: 因為我認為華語是我們自己的語言，他應該要會說華語， 不只除了會說，會聽，我希望他也可以認識字。而且他的 表姊，表哥們都在那邊上課。 Yu-chiao: How long has Kaixin been attending Chinese school? Mother: About five years. She started when she was four. Yu-chiao: Why do you send her to Chinese school? Mother: Because I think she should be able to speak and understand Mandarin as well as writing. I think she can learn a lot of words there. Her cousins also go there.	
Attending Chinese school	Yu-chiao:你覺得去中文學校學中文有什麼好處呢？ Mother: 我想他去中文學校可以認識多一點朋友，比較有趣。而且 她是比較內向的孩子，她本來就不太愛說中文，再加上內向， 她就更不愛說，去中文學校，他可以一邊和其他小朋友玩， 一邊學，我想她也會變得比較開朗，比較願意說華語。 Yu-chiao: What advantages do you think going to a Chinese school can bring? Mother: I hope that she can meet a lot of friends in Chinese school. It will make learning Mandarin more interesting. She is a very shy girl and she doesn't like to speak Mandarin. She can play with other kids and learn Mandarin at the same time in a Chinese school.	01/11/07
Strategies	Yu-chiao:她還有其他學中文的機會嗎？除了上中文學校之外？ Mother: 沒有，就是我自己在家教她。在家我會叫她寫中文日記。 Yu-chiao:所以你在家也會教她中文？ Mother: 對。 Yu-chiao:你都怎麼教他呢？ Mother: 複習中文學校的功課，考考她聽寫，還有要她寫日記。或 這是陪她看一些中文書。 Yu-chiao:中文學校的課業你會幫她複習或預習嗎？ Mother: 其實常常是我姊姊來我們家時教她的，因為我姊姊還有她 女兒，Kaixin 的表姊每個週末會來我家。有時候我會教她， 但是通常我姊姊週末時，會教她還有她自己的女兒。她也 在上中文學校，所以就兩個一起寫功課。 Yu-chiao: Does she have other opportunities to learn Mandarin apart from going to Chinese school? Mother: No but I teach her at home by myself. Yu-chiao: How do you help her? Mother: I help her review the school work from the Chinese school. I also ask her to keep diary in Mandarin. Sometimes I read Chinese books with her. Yu-chiao: Do you teach her school work from Chinese school? Mother: Yes, but most of the time it is my sister who helps her when she comes to our place. My sister and her daughter come to our place every weekend. Her daughter goes to the same Chinese school. Therefore, my sister helps both of them review school work.	06/12/07
Resources provided for learning Mandarin	Yu-chiao:那麼除了中文學校外，你還有沒有給她什麼資源？例如中 文故事書，或是 卡通影片？ Mother: 我們有很多中文兒童歌曲的 DVD，常常放給她們看，跟 這一起唱。	06/12/07

	Yu-chiao: 那有書嗎？ Mother: 故事書比較少，以前會去圖書館借，現在我在工作，又有 小兒子，比較忙。 Yu-chiao:圖書館借得到中文書嗎？ Mother: 借得到，唐人街的圖書館就有。 Yu-chiao: Do you provide her with other Mandarin related resources?, such as storybooks or children programmes? Mother: We have some Chinese nursery rhythms. Yu-chiao: Do you buy Chinese books? Mother: No. We used to borrow some from a library. Yu-chiao: Where can you borrow Chinese books? Mother: The library in Chinatown.	
Strategies	Mother: 我們在馬來西亞也是這樣，全家人會聚在一起。 我們想 這是一個鼓勵我們小孩學中文的好方法，他們喜歡玩在一 起，也喜歡一起做功課，我們的小孩從來沒有質問過為什 麼要學中文。 Mother: This is what we usually did when we were in Malaysia. Families like to get together. That is what family means to us…We all think this is a good way to encourage our children to learn Mandarin. They enjoy spending time with each other, no matter whether playing or studying. Our children never questioned why they needed to learn Mandarin and go to Mandarin school because we are all doing the same thing.	06/12/07
Parental support in school work	Mother: Kaixin 學校目前的功課還不太難，我可以幫他複習一些科 目，像數學。我們送他去補英文還有其他的課， 我們希望 他在學校的表現很好，可以上好大學。 Mother: Kaixin's schoolwork is not too difficult for me at the moment. I can help her with some subjects, such as mathematics. We send her to English classes and other classes after school. We hope she can do very well in school and goes to good university."	18/1/08
Parental support	Mother: 我和我先生都很忙，先生工作的時間很長，我有好幾份工。 我們沒有很多時間來照料孩子。我們很幸運我媽媽和我們住 在一起，她幫我們照顧孩子。Kaixin 很乖，她都會先把功課 寫完才去做其他的事，我有時幫他複習中文學校的功課，不 過都是我姐姐來我們家時幫他複習比較多。 Mother: My husband and I are very busy. My husband works for long hours and I have several different part-time jobs. We don't really have a lot of time to look after our children. Luckily, my mother lives with us and she can look after them. Kaixin is a very good girl. She always finishes her work before she goes to play or do other things…I sometimes help her with her homework from the Chinese school but my sister comes to our place to help the children every Saturday.	18/1/08
strategies	Mother: 我們的親戚都在英國，大概有四十個。有些人認為既然我 們已經在西方社會，就不需要按照習俗，稱呼長輩，不過， 我認為這是很重要的，要教我的小孩如何正確的稱呼長輩。 Mother: Most of our relatives are in the UK; and there are a lot of us, about 40 people. Some people would think that since we are in a Western society, we don't need stick to the traditional way of addressing each other. However, I think it is very important to teach my children the proper way to address their relatives, especially the older ones. It sounds very rude to me	23/02/08

	if they just call them by their names.	
Learning Chinese characters	Aunt: Kaixin 應該對怎麼寫漢字有基本的認識了，所以我希望他能夠自己負起責任學習，想一想每個字要怎麼寫，不用我一直提醒。她有時候會遇到不懂的字，我就會提醒她，用他以前學過的字來提醒她。 Aunt: Kaixin should have the basic idea of how to write a Chinese character already. Therefore, I hope she can take the responsibility for learning; that is to figure out how to write a Chinese character correctly without my instruction. Of course, she sometimes encounters difficult words and she might be confused. In this situation, I would give her some instructions. I would remind her how to write those words by giving her some old characters she can write already. This strategy is always very useful. She can write the new and difficult character on her own in the end.	23/02/08
Child' perception of parental support	Kaixin: 我阿姨還有表姊星期六都會來我們家，表姊跟我一起去中文學校，可是他們住很遠，所以都會先來我家睡覺，我們再一起去學校。我阿姨星期六都會教我還有表姊功課，不過有時候他很忙，我就問我表姊，她是 Year 5 我是 Year 4，她已經上過我們的課了… Kaixin: My aunt and my cousin, Yong Le, always come to our place on Saturdays. Yong Le also goes to my Mandarin school. Their place is very far away from the school. Therefore, Yong Le stays over night and we goes to school together… My aunt teaches me and Yong Le Mandarin on Saturdays. She also checks my homework for me. Sometimes, she is busy doing other things with my grand mum and other aunts. I ask Yong Le to help me. She is in Year 5; I am in Year 4. She knows most of the words in my book…	06/12/07

Curtis' Family (only one parent with a Chinese background)

Social and cultural background	Yu-chiao: Curtis 是在哪裡出生的？ Mother:　他是 1988 在荷蘭海牙出生的，他三歲時我們搬到瑞士，他四歲的時候我們搬回英國 Yu-chiao: Where was Curtis born? Mother: He was born in Holland in 1998 and moved to Switzerland when he was three, and then moved back to England when he was four.	01/12/06
strategies	Yu-chiao: 你什麼時候開始教他中文？ Mother:　他一出生就開始了。我都只跟他說中文，他三歲時我開始教他注音和國字。 Yu-chiao: When did you start to teach Curtis Mandarin? Mother: I started to teach him as soon as he was born. I always speak to him in Mandarin. I started to teach him formally the pronunciation and the words when he was three.	01/12/06
strategies	Mother: 很多父母放古典樂，我放中文兒歌。我從他一出生就都放兒歌給他聽，還有唐詩。 Mother: Other parents play classic music, I played Chinese nursery rhythms. When he was younger, I started to play cassettes of nursery rhymes for him since he was born. I also play poetry.	01/12/06
strategies	Yu-chiao: 你怎麼使用中文書來教他呢？	01/12/06

	Mother: 我念書給他聽，他小的時候，主要是我念。他大一點，會認字的時候，我鼓勵他唸給我聽。 Mother: 選書的時候，我都是選中文作家的書，而不是翻譯的。這樣的書裡面沒有英文，裡面的文化也是中國文化，文化認知很重要。 Yu-chiao: How do you use Chinese books to teach him? Mother: I read books for him by myself. When he was younger, it was mainly me who read the books for him. When he gets older after he can recognise some words, I encourage him to read those words for me instead. Mother: When choosing books for him, I normally chose the books by native writers but the translation ones. One good thing about this kind of books is that there is no English on them. Also the culture included in these books is Chinese culture and customs. I think cultural awareness is also a crucial issue when learning Mandarin.	
strategies	Mother: 可能因為 Curtis 是獨生子，他不外向也不愛講話，他都要觀察一段時間，才敢表達自己的意見，學校的老師也注意到這一點，也跟我們討論過。所以我想能夠讓他參與不同的活動還有課程，應該會有幫助。 Mother: Maybe it is because Curtis is the only child. He is not very extroverted and talkative. It always takes him a while to feel comfortable to talk to other people and express his own opinions. The school teacher has also noticed this and discusses it with us. Therefore, I think sending him to do different activities and classes will be helpful for this	25/09/07
strategies	Mother: 要維持這樣子的模式其實很困難。我跟 Curtis 講中文，爸爸跟他說英文，對爸爸來說很困難。妳想想看，他都不能了解他太太和兒子彼此再說什麼。如果沒有他的支持，我絕對沒有辦法這麼做。 Mother: It is actually very difficult to stick to this mode: I speaking Mandarin to Curtis and John speaking English to him…. It was hard for him. Imagine! He cannot understand the conversations between his wife and his son most of the time. It must have been very frustrating for him. Without his support, I could never have done this.	01/12/06
strategies	Mother: Curtis 不是一個外向的孩子，他通常都不會告訴我，學校發生什麼事。有時候他要告訴我學校發生的事，但是無法用中文表達，就用英文說。這種情況，我就讓他用英文說了。還有也要看他說的內容是什麼，如果是快樂的事，我就用中文再說一遍，問他我說的對不對？ Mother: Curtis is not a very outgoing boy. He doesn't normally tell me what happens in school. Sometimes when he wants me what happened that day in school, he cannot use Mandarin to describe. He uses English instead. I normally would let him use English just in case he doesn't continue. Also it depends on what he tells me. If he tells me something happy, after he finishes, I would use Mandarin and describe again what he just said, and ask him if it is correct or not.	25/09/07
strategies	Mother: 他很喜歡看有教育性的影片，尤其是喜歡科學方面的。他從這些影片學到很多東西。我們回台灣時，他還可以和表哥們討論影片的內容。 Mother: Curtis likes to watch educational films very much. He is especially interested in watching the science part. He has learnt a lot of different things from the films. When we go	02/10/07

	back to Taiwan, he discussed their content with his cousins.	
strategies	Mother: 我帶 Curtis 到慈濟去體驗中國和台灣的文化。我們家是佛教，常去廟裡拜拜，Curtis 回台灣時，也會跟大家一起去。我的目的是要讓他尊重不同的文化和宗教，到廟裡讓他學到很多。在國外要維持我們的傳統文化真的很困難，所以我嘗試不同的方法和不同的地方。 Mother: I take Curtis to the temple to experience the Chinese and Taiwanese culture and atmosphere there. My family is Buddhist; going to a temple is a very common thing for us. Curtis also goes with us when we go back to Taiwan. My intention is to let him learn to respect different culture and different religions. Moreover, he has learnt a lot of different cultural things in the temple. It is very difficult to maintain our heritage culture in a different country. Therefore, I try different methods and different places.	02/10/07
Chinese characters	Mother: 怎麼樣正確握筆很重要。Curtis 握筆都握得太緊，所以才寫幾個字，手就很酸了。握筆法是書法裡很重要的一個部分，Curtis 應該要好好學。 Mother: It is very important for Curtis to know how to hold a pen properly. Curtis tends to hold pens too tight and so his hand gets very sore and tired after just writing a few characters. The proper method of holding pens is one of the key principles of writing Chinese calligraphy. Curtis should be very clear about this since it is part of the Chinese culture.	06/11/07
Personal experience of learning	Mother: 我回想我還是學生的時候，我最喜歡在英國讀碩士時的一堂課。那門課的老師總是先說一些有趣的小故事，然後才開始上課，這跟我以前在台灣上課的經驗很不一樣。這就好像你吃飯的時候，有開胃菜，刺激你的食慾。我也喜歡用這個方式來幫 Curtis 開始上課。 Mother: I recall that when I was a student, I enjoyed one course when I did my Master's degree in the UK. The lecturer always started the class with some interesting examples or stories and this experience is very different from my experience in traditional Chinese classrooms. It is like when you eat, you have starters, which stimulates your appetite for the main course. I like to give Curtis different starters when we start a lesson.	06/11/07
Chinese characters	Mother: 對 Curtis 來說，學寫國字是最困難的。傳統的抄寫方式，對一個小男孩來說是很無聊的，所以我用不同的方式來教他，他目前來說都還蠻喜歡學寫字的。 Mother: Learning to write Chinese characters has always been the most challenging task for Curtis. The traditional way of copying characters again and again onto a exercise book can be very boring for such a young boy. Therefore, I try to use different methods to make the writing become more interesting and fun. Curtis enjoys learning to write Chinese characters so far.	06/11/07
Chinese characters	Mother: 教他寫字的時候，我有時會帶他去公園或是在我們的花園裡，我們用粉筆或是用樹枝在地上練習寫字。在家裡，我用白板給他寫。我也跟他玩遊戲，比如說釣魚遊戲還有記憶卡。 Mother: For example, when teaching him how to write Chinese characters, sometimes I took him to a park or to our garden and we practice writing on the ground by using some sticks or chalks. In my house, we have a whiteboard for him to write Chinese characters. Sometimes we also use paper to practice. He likes these different activities very much. His favorite activities are fishing and writing on the ground. Moreover, I	06/11/07

	play some games with him, such as fishing games and memory flash cards.	
Strategies and personal experience of learning in school	Mother: 我都會要他用新學到的字造詞和造句。一方面我可以看看他是不是真的了解字的意思了，另一方面，他也會很有成就感。我學英文也是這麼學的，我覺得很有用，所以我用這個方式教他。 Mother: I always ask Curtis to make phrases and sentences by himself when we learn new words. On the one hand, I can check if he really understands what the word means; on the other hand, he feels that he can use the new words he has just learnt, which is great. I learnt English in this way and I found it very helpful. That is why I also apply this method to teach Curtis.	06/11/07
Chinese characters	Mother: 我讀了一些有關於小孩學習的書，我自己的經驗也是這樣。當小孩在學新的字的時候，那個自救好像是一幅圖畫，而不是有意義的字，尤其是中文字。Curtis 三歲開始，我就教他寫字，我就用這種圖示法教他。我也用不同的活動來教他，他很喜歡這些活動。對中文字也很有印象。 Mother: I have read some books about children's learning; I have also found it true in my own experience: when young children start to learn a word, the word is like a picture for them instead of meaningful text, especially for Chinese ideographic characters. I started to teach Curtis Chinese characters when he was three years old. I apply the ideographic feature to teach Curtis…. In order to keep him interested and motivated, I often play different games with him and use various strategies. He has found learning Chinese characters interesting and these games leave him with a vivid impression of Chinese characters…	01/12/06
strategies	Mother: 我認為閱讀對他的閱讀能力及寫作能力都很有幫助，所以我們每天都讀很多書。我發現到他的寫作能力變好了。 Mother: I believe that reading is very good for his reading ability as well as writing ability. We do a bit of reading everyday. I have noticed that he has improved his Chinese writing. He doesn't write like he is talking. He starts to use more phrases and terms he learns in books now.	04/12/07
strategies	Mother: Curtis 很害羞，所以他不回冒險去嘗試新的事物，我知道如果我一直糾正他，他就部會想要去嘗試新事物了。所以當他有錯誤時，我會等一個比較好的時機來告訴他，也鼓勵他嘗試不同的方法。 Mother: Curtis is a shy boy and won't take any risk nor try adventurous things. I know if I keep on correcting him every time he made mistakes, he would lose enthusiasm to explore new things. So when he made a mistake, I would wait for a better time to tell him and also encourage him to try different ways.	04/12/07
strategies	Yu-chiao: 當他跟你一起讀故事時，遇到困難的話，你怎麼幫助他？ Mother: 我會用一點英文來解釋，或是用例子，一些有趣和文化相關的例子。比如說，我們講到 "小姐小姐來看戲"，我用一些他熟悉的有趣的例子，比如歌仔戲和布袋戲。我也告訴他台灣的外公外婆很愛看。這些例子讓他很有動力想要學好。 Yu-chiao: How do you help him when he comes across some problems on reading the story books with you? Mother: I use a little bit of English to explain as well as some examples. I will use some interesting examples and relate them to Chinese culture and Taiwanese culture. For example, we talked about watching a play. I used some examples which were interesting and familiar for him. Such as the traditional Taiwanese play and puppet play. I also mentioned	04/12/07

	that her grandparents (in Taiwan) really like to watch this kind of play. These examples not only helped him understand the new words but also motivate him to learn what the traditional Taiwanese plays and puppet plays are. He is very keen to find out why his grandparents like these plays and what these plays are like.	
Attitude towards learning Mandarin	Father: Since Ching-hui is from Taiwan, half of our family is in Taiwan, it is important for Curtis to appreciate this and be able to see himself as one of them. Therefore, being able to speak Mandarin is beneficial. However, I hope learning Mandarin is interesting to him instead of being stressful. As long as he enjoys learning it, I would support him.	04/12/07
Strategies	Yu-chiao: 他有沒有問過他會什麼要學中文？學校又不用，日常生活也不一定會用到。 Mother: 我試著創造國語的環境給他。我們每年都帶他回台灣，他有表哥還有朋友在那裡，他得要用國語跟他們說話。他很喜歡跟他們玩，所以他也知道要把國語學好。他自己也覺得是他們的一份子，所以這個自覺鼓勵他學中文。 Yu-chiao: Has he questioned when he needs to learn Mandarin since he doesn't need it immediately in school and outside world? Mother: I tried my best to create Mandarin speaking environment for him. We take him back to Taiwan every year, where he has some cousins and friends and he needs to communicate with them in Mandarin. He enjoys playing with them very much. He does different activities there and so he can feel the need to learn Mandarin. He also feels he belongs to the community and the family when he goes back to Taiwan instead of an outsider. So actually, this awareness of identity also encourages him to learn Mandarin.	01/12/06
Contact with Chinese society	Curtis: 我喜歡去台灣，我喜歡和我的表哥還有那裏的朋友玩，我的國語很好，我可以說我想要說的話，我也聽得懂。但是我有些字忘記了，我要跟媽媽多學一點，我明年要自己飛去台灣了，我很開心要看到阿嬤還有朋友。 Curtis: I like to go to Taiwan. I like to play with my cousins and my friends there…My Mandarin is good. I can say what I want to say to them and I can understand them. But I forget some characters. I need to study more at home with my mummy…I am going to Taiwan next year on my own. I am very excited to fly there and see my grand mum and cousins on my own.	12/01/08
Child's perception of learning Mandarin	Curtis: 我最喜歡下象棋，有一點像西洋棋，不過要學國字才看得懂。我的表哥很會玩，我們都會比賽。 Curtis: Chinese chess is my favorite. It is a bit similar to Western chess, but you need to learn the Chinese characters on each piece and then you can play. My cousins are very good at playing Chinese chess. We like to have competitions when we get together.	12/01/08
Child's perception of learning Mandarin	Curtis: 十二生肖很有趣，我全部都知道，我都會跟我的朋友說他們是屬什麼，我還教他們要怎麼說。 Curtis: The Zodiac is very interesting. I know all of these twelve animals. I can tell my friends what animal they are. They like to know what they are! I also teach them how to say that in Mandarin	12/01/08

Lucas' family (only one parent with a Chinese background)

Social and	Yu-chiao:可不可以請你說一下你的國籍？	05/10/07

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cultural background	Mother: 我的國籍是這樣的, 我出生在台灣, 我父親那邊完全是中國人,而且還是外省人,他們是那時候跟國民黨一起遷到台灣,我母親是一半日本人,我的外婆完全是日本人,不會說國語,我的外公是客家人,所以我的母親會說客家話,小時候住在苗栗。所以要說我的國籍,我的國籍是日本,我的父母親給我取得日本國籍,我在台灣出生,但我四個月大就全家搬到日本,然後在日本住了十四年,我的基本教育都是在日本受的,除了小學六年級,國一和國二,所以我的中文是在那時候學的。 Yu-chiao:: Would you please describe your own background? Mother: I was born in Taiwan. My father is Chinese living in Mainland China. He went to Taiwan with KMT. My mother Is half Japanese and half Taiwanese. My maternal grandmother is Japanese and she can't speak Mandarin at all. My maternal grandfather is Hakka and so my mother can speak Hakka. I was born in Taiwan and moved to Japan when I was four month old. I lived in Japan for fourteen years. I had my schooling in Japan, except for the last year in primary school and the first two years in junior high school. I learnt my Mandarin then.	
Linguistic background	Yu-chiao:為什麼這幾年回台灣呢? Mother: 雖然我的父母都會說中文,但我不愛說也不愛聽,我的父母覺得你是一個中國人,應該要會說中文,很不高興我為什麼不學中文,所以又把我送回台灣。一開始回台灣時,我父母送我到日僑學校就讀,怕我趕不上,可是去日僑學校就跟在日本一樣,天天說日文,我還是不肯學中文,所以他們就把我轉到當地的學校,然後讀了三年。 Yu-chiao:所以你的中文基礎是在那三年學的? Mother: 對,後來我又回日本去念高中,然後高中讀到一半去了美國,然後就在美國的學校繼續唸完高中及大學。 Yu-chiao: Why did you go to Taiwan then? Mother: Although my parents speak Mandarin, I didn't want to speak Mandarin. My parents thought since I was Chinese, I should be able to speak Mandarin. They were very unhappy that I couldn't use the language. Therefore, they sent me to Taiwan to learn Mandarin. I went to a Japanese school to start with because my parents were worried that I couldn't catch up with other students in a normal school. But I used Japanese there every day and refused to speak Mandarin. Therefore, they sent me to a normal primary school. Yu-chiao: Therefore, you got your Mandarin ability in the three years? Mother: Yes. I went back to Japan to continue my secondary school and then went to US.	
Social and cultural background	Yu-chiao:那麼 Lucas 的爸爸呢? Mother: Lucas 的爸爸是墨西哥裔美國人,他的全家都是在墨西哥出生,然後移民到美國,他是最小的一個,他是全家唯一一個在美國出生的人,所以他的主要語言是英文,他會說西班牙文,但是英文比較好。 Yu-chiao: How about Lucas' father? Mother: He is Mexican American. His family is from Mexico and he was born in the US. He can speak Spanish but not very well.	05/10/07
Linguistic background	Yu-chiao: 依照你剛剛所說的情形,所以你的第一語言是日語嗎? Mother: 對,日語是我的第一語言。	05/10/07

	Yu-chiao: 那你平常跟你的父母親交談，是用什麼語言？ Mother: 我現在平常跟他們用中文溝通比較多。 Yu-chiao: 那小時候呢？ Mother: 小時候在日本的時候幾乎都是用日文。 Yu-chiao: 你的父親是中國人，他會說日文嗎？ Mother: 會，我的父母親都會說日文。 Yu-chiao: 好，那麼平常在你們家裡，你們用什麼語言溝通？ Mother: 我跟 Lucas 都是說中文，他的爸爸只說英文， Yu-chiao: Is Japanese your first language? Mother: Yes. Yu-chiao: What do you use to communicate with your parents? Mother: Now I use Mandarin most of the time. Yu-chiao: Does your father speak Japanese since he is a Chinese? Mother: Yes, both of my parents can speak Japanese. Yu-chiao: In your immediate family, what language do you use to communicate with each other? Mother: I speak Mandarin to Lucas and his father speaks English to him.	
Linguistic background	Yu-chiao:那你自己形容你的中文程度呢？ Mother: 我的說還可以，平常的會話沒有問題，讀的方面，看報紙看書也都沒有問題，但是要寫文章，我就寫不出來了，很多字忘了，很多詞語也不夠好，不夠深。 Yu-chiao:所以日常生活使用中文都沒有問題？ Mother: 對，尤其說，如果我沒有說我的背景，別人聽不出來我的中文有不一樣的地方，有一次我的朋友跟我說，我說中文就像中文很好的外國人，字正腔圓。 Yu-chiao: Can you describe your Mandarin ability? Mother: My speaking is fine; reading skills is also not bad. However, my writing skill is pretty bad. I cannot remember a lot of words and terms. Yu-chiao: Therefore, your Mandarin is good enough to deal with daily life? Mother: Yes. People cannot even tell that Mandarin is not my first language.	05/10/07
Attitude towards learning Mandarin	Yu-chiao:對，你的發音很標準也很清楚。 Mother: 尤其是有小孩以後，我希望讓他在耳朵很靈敏，用聽的就可以學語言的時候，我故意說的更慢一點，更清楚一點。我希望他的發音也能夠很好很標準，而小孩這時候認字可能難，但是發音學的很快。 Yu-chiao: Your pronunciation is very clear and correct. Mother: Yes, especially after Lucas was born. I speak slowly and clearly deliberately for him.	05/10/07
Strategies	Yu-chiao:那 Lucas 也已經習慣跟你交談時都是使用中文？他不會用英文跟你談話？ Mother: 我已經跟他說過，Lucas 對不起，媽媽的英文不好，我不會用英文跟你說話。Lucas 說 媽媽 沒關係，你是中國人嘛！所以現在還好，他也都跟我說中文，現在他的年紀還沒有到有 peer pressure 同儕壓力的階段，要到大一點的時候，他可能會覺得比較丟臉，因為我自己也經歷過，所以我知道，我大一點的時候，就不敢在外人面前說中文，他可能也會經歷這個階段，不過到目前為止，都還好 Yu-chiao: Has Lucas tried to speak English to you?	09/11/07

	Mother: I told him " I am sorry, Lucas. Mummy's English is not good. I won't speak English to you. Lucas replied: Mummy, it is ok. You are Chinese. Therefore, he speaks Mandarin to me so far. He doesn't have peer pressure yet. When he gets older, he might feel embarrassed to speak Mandarin to me. I have the same experience. I didn't want to speak Mandarin in front of other people.	
Attitude towards and value of learning Mandarin	Mother:雖然他本身不會說，也不肯學，但是在 Lucas 一出生時，我們就說好了，我們以中文為主，我們本來可以選日文，西班牙文，可是我們認為中文將來一定會是很重要的語言之一，也很難學，所以也不要教他太多語言，就以中文為主，所以我們決定我在家只跟他說中文，有時候 Lucas 用英文交雜著跟我說話的時候，他爸爸會糾正他說 "Lucas 你千萬不能用英文，你一定要用中文跟你的母親交談！ " Mother: I discussed with my husband before Lucas was born about what second language we should choose for Lucas to learn. I can speak Mandarin and Japanese and my husband can speak Spanish. We should take advantage of this. We came to an agreement that Mandarin should be the main second language for him. We believed that Mandarin was a very difficult language to learn, especially learning Chinese characters. We also thought that Mandarin would be a very important language in the future. Therefore, I only speak to Lucas in Mandarin.	09/11/07
Attitude towards and value of learning Mandarin	Mother: 我先生不會說中文，可是他很支持 Lucas 學中文。他都會確定 Lucas 有做完中文學校的功課，他還常常問 Lucas 我教了他什麼。 Mother: My husband cannot speak Mandarin but he plays a very supportive role in Lucas' learning of Mandarin. He always makes sure that Lucas has completed the homework from Chinese school. He also asks Lucas about what I teach him very often.	09/11/07
Strategies	Mother:對，而且以前我們住美國時，我的父母親也在那裡，所以他有更多的機會聽到中文。我們家裡現在有很多中文書，電視也只看中文的電視或影片。因為他現在越來越忙，看電視時間本來就不多了，然後我就想 既然英文的環境夠多了，我自己的詞語也不夠多，所以可以從中文的電視學到很多詞語。 Yu-chiao:是什麼樣的電視節目呢？是卡通影片嗎？ Mother: 對，很多卡通影片他都很喜歡 （走到電視旁，展示卡通 DVD 給我看） 像這些 小叮噹阿 還有很多我小時候很喜歡看的日本卡通影片，這些都是我在台灣買的，都已經是中文版的，他這些全部都看過了！然後，很多詞語他都在這裡面學來的，這些對我幫助很大 也對他幫助很大。 Mother: When we were living in the States, my parents were also there. Lucas had more opportunities to hear Mandarin. We have a lot of Chinese books at home and we watch Chinese TV programmes and films. He is getting busier with school work and so he doesn't have a lot of time to watch TV. I myself also need to improve my Mandarin. Therefore, we watch Chinese programmes together. Yu-chiao: What kind of programmes do you watch? Mother: a lot of animations, such as Doraemon and a lot of animation that I watched when I was a kid. I bought these DVDs in Taiwan. He has watched them all. These have helped both	09/11/07

	of us very much.	
Attitude towards learning Mandarin	Mother: 我的父母替 Lucas 立了很好的典範。他們大部分的時間都住在美國，因為我弟弟妹妹都物再那裏。他們還是都說中文。我希望 Lucas 也能了解不是只有住在中國人的社會裡才是中國人，如果他了解了，他會很自然的願意使用中文。 Mother:I think my parents are a very good example for Lucas. They live in the US most of time since my brother and sister are living there. This doesn't affect the fact that they are Chinese and they speak Chinese. I hope Lucas can get the idea that not only people who live in a Chinese country are Chinese. If he understands this, he would be very happy to speak Mandarin.	07/12/07
Social and cultural background Linguistic background	Mother:我的父母很努力的幫我學習中文，他們堅持一定要跟我說中文，即使是到 學校去接我。我還記得，我是青少年的時候，覺得很不好意思再朋友面前說中文。我沒有說中文的朋友。我也不了解為什麼我要學習這個沒有用處的語言。我再日本生活，根本不需要，我也不認為以後會用的到。我就拒絕學中文了。這就是他們為什麼送我回台灣的原因。在台灣，我有祖父母，還有其他的親戚。大家都說中文。到那時我才了解，我有一部分的中國血統，應該學習中文。 Mother: My parents tried very hard to help me to learn Mandarin; they insisted on that they should speak Mandarin to me all the time even when they went to school to pick me up. I can recall that I felt very embarrassed to speak Mandarin to my parents in front of my friends when I was a teenager. None of my friend spoke Mandarin. I didn't understand why I needed to learn this "useless" language. I didn't need it for living in Japan; I didn't think I would need it in the future at all. I refused to learn Mandarin any more. That was why they sent me back to Taiwan to learn Mandarin. In Taiwan, I have grandparents and other relatives. People there speak Mandarin. The "useless" language was used there every day. My grandparents used it; my aunts and uncles used it; my friends in Taiwan used it and my parents used it. Not until then did I realize that half of my roots were in Taiwan and I was half Chinese. This language should be part of me. I started to learn Mandarin and accepted it	05/10/07
Parental support	Yu-chiao:那他會不會覺得你們兩個人的交談，他無法理解，這是一個問題？ Mother: 他其實大概可以猜的到意思，他是一個很敏感的人，以前他也住過日本，在當時，他身為一個外國人，已經習慣從肢體語言去猜別人所說的意思，所以他現在已經大概可以猜出來，我在跟他說什麼！ Yu-chiao: Does your husband think it is a problem that he cannot understand your conversation between you and Lucas? Mother: My husband used to live in Japan. He had the experience of guessing what people said by looking at the body language and the context. He can guess most of the time that what I am trying to say to Lucas. Of course, there are some occasions that he couldn't understand. I always told him afterwards. He has very firm attitudes towards our using of Mandarin. Sometimes when Lucas tried to speak English to me, he told Lucas strictly that he must not speak English to me.	09/11/07
Teaching Chinese characters	Mother: 這是他現在在上的課，他的聽說能力比他的讀寫能力好多了，這些課本上的字對他來說太難了，他能夠認幾個字就認幾個字，我不太強求他。另外這一本（寫字練習本），是	11/01/08

	我的父親在台灣幫他買的，這些字都是最基本的，他就是需要這些最基本的字，我就叫他每天寫五個字，比如說今天寫 小，大 ....等等，然後每天就幫他往前複習複習。我認為他就是需要這個程度的字。我還利用生字卡教他認字，最近沒有做了，前幾年就拿著生字卡問他，這是什麼字？這是什麼字？	
	Mother: This is what he is learning now. His listening and speaking ability is much better than his reading and writing. These Chinese characters in this textbook are very difficult for him. I don't really want to force him to learn these. There is another exercise book that my father posted to us. It has basic characters that he should know. I teach him five characters every day. I also sue some flashcards to teach him.	
Resources provided for learning Mandarin Strategies	Yu-chiao:我剛剛在他房間看到很多中文的故事書籍.. Mother: 對，那些都是他小時候四，五歲，小學一年級的時候，我會唸那些故事給他聽，一半英文，一半中文，那個時候我就念給他聽，現在就比較沒有了。其實我一直在想，上次 茂丞的媽媽告訴我一件事情，我覺得很有趣，就是他發現在國外的這些小孩，他們寫出來的文章，就跟口語說出來是一樣的，完全是不像寫文章的，當然 Lucas 要是能夠寫文章，我就已經覺得很滿意了，但是茂丞的媽媽說要念文章，故事給這些小孩聽，而不是只有口語，否則寫出來的就跟口語完全一樣了，所以我覺得看書念給小孩聽也是很重要的。 Yu-chiao: I saw a lot of Chinese books in his room. Mother: Yes, I sometimes read these stories for him. Curtis' mother told me that if we can read stories to children, their writing will be much better. Therefore, I also try to read stories to him.	11/01/08
Resources provided for learning Mandarin	Mother: 我很幸運有我父母的支持，我爸爸總是問我他要寄什麼教材來給 Lucas，他每個月都幫我們寄一個大包裹，裡面有各式各樣的教材，有故事書，有教材，有影片 。他們如果有看到對他有幫助的，會幫他買。 Mother: I am very lucky to have my parents' support. My father always asks me what material Lucas needs and sends us a big parcel every month. The materials they have sent include textbooks, comic books, storybooks, exercise books, films and cartoons. Whenever they see something helpful for Lucas to learn Mandarin, they would purchase it and then send it to us. I don't need to worry about getting anything here.	11/01/08
Attending Chinese school	Mother: 我們在中文學校能夠認識其他的家庭，真的很好，Lucas 很喜歡跟 Curtis 玩，他有時週末都去他們家，我也從他媽媽那裏學到很多。 Mother: It is very good that we got to know other families through the Mandarin school. For example, Lucas really likes to play with Curtis and he stayed in Curtis' place at the weekends sometimes. I have learnt a lot from Chin-hui; I always ask for her suggestions about how to teach Lucas. She gave me a lot of good ideas.	11/01/08
Cultural awareness Contacts with Chinese relatives	Yu-chiao: 除了在家的這些資源，若有一些其他外面和中國文化，語言有關的，你 　　　　　會特別帶他去嗎？ Mother: 我都盡量帶他回美國或是回台灣，和我的家人見面，我的爺爺奶奶都還 　　　　　健在，我的爺爺已經九十幾歲了，他們也是外省人，我爺	11/01/08

	爺是河南人，奶奶是河北北京人，我想他們就是活著的歷史，我希望 Lucas 能有機會多跟他們相處，在這裡就比較少。就只有跟有相同背景的家庭一起聚會，一起玩，去中國餐廳。 Yu-chiao: What other resources you provide with him apart from the resources at home? Mother: I take him to Taiwan or to the States to see my family. My grandfather is in his nineties. He is like a history book. I hope Lucas can spend more time with them. In the UK, we go out with other families with the same background sometimes.	
Strategies	Mother: 我都要求 Lucas 要慢慢讀，大聲讀。我希望他能發音很正確。他不會讀的時候，沒有信心的時候，他都念得很小聲，所以我希望他能有自信，大聲的念。我們在學校不就是這樣嗎？我的好詩都要求我要大聲的念。我也希望他能把家裡就當做學校一樣，認真的學，不是在玩。 Mother: I always ask Lucas to read and reply to my questions loudly and slowly. I want him to speak properly and pronounce accurately. When he didn't feel confident enough to say some words, he would lower his voice. I hope he can be confident and can try to say words clearly and so I always ask him to speak up. It is just like what we do in school, isn't it? My teachers always asked us to speak loudly and clearly. I also want Lucas to be serious about our learning hour although it is happening at home and I am teaching him. He should be as serious as he is in school.	22/02/08
Strategies	Yu-chiao:在你教他中文的過程當中，你覺得最困難的是什麼？ Mother:當然是寫字了，尤其是男孩子，你要他坐下來，花很長時間慢慢寫，是一件比較困難的事。 Yu-chiao: What is the most difficult thing for him when he is learning Mandarin? Mother: It is the writing. For a boy, it is not easy to ask him to sit down for a long time and practice.	22/02/08
Strategies	Mother: 我認為上課前的暖身活動很重要，就好像你做運動一樣。Lucas 都一直在說英文的環境裡一整天，他的腦子要調整一下 為中文系統。還有，暖身也是讓他知道正是上課要開始了，不是在玩。 Mother: In my opinion, warming up is very important. It is like when you do some exercise, you need to warm up your body. Lucas has been in an English speaking environment for the whole day. We need to get his brain and mind ready for the Chinese learning session. On the other hand, warming up is also to let him know that this learning session is a serious task, not just some activities for fun.	22/02/08
Strategies	Mother: 我發現寫字和識字對他來說是最困難的。他可以說的很好，但是會說並不一定會寫會認。我想能夠增進他的讀寫能力的方法 就是每天練習。 Mother: I have found that in Lucas' learning Mandarin, writing and recognizing Chinese characters are the most difficult for him. He can speak very well and can understand most of what I say to him. However, even though he knows the terms in Mandarin, he cannot write nor recognize these terms in written form. I think the only way to improve his literacy in Mandarin is practising the characters every day. I have also found that it is quite helpful if I give him some examples when	22/02/08

	teaching him some new words, especially those examples he already knows…	
Strategies	Mother: 有時候我是哆啦 A 夢他是大雄，有時我們換角色。以前我問他問題，他就回答我。現在她的中文已經很不錯了，可以表達他想說的，所以我叫跟他一起來說故事。 Mother: Sometimes I am Doraemon and Lucas is Nobita and some sometimes we swap our roles.　When I started this activity, I set the storyline and Lucas just replied to my questions.　Now his Mandarin is good enough to say what he wants to say; I leave the story open and we create the short drama together.	14/03/08
Strategies	Mother: 他很喜歡跟我玩這個活動，他會給我一些挑戰，就像他在影片裡看到的一樣。我認為這是很好的活動，因為他可以學到一些新字。在中文學校，現在他們在學 "生日快樂" 所以他今天要說有關生日的是。 Mother: Lucas likes to do this kind of role play with me.　He always tries to give me challenging different tasks, like he saw in Doraemon.　I think this is a good activity because he can use the words and sentences he knows and learn some new words as well.　In the Chinese school, they were working on the topic of "Happy Birthday".　That is why he wanted to talk about birthday today.　In school, he learnt birthday, birthday presents, cards and toys, etc.　He used many of those words today.	14/03/08
Child talked about Chinese relatives	Lucas: 我知道很多有關於中國和台灣的事,我知道我的祖祖祖祖父是誰！我的曾祖父跟我說很多故事,很多他小時候的事。 Lucas: I know a lot about the history of China and Taiwan and I know who my great great great great grandparents were!　My great grandparents told me a lot of stories; they also told me what their life was like when they were young, even when they were eight years old!	14/03/08
Child talked about resources provided for learning Mandarin	Lucas: 我喜歡看媽媽和外公買給我的卡通,最喜歡哆啦 A 夢,他很聰明很勇敢,解決很多事情,什麼都可以。 Lucas: Yes, I like to watch the animations my mum and my grandparents bought for me.　My favorite is Doraemon.　He is very clever and brave.　He solved a lot of problems. Everything is possible for him.	14/03/08

Caroline's family (without any Chinese background)

Attitude towards and value of learning Mandarin	Mother: Caroline is always very interested in learning languages.　I went to speak to her Latin teacher.　She said that Caroline was the best student she had ever had.　I cannot say that Caroline is very talented but once she is interested in something, she tries to learn it very well….I think I should encourage her to learn languages.　I believe Mandarin is a very important language and it is very beautiful.　I once had the chance to learn Mandarin when I was working in Hong Kong, but I was too busy to do so.　I suggested Caroline should learn Mandarin; I showed her some Chinese calligraphy in order to motivate her.	14/11/07

	She likes painting very much. I think I have made the right decision. She loves learning Mandarin, especially the Chinese characters.	
Strategies	Yu-chiao: How do you usually help her at home? Mother: When she has her private lesson, I always sit behind and listen to what the teachers teach. I attend the adults' class in the Mandarin school and am trying to improve my Mandarin. Apparently, her Mandarin is much better than mine, especially the writing. I sometimes tell her that I can practice the speaking with her at home, but she doesn't think my Mandarin is good enough to practice with her. Therefore, I cannot provide her direct help. However, I make sure she does her Mandarin homework and prepares for the class. Moreover, I also want her to be active within the Chinese network she is involved in. For example, those students who went to the summer camp in China with her still have contact. They sometimes get together and sometimes email each other, sharing their experience of learning Mandarin.	14/11/07
Strategies	Mother: As you know, she won the first prize in the Chinese composition competition. Last month, I took her to the awarding ceremony. She felt very happy and very proud of herself. There, she also got to know some new friends who are also learning Mandarin. I encourage her to join in these activities and keep these links. I think all of these links and activities can motivate her to learn Mandarin even more. I also told her that if her Mandarin has improved a lot and she wants to go the Chinese summer camp again, I will send her there again. She knows that I value her learning of Mandarin a lot and she can feel my enthusiasm. I believe her perception of my attitude towards her learning Mandarin influences her motivation and attitude of learning Mandarin.	14/11/07
Attending Chinese school	Mother: We started at Hua Hsia and then we left there because they used the textbooks from Taiwan, which were very useful for families who are originally from Taiwan. Those books are not so appropriate for families like us, who learn Mandarin as a foreign language. Moreover, the head teacher then didn't allow teachers to use English to explain in class. Therefore, my daughter couldn't understand anything and then felt very confused, without knowing what was going on	14/11/07
Attending Chinese school	Mother: The Chinese school is like a small Chinese community for us and it was our first step to meet some Chinese speaking families. I think Caroline needs to know Chinese speaking friends or friends with Chinese background. Then she will feel closer to the language. Also she can get some chance to practice her Mandarin and get to experience Chinese culture."	14/11/07
Strategies Cultural awareness	Mother: We always learn a lot from these activities, not just Caroline but also us. We vaguely knew that Dragon Boat Festival was an important festival in Chinese culture but we didn't know the origin nor the related customs. After attending this workshop, we have got a very good understanding of this festival. Caroline was very interested and enjoyed herself on that day and also at other events as well. It is good to see that she enjoys Chinese culture and thus enjoys learning Mandarin.	28/02/08
Strategies	Mother: Even though I don't understand what the teacher says exactly, I can get some ideas about what the teacher covers in that class and what the homework is. When we go back home, I can make sure she does her homework both for Chinese school and	28/02/08

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	for the tutor. I can also make sure that she is well prepared for these classes.	
Strategies	Father: We always watch films together. I bought a lot of famous Chinese films for us to watch together. We were amazed by the Kong-fu type films, in which people can just fly everywhere. The traditional costumes are very beautiful. We were also struck about what the Chinese society was like during the Cultural Revolution. These films have brought us closer to Chinese culture.	28/02/08
Child talked about attending Chinese school and learning Mandarin	Caroline: I like to go to Chinese school to learn Mandarin. I like my teacher and my friends there. We do a lot of different things in Chinese school, not just study Mandarin. I also got to know a lot of good friends there. I like to spend time with them.	12/03/08
Child talked about Culture	Caroline: The melody and the lyrics are very beautiful in Chinese songs. When I encounter some words that I don't know, I ask my Chinese teachers. I can sing some of the songs. I share those songs with my friends in Chinese school and they also share theirs with me. Sometimes we sing these songs together. It is really good fun.	12/03/08
Child talked about learning Mandarin	Caroline: It is a real world and a real language. I want to go back many times and I hope I can just speak Mandarin there. I need to work harder to learn Mandarin.	12/03/08
Child talked about learning Mandarin and Chinese culture	Caroline: There are a lot of important things I have learnt about Chinese customs of eating. I am very happy that I got to know these before I went to China for the summer camp. Otherwise, I would offend the people and make them feel unhappy. For example, when we use chopsticks, chopsticks should never stand upright or vertical in your bowl. This gesture is to honour the dead or deceased family members. If I didn't know that and did it even accidently, the people who ate with me would feel offended.	12/03/08
Child talked about parental support	Caroline: My mother always cares about what I did in Chinese school and the private classes I do on Saturdays. She is very interested in what I learn and wants me to teach her as well. She also offered to check my homework for me and sometimes she listens to my reading. I am very happy that she is very pleased with my work.	12/03/08

Philip's Family (without any Chinese background)

Attending Chinese school	Mother: The school is like a big family. It doesn't matter that we don't have any Chinese background. We got to know a lot of Chinese families there. The parents there support each other and each other's children. We feel like family members and the parents and the children do a lot of things together.	30/10/07
Access to Chinese culture: Trip to China	Mother: He was very excited when we got to Xi'an. He is very interested in Terracotta warriors. We had been to the exhibition in the British museum, but seeing those in China is very different. Once we got there, he read about it and saw the real Terracotta lying there. He was really interested in that and was very excited.	30/10/07
Strategies	Mother: I cannot help directly teaching him how to write or how to read. I make sure he completes his homework before he goes to Mandarin school. I sometimes ask him to tell me what he did in class that week and show me if he can say anything.	30/10/07
Attitude	Father: Philip didn't pick learning Mandarin by accident. We did give	30/10/07

towards and value of learning Mandarin	him some encouragement and support. We thought carefully before we made this decision. We thought he should have a European language, but after that, what language should we choose for him? A lot of people pick Japanese because of Japan's economy and possibilities of business contacts. But when you bear that in mind, you would think Mandarin is another good choice. Mandarin has a lot of appeal when you think about it. When he grows up, China will be a very important country in global politics and global economy. So it makes huge amount of sense to learn Mandarin.	
Strategies	Father: We gave Philip a lot of support and we thought carefully before we decided to let him go to Chinese school. Mandarin has a lot of appeal when you think about it. Therefore, since Philip really likes to learn Mandarin, we do our best to support him.	30/10/07
Child talked about learning Mandarin	Philip: Some friends from English school want to play football with me; sometimes there are friends' birthday parties. I cannot go because I need to go to Chinese school…but I don't feel bad. I like to go to Chinese school. I have a lot of friends there. We learn Mandarin together. During the break time, we play football and some games together. It is really fun!	31/01/08
Child talked about learning Mandarin	Philip: I spoke to a Chinese man when we travelled on a boat. He could not speak any English. He thought I was only five and he taught me how to count to five. I counted to twenty two and he was very surprised.	31/01/08

Appendix 4 Example Fieldnote

Family: Curtis and his mother

Date: 06/11/07

Fieldnote: Participant observation		Reflective note /Comments
Place	Curtis' home, in Curtis room	1. Learning sessions take place at Curtis room. Curtis knows that when his Chinese lesson would be and moves his school work from the mainstream school to another table (out of the way). *(Comments after watching the video recoding of the learning session)*
People	Curtis and his mother	
Activity	1. Learning to write Chinese characters 2. Learning some characters with same/similar pronunciation 3. Learning some characters with more than one pronunciations	
Objects	Flashcards, exercise book, mini white board, a storybook, marker pens, dictionaries	
Time	60 minutes	
Goal	1. Be able to write some characters 2. Be able to distinguish some words with similar pronunciation 3. Be familiar with some words with more than one pronunciations	
Process	1. The mother and Curtis worked on a short story. -- M read the story for Curtis -- The story is about a tress -- M asked Curtis to tell her the story again by looking at the pictures and some characters. -- Curtis can understand the story but he doesn't know all of the texts. 2. M & C worked on some characters in the story. -- M showed C flashcards and instructed him to read -- M compared "就" (jiu-exactly) and "舊" (jiu-old) -- M explained the roots of the words -- M asked Curtis to distinguish them and make phrases -- C: 她就是我的老師 (She is exactly my teacher.) (Pointed at me)	*1. Curtis enjoyed the learning session. He smiled all the time, especially when he got things right.* *2. The progression between learning activities was*

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	這是我的舊書 (This is my old book) -- M taught C how to write these two words by using mini whiteboard -- C copied the words.　C tried to write these characters by himself. (Tried several times) 3. Worked on two characters with similar sounds. -- M showed Curtis two flashcards and asked him to read them. "起" (qi3) "騎" (qi2) -- Curtis couldn't tell the difference. -- M explained and taught him how to pronounce them properly. -- M helped C to practice pronouncing second and third tones. -- M asked Curtis to make phrases. --C- 一起 （together） 騎車 (ride a bike) -- C I rode a bike with my friends. -- M asked C to look up these two characters in the dictionary. 4. M showed Curtis another flashcard: 長 -- M asked C to read the character -- C "Zang" (grow) -- M pointed out it can also be "chang" (long) -- M asked C to think about some examples -- C: Giraffe (Chang Jing Lu) (Long neck dear) Long hair (Chang Tou Fa) -- C: grow tall (Zhang gao) grow big (Zhang da) 4. M sang with Curtis a song about elephant (with a long trunk) M sang another song with Curtis (about growing up)	*very smooth. There was not any break between activities.* 3. *When Curtis wrote characters, M held his hand to write to start with.* 4. *M corrected the way Curtis held pencils frequently. She also raised C's head several times.*
Feeling	Both M & C enjoyed the learning activities.	Overall, the

	M is well prepared for the learning session. M gave C some responsibilities. The characters covered today are quite difficult for a young boy. Why did the mother choose the story and these characters? The mother used different kinds of activities to make the learning session interesting. How/when does the mother review these characters again?	learning session was very enjoyable. Although the main focus was on learning to write Chinese characters, the mother combined the practice of pronunciation and making phrases. She finished the session with two songs that Curtis was familiar with. Curtis enjoyed doing the tasks and activities.
Interview	1. questions about the learning session today 2. questions about the strategies the mother uses to teach Curtis to write Chinese characters.	

Appendix 5 Variety and Dialect

Varieties of Chinese

Chinese (*hànyŭ* 汉语 / 漢語 or *zhōngguóhuà* 中国话 / 中國話) comprises many regional language varieties sometimes grouped together as the Chinese dialects, the primary ones being Mandarin, Wu, Cantonese, and Min. These are not mutually intelligible, and even many of the regional varieties (especially Min) are themselves composed of a number of non-mutually-intelligible subvarieties. As a result, Western linguists typically refer to these varieties as separate languages. For sociological and political reasons, however, most Chinese speakers and Chinese linguists consider them to be variations of a single Chinese language, and refer to them as *dialects*, translating the Chinese terms *huà* 话, *yŭ* 語, and *fāngyán* 方言. The neologism *topolect* has been coined as a more literal translation of *fangyan* in order to avoid the connotations of the term "dialect" (which in its normal English usage suggests mutually intelligible varieties of a single language), and to make a clearer distinction between "major varieties" (separate languages, in Western terminology) and "minor varieties" (dialects of a single language). In this article, however, the generic term "variety" will be used.

Chinese people make a strong distinction between written language (文, Pinyin: *wén*) and spoken language (语/語 *yŭ*). English does not necessarily have this distinction. As a result the terms *Zhongwen* (中文) and *Hanyu* (汉语/漢語) in Chinese are both translated in English as "Chinese". Within China, it is common perception that these varieties are distinct in their spoken forms only, and that the language, when written, is common across the country.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia