Language Socialization of Chinese Children in the American Midwest: Learning to Write in American Preschool, Chinese Sunday School, and at Home

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Early literacy studies in American preschool, Chinese school and home settings have reported very different sets of beliefs and practices about writing and learning. However, few studies have explored the cultural underpinnings and the socialization role of such differing beliefs and practices across these settings in the Chinese community in U.S. Taking a language socialization perspective, this study explores early writing socialization of Chinese preschool children in English and Chinese in three community settings: American preschool, Chinese Sunday school, and at home. In a six-month ethnographic study, the researcher observed and video-taped the writing activities in the three settings, collected artifacts and interviewed teachers and parents. Discourse analysis of moment-to-moment interaction was triangulated with observation and interview data.

The research reveals the contrasting yet complementary social meanings of becoming an emergent writer in and out of formal schooling. In preschool, the children are encouraged to become writers who develop a strong sense of authorship and ownership of their writing, produce both nonconventional and conventional writing, and use them to achieve a number of communicative purposes. Children’s individuality is valued and the desirable learner characteristics are imaginative, creative and expressive of their ideas, initiating interaction with the teacher and peers, and active in exploring the material environment. At home, parents’ beliefs and practices about English writing and learning show differences from those at preschool; but there are also signs that parents have begun to adopt school practices.
In Chinese Sunday school, the children are encouraged to develop mastery of the character sound and meanings, and become skillful producers of character forms. Early writing in the class is not so much for communicative purposes, but more for moral, aesthetic and cultural purposes. Therefore, the children are expected to develop a respect for written characters, a value and enjoyment of classics. In the learning activities, the children’s collectivity is emphasized and the main desirable learner characteristics are paying attention to and following teacher’s explanation. Many of the parents’ expectations of Chinese language in general, and writing in particular, are realized in the Chinese Sunday school. In addition, some of the parents’ beliefs and practices about Chinese writing and learning resemble those at the Sunday school. These findings add to evidence that community-based organization is an important socialization venue for minority children in the U.S.

By connecting writing practices with beliefs about early writing and learning, the research highlights the culturally specific process of early writing socialization in English and Chinese languages. By comparing writing practices across schools and home settings, the research demonstrates the bidirectional nature of language socialization in bilingual environment and yields understandings of changes and hybrid socialization practices in contact situations.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Writing as a way to keep records and communicate information exists almost in every culture, and each has developed its own way to develop this cultural skill in young children. In English, children learn 26 letters; in Chinese, children learn characters. Though with different writing systems, both cultures highly value literacy, and the ability to read and write. Chinese children in America are learning both writing systems at the same time. What happens when the two languages and cultures meet? This study explores the cultural processes of the socialization of young writers in English and Chinese across American preschool, Chinese Sunday school and home settings.

1.1 Rationale

In American preschool, emergent literacy prevails. Early writing development is viewed as a movement from less conventional to conventional writing (Kress, 1997; McGee & Richgels, 2008; Sulzby, 1990). Early writing activities encourage children to explore different forms and functions of writing in meaningful social situations like writing a gift note or signing one’s name on a painting (Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Vukelich & Christie, 2009). Teacher’s explicit teaching of writing is discouraged, and the curriculum is often emergent and built on children’s interest (McGee & Richgels, 2008).

Early literacy studies in Chinese school have reported very different sets of beliefs and practices about writing and learning. Early writing development is viewed as the mastery of Chinese characters — the basic units of Chinese written system (Chao, 1997;
Li, 2002, 2006). Early writing activities are designed to help children memorize and practice forms and meaning of Chinese characters, like copying characters or reciting texts (Chao, 1997; Li, 2002; Pu, 2010). Classes are usually teacher-controlled and the curriculum often follows the textbook (Curdt-Christiansen, 2006; Pu, 2010).

However, few studies have explored the cultural underpinnings and the socialization role of such differing beliefs and practices across these settings in the Chinese community in U.S. Language beliefs and practices serve important socialization roles in the sense that they are usually ways people construct locally preferred identity and membership (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Woolard, 1998). The same is true with writing. In writing activities, participants constantly socialize each other into particular worldviews (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Without understanding such cultural and socialization goals of literacy practices, the different beliefs and practices about early literacy may lead to misunderstanding among different cultural groups and aggregate cultural stereotypes. Very often, the emergent literacy practices in preschool are misunderstood by the parents as just play, rather than learning while the early literacy practices in Chinese school are interpreted as didactic and boring (Curdt-Christiansen, 2006; Li, 2006). With a language socialization approach, this study is intended to explore the cultural justifications and consequences of these distinct beliefs and practices: how do they shape children to become culturally specific writers and learners?

Moreover, emergent literacy in English and early literacy in Chinese are usually studied separately. Lo and Reyes (2004) noted Chinese-English bilingualism has drawn comparatively little attention in academia, contributing to the invisibility of Asian Pacific Americans in language research. Similarly, there is a lack of research on biliteracy
development among Chinese children, with the exception of Pu’s (2010) study of Chinese children’s biliteracy practices in elementary school and in Chinese school, and Li’s (2002) study of Chinese children’s biliteracy development at home and in public school. It appears to the researcher that so far there has not been a single study on early literacy socialization across three settings, namely preschool, Sunday school and home settings. Informed by the holistic perspective of language socialization, this study aims to contribute to the current literature by exploring how young Chinese children become writers in both English and Chinese across American preschool, Chinese Sunday school and home settings.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Taking a language socialization perspective, this study explores early writing socialization of Chinese preschool children in English and Chinese in three community settings: American preschool, Chinese Sunday school, and at home.

In a six-month ethnographic study observing and video-recording the writing practices in American preschool and a Chinese Sunday school, the researcher aims to not only reveal the culturally specific process of early writing development, but also investigate the distinct yet potentially coordinating social meanings of becoming an emergent writer in and out of formal schooling. Through analyzing video-recorded moment-to-moment interaction of different writing activities, this study aims to reveal the culturally specific process of early writing learning in each setting. Through interviewing teachers and parents, the researcher looks for community members’ beliefs about early writing learning and looks at how they influence their writing practices. By examining
micro-level interaction and members’ beliefs about writing and learning, the researcher explores how writing practices and beliefs shape the culturally preferred subjectivities, namely the writers and learners socialized. Informed by the holistic approach of language socialization, this paper looks across schools and home settings. Such an approach helps reveal the differences and similarities among these settings in terms of the socialization process and the kinds of writers shaped, as well as the challenges and opportunities posed for the teachers, parents, and children, which might fuel the change and hybrid practices in socialization process in bilingual and multilingual communities.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This research helps us to understand the culturally specific writing practices in bilingual Chinese children’s biliterate development. The holistic ethnographic design allows the researcher to compare early writing teaching and learning practices in preschool, complementary school, and home settings, and explore the differences as well as the connection across the three settings. Its moment-to-moment interactional analysis of video-taped naturalistic data connects micro-level language use with macro-level sociocultural underpinnings within the community. This helps to reveal how the specific ways of learning and using English and Chinese writing reflect underlying cultural values about being a young writer and learner. Such knowledge brings insight to language and literacy socialization in bilingual and multilingual settings. Also it helps promote equity and diversity in today’s increasingly multicultural classroom in America and has its implications for educators, parents and policy makers: Firstly, it helps educators, especially English language teachers and heritage language teachers, better understand the children’s specific needs in becoming
emergent bilinguals, and incorporate that into classroom teaching. Secondly, it helps understand parents’ concerns about raising their children in U.S. and promote communication as well as collaboration among home, school and community. Thirdly, it encourages language policy makers to take into consideration the actual needs of ethnic groups in America, especially those of young children entering public schools for the first time.

1.4 Primary Research Questions

The overarching question is: how are Chinese children in America socialized to write in preschool, Chinese Sunday school and at home? Four major research questions are formulated based on the overarching question:

1. What are the practices adopted by the teachers in preschool and Sunday school in socializing Chinese children to write?

2. What kinds of writers and learners are the children socialized to become in learning writing in each school setting?

3. What are parents’ beliefs and practices about English and Chinese writing at home and how do they differ from or are similar to those at preschool and Sunday school?

4. What are the changes and hybrid practices in the socialization process across preschool, Chinese Sunday school and home settings?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Language socialization has proved to be a productive framework in looking at culturally specific language acquisition and use. As a theoretical paradigm, it was
developed in the 1980s in response to the neglect of culture in first language acquisition research from a psycholinguistic perspective, and the neglect of language in anthropological research on child socialization (Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004; Garrett, 2008; Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002). It is concerned with how children or novice members of a community are socialized to use language and socialized through language use (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). It emphasizes the acquisition of both linguistic and cultural knowledge by novices in a community (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984) since language acquisition or communicative competence is not only about proficiency in the language itself but also is inextricably linked to cultural knowledge that enables them to use language appropriately. In addition, it views language as the “primary symbolic medium” (Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, p. 340) in socializing novices to become members of a community. Language socialization is not limited to spoken modes of language (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Literacy activities, including reading and writing, constitute important sites for language socialization – socialization to use literacy skills and socialization through the use of literacy skills (Schieffelin, 1996). The research focus of literacy socialization is on skills, beliefs and values that are culturally transmitted to learners in literacy events (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). In addition, attention should be paid to the discourse structure in home and school settings to understand ways literacy socialization may be facilitated. Such perspective on the close connection between oral discourse structure and literacy socialization allows the study of literacy acquisition to be “easily integrated within the general study of language socialization” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 181).
1.6 Key Terms

- **Literacy**: In this paper, literacy refers to both reading and writing. My focus on writing alone is not denying the connection of the two; rather it focuses the scope of this study.

- **Literacy event**: It refers to “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants’ interactions and their interpretive processes” (Heath, 1982, p. 93).

- **Young language learner**: The age ranges from infants to age 7 or 8 when they are in the earliest years of elementary school (Bailey, 2008).

- **Emergent literacy**: It is used as “a blanket term that characterizes the manner in which young children are learning more and more about the culturally elaborated writing system that is used around them” (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p. 20).

- **Chinese as a heritage language**: Following Valdés (2001), Chinese is a heritage language for the young children in America because they are raised in a home where parents speak Chinese as mother tongue and these children can speak or understand Chinese at different levels.

- **Indexical process**: It refers to a process of assigning meanings like temporal, spatial, social identity or affective meanings to certain lexical and sentential forms. Indexical knowledge connects linguistic and cultural competence and relates language acquisition with socialization (Ochs, 1996).

- **Language ideology**: It is the cultural conception and local meaning of language and language use in daily life (Gal, 1998).
Subjectivity: In a post-structuralist approach, subjectivity is more about how individuals come to know themselves as such, explicitly thematizing “issues of desire, power, and positionality” (Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004, p. 356).

Hybridity: In contact situations, individuals and communities may change their traditional practices in order to meet their current needs, which may take on hybrid forms that build on but also differ from the original practices in the community.

1.7 An Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 introduces the rationale and purpose of the study, discusses its significance, and concludes with the major research questions, theoretical framework, and definition of key terms.

Chapter 2 reviews relevant lines of literature. It aims to establish the theoretical and empirical grounds for this study. Theoretically, by tracing back to the historical origin of language socialization research and examining its core conceptions and assumptions about language, culture, subjectivity and learning, the researcher lays out how this framework provides theoretical positioning and methodological tools to study the culturally specific process of children’s early writing development, the emergence of locally intelligible subjectivities and the dynamics across settings in contact situations. Empirically, by reviewing studies on children’s early writing development in American preschool and Chinese school in U.S., and literacy socialization studies in bilingual and multilingual settings, the researcher develops a grasp of the central issues in the field: what has been done and what still needs to be addressed, as well as how the theoretical
and methodological advantages of the language socialization approach can help fill the gaps identified. Emergent literacy studies in American preschool and early literacy studies in Chinese school have reported very different sets of beliefs and practices about writing and learning. However, few studies have explored the cultural underpinnings and the socialization role of these differing beliefs and practices. With a language socialization approach, this study aims to reveal the cultural justifications and consequences of these distinct beliefs and practices. Moreover, informed by the holistic perspective of language socialization, this study hopes to contribute to the current literature by exploring how young Chinese children become writers in both English and Chinese across three settings, namely American preschool, Chinese Sunday school and home settings.

Chapter 3 discusses the methods of the study, delineating the research design, the research settings and participants, as well as data collection and analysis procedures that ensure the reliability and validity of the research.

Chapter 4 presents the major findings from the American preschool. The primary question this section tries to answer is: how are children socialized to write in the preschool classroom? It first talks briefly about the classroom philosophy of learning through play, which guides the time and space arrangement of the class, and the learning activities in the class. Then it tries to uncover the multiple learning opportunities afforded by various kinds of play in this class for the young children starting to learn writing, including circle time play, teacher present free play, peer play and children’s exploration of enriching text environment in the class. Discourse analysis of the video-recorded interactional data and analysis of classroom artifacts reveal that the children are
encouraged to become writers who develop a strong sense of authorship and ownership of their writing, produce both nonconventional and conventional writing, and use them to achieve a number of communicative purposes. In these learning activities, children’s individuality is valued and the desirable learner characteristics are imaginative, creative and expressive of their ideas, initiating interaction with the teacher and peers, and active in exploring the material environment. In order to discover the dynamics between preschool and home, this chapter concludes with a discussion of what parents believe and do about children’s English writing and learning, and their understanding of the school philosophy of learning through play. Very different from the preschool class, parents place more emphasis on the written form of letters. When they teach their child to write, they usually do it the traditional way and let the child write letters following textual model. Despite the differences in writing beliefs and practices from school, there are signs that parents also have begun to adopt school practices: there is less parental control, and sometimes parents play pretend writing games with the child.

Chapter 5 demonstrates the major findings from the Chinese Sunday school. The primary question this section tries to answer is: how are children taught to write in the Chinese Sunday class? It first talks briefly about the classroom philosophy of 學 (xue, learning) and 習 (xi, review, practice). Then it tries to uncover the writing learning opportunities afforded in this class in a variety of learning activities: 認字, 讀字 (recognizing and reading characters), 聞 (song, reading aloud the text), 記 (ji, memorizing characters), 寫 (xie, children’s own writing), and 溫 (wen, reviewing what is learned). Discourse analysis of the video-recorded interactional data and analysis of classroom artifacts reveal that the children are encouraged to develop mastery of the
character sound and meanings, and become skillful producers of character forms. Early writing in the class is not so much for communicative purposes, but more for moral, aesthetic and cultural purposes. Therefore, the children don’t have much sense of ownership of writings, but they develop a respect for written characters, a value and enjoyment of classics. In the learning activities, the children’s collectivity is emphasized and the main desirable learner characteristics are paying attention to and following teacher’s explanation. In order to discover the dynamics between Chinese Sunday school and home, this chapter concludes with a discussion of what parents believe and do about children’s Chinese writing and learning, as well as their understanding of the role of Chinese heritage language school in the maintenance of Chinese language. It shows that many of the parents’ expectations of Chinese language in general, and writing in particular, as well as learning experiences are realized in the Chinese Sunday school.

Chapter 6 presents a comparative discussion of the findings from the two schools, comparing their differences, similarities, change and hybridity in socializing young children into early writing, as well as the language and sociocultural factors coming into play. It also discusses the educational and theoretical implications of these findings, concluding with some practical suggestions for schools, parents and communities in bilingual and multilingual contexts.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

By reviewing relevant lines of literature, this chapter aims to establish the theoretical and empirical grounds for this study. It discusses the historical origins of language socialization and examines its core conceptions and assumptions about language, culture, subjectivity and learning. Then it discusses how this framework provides theoretical positioning and methodological tools to study the culturally specific process of children’s early writing development, the socialization of locally preferred writers and learners as well as the dynamics across settings in a bilingual environment. Empirically, by reviewing studies on child’s early writing development in American preschool and Chinese school in the U.S., and literacy socialization studies in bilingual and multilingual settings, this chapter surveys the central issues in the field: what has been done and what still needs to be addressed, as well as how the theoretical and methodological advantages of the language socialization approach can help fill the gaps identified.

2.1 Language Socialization

Examining both the seminal and more recent theoretical discussions on language socialization in the past two decades, this section lays out the tenets of the framework and its assumptions of core concepts adopted in this paper, namely language, culture, subjectivity and learning. Also it discusses the specifics of language socialization in bilingual settings.
2.1.1 The tenets of language socialization.

Language socialization is concerned with how novices are socialized by adults or more capable peers to use language in a culturally appropriate way and become competent community members through language use.

As a theoretical paradigm, it was developed in 1980s in response to the neglect of culture in first language acquisition research from a psycholinguistic perspective and the neglect of language in anthropological research on child socialization (Garrett, 2008; Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002; Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004). At the time, the developmental psychological perspective of language acquisition focused on individual’s linguistic acquisition paying little attention to the sociocultural context of such acquisition. The anthropological perspective on socialization primarily concerns itself with a child’s acquisition of a set of cultural skills to participate in societal activities, ignoring the role of language as a major socialization tool. Combining and building on the strengths of developmental psychological and anthropological perspectives on language development and child development, language socialization is dedicated to the study of simultaneous acquisition of linguistic and social competence.

The central argument it makes is two-fold: one is that language acquisition is inextricable from the acquisition of cultural knowledge and language competence is both linguistic and cultural competence; the other is that the socialization of community members is achieved in interaction mediated by language.

During the formation period of language socialization framework, its originators are not alone in exploring the interdependence between language and culture. Actually
their focus on the relationship between language and social structures benefits from several lines of research. One is how communicative form in family settings is linked to local concepts of social identity (Bernstein, 1975; Cook-Gumperz, 1973). And another is studies based on communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). In this respect, it also builds on linguistic anthropological studies of communicative activities in different speech communities (Gumperz, 1968), featured by its field investigation of speech community’s repertoire of communicative forms and functions in communicative events, also known as “Ethnography of Communication” (Gumperz & Hymes, 1964; Savoille-Troike, 2003).

Nor are they alone in seeing the socialization role of language. In this respect, they give credit to studies focusing on the socialization role of language like “linguistic socialization” (Fischer, 1970) and “language of socialization” (Gleason & Weintraub, 1976), and interactional views on socialization (Piaget, 1969; Vygotsky, 1978). On the one hand, language socialization maintains that the learning and use of language are important ways for learners to get sociocultural information and to produce culturally appropriate membership. On the other hand, no longer is socialization seen as unidirectional process where parents shape child behavior or instill social values into the child’s head, but a bidirectional and mutual process, where children actively interact with the physical world and people around them (Pontecorvo, Fasulo & Sterponi, 2001; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

What makes language socialization unique is its combination of the two lines of research mentioned above: studies on the interdependence between language and culture, and studies on the socialization role of language. The interrelation of language and culture is revealed and enacted in interaction mediated via language. That’s why it has
the power to reveal the process of the simultaneous acquisition of linguistic and cultural knowledge because it focuses on interaction, the locus of socialization process, which in turn points to the larger social process and worldview.

Within this paradigm, every interaction is potentially a socializing experience in that members of a social group are socializing each other into their particular world views as they negotiate situated meaning. (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 165)

To examine the process in which Chinese children learn to become young writers and learners in and though writing activities in classrooms, and the culturally specific meanings of such competency, language socialization would be a fruitful framework because it focuses on novice members, on the intertwining of linguistic phenomena (including writing) and cultural meanings, and on the production of culturally intelligible members in interaction involving writing. With the central tenets discussed, the following section further delineates the key concepts in language socialization framework that will guide the way this paper looks at writing and writer, learning and learner.

2.1.2 Key conception and assumptions.

Given the research goal on the socialization of culturally specific young writers and learners, four core concepts and their interrelations in language socialization are discussed here: language, culture, subjectivity and learning. The discussion of these concepts provides theoretical positioning and analytical angles in initial data analysis and the write-up of the paper.
Language and culture.

Firstly, language and culture are inseparable from each other. The learning of linguistic knowledge is commensurate with the learning of cultural knowledge. The process of language acquisition is understood as the integration of code knowledge with sociocultural knowledge. Garret (2008) also pointed out that language socialization emphasized the simultaneous acquisition of language proficiency and cultural knowledge in participating in cultural activities.

As a developmental process, then, language socialization is much more than a matter of learning to produce grammatically well-formed utterances. It is also a matter of learning to use language in socially and pragmatically appropriate, locally meaningful ways, and as a means of engaging with others in the course of—indeed, in the constitution of—everyday interactions and activities. (p. 190)

Language should be examined in its communicative context. The researcher should not only look at the form of language, but also its content and its communicative purpose. Writing as part of the larger language system should also be examined in the same way. Not only is the written form examined, but also its content and communicative function are discussed, which is necessary to explore how writing skills together with culturally specific beliefs and values about writing and writer is transmitted to novice members of the community (Heath, 1983; Schieffelin, 1996; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

Secondly, language organizes culture. As discussed earlier, socialization is an interactive process and language itself is a powerful socializing tool. Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) pointed out:

…ordinary conversational discourse is a powerful socializing medium. Crucial information concerning the organization of society and local knowledge is
conveyed not simply through the content of language but through its grammatical and discourse form as well. (p. 172)

They emphasized the significance of interactional patterns of language use. Not only does language content matter, so does the way interaction organized via language or its discourse structure. One example is the organization of turn-taking in conversation. For example, caregivers may socialize the children to understand complex relationships by involving them in multiparty talking (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 171). All these dimensions of language, including linguistic content, paralinguistic features, and interactional patterns, are regarded as resources available to community members to construct and interpret meanings in interactions. In the current research, the central unit of analysis will be natural interaction involving writing activities and the researcher will pay attention to not only the writing activity itself but also its interactional organization, and the participants’ verbal and non-verbal participation so as to reveal the culturally specific socialization process going on at different dimensions of language in writing events and activities. The close connection between discourse and writing socialization makes the acquisition of writing skills part of language socialization in general (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

Thirdly, language is organized by culture: Though language is the central part in socialization process, it is not random; rather it is governed by culture.

From our perspective, language and culture as bodies of knowledge, structures of understanding, conceptions of the world, and collective representations are extrinsic to any individual and contain more information than any individual would know or learn. Culture encompasses variations in knowledge between individuals, but such variation, although crucial to what an individual may know and to the social dynamic between individuals, does not have its locus within the individual. …How caregivers and children speak and act toward one another is
linked to cultural patterns that extend and have consequences beyond the specific interactions observed. (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984, p. 284).

They believe that the way language is used is constrained by local cultural norms, which often goes beyond the immediate interactional context and connects to cultural patterns at the larger level. That’s why it is necessary to look beyond writing activity itself and connect it with overall cultural norms in the class or in the community.

Fourthly, the question then is how to connect language with culture? Emerging in literature are two ways of making the connection: one is to infer cultural meanings from linguistic and nonlinguistic resources in interaction; and the other is language ideology, to ask the participants about their beliefs about language and language use.

One way language opens a window to cultural information is the indexical relationship. One specific feature of language is its duality: having both referential or semantic meaning and non-referential or social meaning. The non-referential meaning is achieved by indexical process. In other words, the relation between linguistic structures and sociocultural information is indexical: “the use of certain structures points to and constitutes certain social contexts and certain cultural frameworks for thinking and feeling” (Ochs and Schieffelin, 2008, p. 8). Ochs (1996) pointed out indexical knowledge is at the heart of linguistic and cultural competence, and is “the locus where language acquisition and socialization interface” (p. 414).

Socialization is in part a process of assigning situational, i.e. indexical, meanings (e.g. temporal, spatial, social identity, social act, social activity, affective or epistemic meanings) to particular (linguistic) forms (e.g. interrogative forms, diminutive affixes, raised pitch and the like). (Ochs, 1996, p. 410-411)
By examining the particular linguistic and paralinguistic forms, its connection to cultural information or the indexical relationship between language and culture can be potentially revealed. In this research, the cultural information and meanings are mainly gained through close analysis of linguistic forms, content and discourse patterns. However, it is also worth noting the complexity of indexical process. Some situational meanings like social identities, social act and activities are less “grammaticized” than others like time, space, affective and epistemic stance (Ochs, 1996, p. 413). Also the same linguistic structures may not necessarily assign the same meaning, which is also called indexical breakdown and “crosstalk” in interpreting “contextualization cues” (Gumperz, 1982). That’s why in analyzing data, the researcher tries to locate multiple evidences in the writing and communicative activity to ensure the validity of the interpretation of certain indexical relationships. For example, linguistic form and content will be considered together with non-verbal or paralinguistic features like eye gaze or gestures.

The other way in which language reveals sociocultural information is through language ideology, which is about the cultural conception and local meaning of language and language use in daily life (Gal, 1998). Valuing local knowledge of linguistic form and use can expose the “sociocultural experience of the cultural actors” (Kroskrity, 2000, p. 7). For example, Woolard (1998a) suggests:

. . . Ideologies of language are not about language alone. Rather, they envision and enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology. Through such linkages, they underpin not only linguistic form and use but also the very notion of the person and the social group, as well as such fundamental social institutions as religious ritual, child socialization, gender relations, the nation state, schooling and law. (p. 3)
Like indexical relationship between language and cultural information, language ideology also connects language or language use with cultural meanings. While indexical relationship is often revealed in linguistic forms, language ideology is often possessed by the members of the community, who may orally express the connection when asked to. However, it should also be noted that language ideology articulated by the members may not always match their actual language use. That’s why one should also compare participants’ expressed ideology with their language use. In this research, the teachers’ and parents’ ideologies about writing and its learning are mainly gained through interviews, and are also checked with the actual writing practices in the classrooms and at homes.

Language and culture are inseparable from each other and they organize and are organized by each other. Their interconnection can be made explicit through indexical process in interaction or language ideology held by members. In the following section, the interrelation between language and subjectivity is discussed.

**Identity and subjectivity.**

As is discussed in the former section, language organizes and indexes sociocultural information, one important level of which is the social identity of interlocutors in communicative act, event and activity (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). It takes as a given that children understand social identities through subjective experiences in interacting with more capable others, or peers. Such understanding of identities is relational, and achieved in communicative interaction. Linguistic or communicative resources play important roles in shaping a child’s understanding of status, role, and relationships (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Such resources uses vary from culture to
culture, and socializing children into culturally specific roles and relationships with peers and adults.

As language socialization moves to the 21st century, attention has been called to the ways in which subjectivities are negotiated and achieved (Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004). Subjectivity, from a post-structuralist perspective, is more about how individuals come to know themselves as such, explicitly thematizing “issues of desire, power, and positionality” (Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004, p. 356). What is at the center is the process of how a certain identity is taking shape and how the individual’s consciousness and desire come into play in the process. The power of the language socialization paradigm is its ability to demonstrate how different kinds of subjectivities come into being (Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004). It can document the reproduction or not of culturally preferred social beings. Such a view of identity and its formation is in line with the postmodern literature seeing identity as “fluid and constructed in linguistic and social interaction” (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 8). Identity is not just a collection of demographic categories such as age, class, occupation, ethnicity, skin color, native language and so forth; but more “a process of continual emerging and becoming, a process that identifies what a person becomes and achieves through ongoing activities and interactions with other person and objects” (He, 2009, p. 366), a semiotic process of identification (Blommaert, 2005; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

Identity is seen as relational and constructed, and subjectivity highlights the individual’s consciousness and desire in the socialization process. This study focuses on the interactional construction of culturally intelligible writers and learners, and also pays attention to the individual’s identification or not with the socializing effort.
**Learning.**

Learning in language socialization occurs in everyday social life, though mundane interactions and activities. By participating in daily activities in the speech community, children acquire the linguistic knowledge of language, and the sociocultural knowledge to use language in a culturally appropriate way. Since language socialization takes activity as a key unit of analysis, it stresses the “situated, emergent, co-constructed nature of learning processes” (Garret, 2007, p. 198).

Also within the language socialization framework, learning becomes culturally specific since learning is about acquiring the ways of “being” in a community, which vary in accordance with the cultural values and beliefs within that community. Rogoff, Moore and Solis (2007) presented three different culturally learning traditions: intent community participation, assembly-line instruction and guided repetition. Intent community participation is a teaching and learning tradition where children learn by actively observing, listening in and contributing to the ongoing community activities; assembly-line instruction features experts’ transmission of knowledge and information to novices outside the context of purposive activity; and guided repetition is involved with experts’ modeling, novices’ imitation, memorization, and performance of the model. Depending on the type of the community, these three types of learning may coexist. And the learning process of novices becomes a process of expanding their languacultural repertoire.

In this study, all daily activities involving writing in schools and home settings are regarded as potential learning opportunities. The learning methods in those activities are compared and discussed to achieve cross-cultural understanding of early writing.
socialization practices across settings and to present a holistic view of the ways in which Chinese children learn to write in English and in Chinese in the local community.

2.1.3 **Language socialization in bilingual settings.**

Given the paper’s focus on children’s bilingual and biliterate development, this section looks at some specifics of language socialization in bilingual settings.

From the language socialization perspective, researchers are able to reveal the process of how bilingual children are socialized to use different languages in a culturally specific ways and at the same time socialized to become members in different communities. Moreover, the holistic approach of language socialization allows the researcher to pay close attention to issues in bidirectional socialization into two different languages and cultures. Unlike their monolingual peers, bilingual or multilingual children are placed at the intersection of socialization of different values. They have to negotiate their dual linguistic and cultural repertoire, and their identities as members of different communities. In order to reveal such issues in the bidirectional socialization in bilingual environment, researchers need to adopt a comparative, critical and dynamic perspective.

Firstly, a comparative approach helps the researcher to examine various kinds of continuities and discontinuities among children’s home, school, and community settings (Garrett, 2008). One example is demonstrated by Jia (2008). She studied the language use of American-born Chinese teenagers’ language use in heritage language school, during dinner talk at home and in local community activities. The study showed that Chinese teenagers frequently experience perplexity and frustration in expanding their language and cultural repertoires in Chinese language school and Chinese community,
which differs greatly from their participation in public school activities. He (2009) also found that the Chinese heritage language class used practices distinct from the American school for the socialization of traditional Chinese cultural values and social roles. In her research, the students often voiced disappointment with Chinese teachers’ practices and reference to the values in American classroom. A comparative approach enables the researcher to reveal the process of how adults and children in bilingual settings manage the potential conflict or to make the most of their situation.

Secondly, language socialization research in bilingual settings also requires a critical approach to account for the co-existence of multiple communities, codes and identities (Duff, 2007). One way to achieve a critical perspective is by combining studies of language ideology with language socialization. Though the role of language ideology is often missing from most psycholinguistic studies of simultaneous bilingual acquisition, it has always been embedded in the language socialization framework. According to Ochs & Schieffelin (1995), language ideologies or values associated with codes are socialized along with the codes themselves. For example, in Fader’s (2001) study of Hasidic girls, the dominant English ideology was resisted in the socialization process in order to maintain their Hasidic identity. Socialized by mothers at home and teachers at school, the girls started to associate femaleness with speaking English, and maleness with Yiddish, religion with Yiddish and secular subjects with English, didacticism with Yiddish and entertainment leisure with English. Language ideologies play an important role in socializing the young children to be a girl or a boy and to be a Hasidic or non-Hasidic. In this way, language ideologies help create and maintain community boundaries.
Thirdly, a dynamic perspective allows the researcher to examine the change and innovative practices of both experts and novices in the language socialization process in bilingual settings. Change is an indispensable part of the language socialization process. For example, Ochs and Schieffelin (2008) pointed out:

Linguistic anthropological work, however, problematizes any model of social reproduction as a simple top-down process of mirroring: close inspection of everyday life reveals that both novices and experts are active social agents in the construction of social life and their participation, while socio-historically structured and constrained, is also reflexive and dialogically engaged with other social actors in ways that may transform, resist or otherwise re-frame dominant discourses and ideologies. (p. 8)

They emphasized the novices’ and adults’ agency within social and historical constraints. This is especially true in bilingual settings, where both adults and children have more linguistic and cultural resources for novel and hybrid practices. In Song’s (2009) study, she found that the bilingual Korean American kids are “active negotiators” (p. 223) of diverse cultural norms and linguistic practices. For example, they omitted the kinship term “Hyeng” through anglicizing a Korean name and avoided Korean kinship terms through code-switching from Korean to English. These novel linguistic practices demonstrate bilingual children’s negotiation of different ideologies in contact situations, and are closely related to their ongoing identity construction. Similar innovative language use has also been found in Fader’s (2001) study. Hasidic girls develop patterns of bilingual language use that are sometimes against the wishes of their elders and the expectations of the community, like their gradual shift to speaking English. And the parents and teachers are forced to change their literacy practices with the children: they provide English books to teach Jewish beliefs. The books have the orthodox Jewish
children as the characters and teach children moral lessons. In this way, “Jewish books in English sanctify the language, breaking apart simple dichotomies of holy and profane languages” (p. 275). She noted this shift in language ideology makes girls’ use of English as a vernacular less than an issue of resistance since the adults are more concerned with the content, rather than the code they are using. Such hybrid practices and changing beliefs are the responses minority community members made to their specific situation in the larger U.S. context. As Ochs and Schieffelin (2008) succinctly put it:

social actions as…structured and structuring in time and space, bound by historically durable social orders of power and symbolic systems yet creative, variable, responsive to situational exigencies and capable of producing novel consequences. (p. 8)

With the comparative, critical, and dynamic perspective, this study not only focuses on the writing socialization in preschool, at home and in Sunday school respectively, but also looks across settings, explicitly searching for the continuity and discontinuity among the three settings, and the change and hybrid practices within each setting, and the motivations for such novel practices.

2.2 Conceptualizing Writing as a Cultural Practice

In this section, I will discuss the conceptualization of writing first because this directly influences the way one looks at learning of writing.

Within the language socialization framework, language is seen as communicative competence. In the same line, writing is seen as part of communicative competence, rather than writing principles or components of written words and sentences. Farr (1986) talked about how writing can be seen as part of one’s communicative competence:
Writing can be seen as one way in which to use one’s tacit knowledge about language, or one’s communicative competence… Within this theoretical framework, learning to write can be seen as adding to one’s oral communicative competence and as changing one’s tacit competence in language. (p. 196)

Such conceptualization of writing is in line with new literacy studies (Street, 2003; Barton, 1994). People bring their cultural knowledge to the learning and use of writing (Barton, 1994, p. 37). Writing is seen as a part of broad social practices involving people, context, tools and institutions, rather than just about the acquisition of skills (Street, 2003).

Three features emerge from the literature on conceptualizing writing as a cultural practice. Firstly, writing as a mode of language is no longer seen in opposition to oral language (Farr, 1986) or other modes of communication like body language or images (Moore, 2008; Pahl, 2008). Rather, they are working together as a whole in communication. “Speaking and writing are alternate ways of using one’s language capacities, and very often both modes are used within a single speech or literacy event” (Farr, 1986, p. 197). That’s also why “language socialization scholars interested in literacy attend to multiple communicative modalities to understand how competence in reading and writing is defined, performed, and acquired (or not) in different communities” (Moore, 2008, p. 646). Written language is seen as part of the semiotic resources for communication.

Secondly, the uses of writing vary in different contexts. Writing as a social practice varies with its use in different contexts (Farr, 1986; Barton, 1994). Since literacy is a social practice, it is no longer neutral or universal but varies across cultures and contexts.
Thirdly, writing is placed within its full array of cognitive, social, cultural, institutional, and historical contexts (Gee, 2001). Similarly, Heath (1989) noted:

When children learn language, they take in more than forms of grammar: They learn to make sense of the social world in which they live and how to adapt to its dynamic social interactions and role relations. (p. 367)

Moreover, literacy practices are closely linked to “values, beliefs, and identities across social context” (Moore, 2008, p. 646). In a similar vein Gee (2001) believed literacy is always integrated with “ways of talking, thinking, believing, knowing, acting, interacting, valuing and feeling” (pp. 30-31).

To conclude, within the language socialization framework, writing is conceptualized as a cultural practice, which goes beyond language and its written mode, connects with other semiotics in communication, specific communicative context, as well as the beliefs, values, and relationships operating in the larger social world. The following section discusses how such conceptualization of writing bears on child’s early writing development.

2.3 Child’s Early Writing Development

This section first looks at different views on children’s early writing development. Then it focuses on studies examining children’s writing development as a cultural practice, which is also the major focus of this paper.
2.3.1 Views on child’s early writing development.

In the past two decades, early writing development has been conceived very differently. Firstly, children’s early writing development has been viewed as an autonomous process, in ways similar to how they learn to speak. It is based on the assumption that written language has universal principles and children are wired to figure out those principles. For instance, Bissex (1980) studied her son’s early reading and writing at home from age five to age eleven. She concentrated on collecting the evidence for the child’s development of formal principles of the English writing system. She found in terms of writing form there is a developmental pattern moving from universals to culture-specifics, like from abstract shape to writing letters. Also developmentally, there is a tendency of the child’s writing moving away from his immediate world to the past and the future and also differentiating his own perspective and that of others. Overall, she found writing can be seen “through a developmental psychologist’s view as cognitive systems increasing in complexity and structural differentiation” (p. 207). This leads to a belief that children learn writing systems on their own, without aid of an instructor or a curriculum.

Secondly, children’s learning writing has been seen as a “block building” process. This is based on the assumption that written language is structural and composed of different parts, including letters, vocabulary, sentences, and outlines. And early writing development is seen as a preparation stage, building on parts of the written language. There is the assumption that early literacy learning is a linear, additive process where discrete skills accumulate and build on each other (Saracho & Spodek, 2004). Heath (1989) criticized such linear process where learning to write predominates: “after the solo
writing of short-phrase answers in the early school years come the short essays and research papers of the secondary school” (p. 370). Early writing learning is seen as an internal psychological process. And this leads to a belief in the formal instruction of written language, including words, phrases and sentences etc.

The first two views of early writing development revolve more around written language itself, either its underlying principle or structural components; they overlooked the interrelationship among written language, the communicative context, and the larger sociocultural systems at work. In contrast, a perspective on writing as a cultural practice holds that children’s learning of writing involves more than the cognitive construction of the language itself. Different from the autonomous view, such a perspective highly values the role of interaction with people in children’s learning writing. Different from the componential view, it sees early writing learning as bounded by the context children live in. They learn ideologies associated with writing, different functions and uses of writing, and are socialized to become a culturally specific writer in the process.

NLS (new literacy studies) suggests that if someone wants to know about the development of literacy, he or she should not ask how literacy and language develop. Rather, he or she should ask how a specific socio-cultural practice (or related set of them) embedded in specific ways with printed words develops. (Gee, 2001, p. 31)

Writing is not learned alone, it is learned in a context where certain relationships and certain identities are enacted; certain ways of interacting with writing tools are historically established; certain cultural models of learning are in progress; certain beliefs about writing itself and its developmental process are demonstrated; certain beliefs about the functions and use of writing are manifested. When a child learns to write, he not only
learns how to write, but all the social practices writing situated in are learned as well.

And this leads to a belief that a child learns writing best through socialization.

Both inside and outside school, most social languages and genres are clearly not acquired by ‘direct instruction.’ While some forms of (appropriately timed) scaffolding, modeling, and instructional guidance by mentors appear to be important, immersion in meaningful practice is essential. Social languages and genres are acquired by processes of socialization. (Gee, 2001, p. 35)

2.3.2 Early writing learning as a cultural practice.

Viewing early writing learning as a cultural practice allows us to see the culturally specific beliefs and practices in socializing beginning writers in different cultures. Earlier studies on children’s writing from this perspective have provided evidence for different beliefs and practices about early writing learning across various community settings.

Examining three case studies on young American children at home and at preschool, Gundlach & McLane (1985) focused on the role of interaction in child’s early writing development. The different kinds of relationships involved in a child’s early life are seen as vital in a child’s early writing experiences, whether it is parent-child, siblings, and teacher-child relationship. In each case, they found some unique relationship each child is involved in. Across the cases, the interactional context around each child constitutes a “zone of proximal development”, which is central to Vygotsky’s (1978) child development theory: the adult or the more capable peer gives support to the child’s developmental need as a provider or guider, and sometimes as an appreciative audience, which sustains the child’s learning process. The three cases also show the role of play in these children’s early learning experiences. The children’s early writing experiences are
closely interwoven with different kinds of plays across home and school settings, such as pretend play and dramatic play. What comes out of such relationship and playful learning activities is that writing, however non-conventional, is believed to be something enjoyable, valued, and communicative. At a very young age, these children developed an ownership of their writing and form a strong sense of themselves as capable writers (Gundlach & McLane, 1985).

In some other communities, such relationships are conceived very differently (Heath, 1989). In examining the oral and literate tradition of black Americans, Heath (1989) found the children learn to read and write by participating in adult world activities, which desire “keen listening and observational skills, quick recognition of nuanced roles” (p. 368). Adult believes children learn best when they are not directly taught because it is important for the children to make their own judgment and adapt to different contexts. Such an orientation towards real world is important to the negotiation of meaning of writings in their life, which is open for public debate. For them, both consuming and producing writing are collectively negotiated activities: “…oral negotiation in groups makes the writing matter” (Heath, 1989, p. 369).

Such culturally specific ways of conceptualizing and socializing early literacy has been reported from other parts of the world, too. Moore (2008) described Fulbe children’s apprenticeship into Qur’anic orality and literacy as “a gradual transfer from teacher to child of responsibility for rendering the text” (p. 650). The children learn to render more and more the sacred text, and also in more modalities, from reading, to reciting and then writing the text. A child learns to write the text by first tracing the instructor’s model of the text, then write following the instructor’s guiding lines, and
finally independently transcribe the text. A movement from reading, reciting and writing the text is regarded as “indicators of successively deeper levels of religious knowledge” (p. 650).

These studies help the current study look at early writing learning with other modes of communication (pictures, images, and artifacts) and with other modes of language (reading, listening and talking), put early writing learning in the specific communicative and community context, and examine the community members’ beliefs and practices about early writing learning. The following two sections look at children’s early literacy development in American preschool and Chinese Sunday school, two contexts this study focuses on.

2.4 Emergent Literacy in American Preschool

This section looks at two main research approaches on early literacy in American preschool: emergent literacy and scientifically based reading research (SBRR), with the former being the focus because it is the main approach the preschool in this study adopts.

Emergent literacy as a perspective for examining how young children become writers and readers was first proposed by Teale and Sulzby (1986). “Emergent” emphasizes that children are in the process of becoming literate, both through their own cognitive work and social interaction with significant others in writing and reading situations. “Literacy” is used to displace “reading readiness”, and emphasizes the interrelation between reading and writing, especially given the neglect of writing development of preschool children in research and teaching at the time. Overall, “emergent literacy” is used as “a blanket term that characterizes the manner in which
young children are learning more and more about the culturally elaborated writing system that is used around them” (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p. 20)

Young children’s participation in daily activities involving literacy is seen as an important beginning for children’s literacy development. Some of the indicators of early literacy include concept of print and recognition of environmental print. Concept of print refers to children’s understandings about the functions, structures, and rules of written language (Goodman, 1986; Vukelich & Christie, 2009). Recognition of environmental print refers to children’s reading of what occurs in real life like a stop sign (Goodman, 1986). Similarly, Serpell, Baker and Sonnenschein (2005) maintained there is no longer a clear distinction between a nonreader and a reader: Children gradually “appropriate the skills and orientations of a reader” (p. 135). That’s why in their early childhood literacy project in Baltimore, the tasks they designed for assessing the beginning readers includes several strands of development: orientation to print, narrative competence, and phonological awareness. They are regarded as the beginnings of children’s earliest literacy development.

In terms of writing, it is important for children to explore writing in meaningful social relations in daily life. Children’s performance of writing and using various written forms to convey messages and meanings are valued more than what they actually write. In general, children’s writing is viewed as a movement from less conventional to conventional writing. Sulzby (1990) identified seven categories of early writing development trajectory:

- Drawing as writing;
- Scribble writing
- Letter-like units
• Nonphonetic letter strings
• Copying from environmental print
• Invented spelling
• Conventional writing

Although there is a general movement to conventional writing, there are developmental variations among individual children, who may switch back and forth between different types of writing (Kress, 1997; Sulzby, 1990).

Another prevailing perspective on early literacy development is scientifically based reading research, also known as SBRR. This perspective often emphasizes the skills young children need to master before they become readers and writers, and believes in teacher’s explicit instruction of these skills (Vukelich & Christie, 2009). Some of the skills that have been found positively correlated with young children’s reading ability include children’s oral language, phonological awareness, and alphabet knowledge.

These skills especially phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge can be improved through explicit teaching, where the form can be a game but the content focuses on teacher’s modeling, children’s guided and independent practice (Vukelich & Christie, 2009).

Snow (2006) referred to researchers believing in emergent literacy and SBRR as holistic thinkers and componential thinkers respectively. She pointed out these two groups of researchers have some general consensus over emergent literacy skills, like spelling names and recognizing environmental text. However, these capacities may be viewed as having varying importance for each group of thinkers. For example, reading

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1 Phonological awareness pays attention to the sounds of spoken language, like the awareness of syllables, rhymes and intonation patterns (McGee & Richgels, 2008)
environmental print is not valued as much by componential thinkers as holistic thinkers since it doesn’t predict later literacy outcomes robustly. And vice versa, skills highly valued by componential thinkers like phonemic awareness tends to be downplayed by holistic thinkers. In practice, different classrooms may have different emphasis based on their beliefs about theories on early literacy development, which may undergo shift and change influenced by educational policy. For example, Head Start is more in line with the holistic view in its first 20-30 years while in recent years it shifted towards including a componential view due to the emphasis on child outcomes, literacy preparation and the role of qualified teachers (Snow, 2006)

NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) standards of early writing development are based on findings from both perspectives. For example, the benchmarks for beginning writing are:

- Writes for many purposes (signs, labels, stories, messages)
- Frequently chooses writing area
- Uses writing in blocks and dramatic play contexts
- Writes own name, using good approximations to letters needed
- Makes mock and actual letters and experiments with letter forms
- Organizes writing linearly on a writing surface and goes from left to right and from top to bottom
- Uses two kinds of letters when writing: “big” ones and “little” ones
- Composes messages and dictates or writes these
- Contributes to class writing projects
- Experiments with making words by stringing letters together to look like words or by attempting to link sounds in words to specific letter names (Vukelich & Christie, 2009, p. 90-92)

However, it is worth noting that the benchmarks have more elements from emergency literacy findings. Only two of the skills from the benchmarks, connecting sound with letters and knowledge of big and little letters, are based more on SBRR.
This is also true in the preschool classroom this research looks at: it mainly adopts the emergent literacy approach. The advantage of this approach is that it goes beyond the language level or children’s actual reading and writing ability; rather it focuses on children’s performance in activities involving written language, and the functions they achieve in these activities. However, seldom does research look at the cultural-specific meanings behind the emergent literacy beliefs and practices. Nor does it focus on the socialization role of early literacy practice, namely what kinds of writers and learners are shaped in the process. As discussed earlier, within the language socialization framework, writing is conceptualized as a cultural practice: literacy or writing is not neutral or universal, but connected to and constrained by local values and beliefs about membership in the community. And the reproduction (or not) of culturally intelligible subjectivities is the central focus of language socialization studies. This study contributes to the research in early literacy studies in preschool settings by making explicit cultural underpinnings of early writing beliefs and practices as well as the kinds of writer and learner reproduced (or not) in the socialization process.

2.5 Early Literacy in Chinese School

This section first briefly reviews the history of Chinese heritage language education in America in general, and in Chinese schools in particular. Then it discusses the teachers’ beliefs and practices about early literacy development in these schools.

Chinese heritage language education has a long history in America and it can be traced back to the 1850s when the first wave of Chinese immigrant laborers settled down in California. The number, type and role of Chinese schools have fluctuated given the
historical, social and political context. After 1882 when the Chinese Exclusion Act was enacted, the younger generations of Chinese immigrants were prevented from becoming mainstream Americans. During this period, Chinese parents often enforced the learning and use of Chinese language by their children (Chang, 2004). Rohsenow’s (2004) study on Chinese language use in Chicago argued that this is why during the period from 1882 and 1943, many second- and third-generation Chinese in Chinatown continued to be “functionally bilingual, at least orally” (p. 326). In 1886, the first Chinese heritage language school was established in San Francisco with the purpose to preserve Chinese heritage and maintain a cultural continuum between the parents and their American born children (Liu, 2010). This is in sharp contrast with the Chinese immigrants after the 1950s. They were primarily “affluent”, “educated”, and “English-speaking” politicians (Chang, 2004; Rohsenow, 2004), who fled from communist revolution in China. For this group of immigrants, their children became educated in English and only have a “passive knowledge” of different varieties of Chinese language, resembling the second-generation children of European immigrant. That is why the growth of Chinese school slowed down at the time (Lai, 2004). In 1965 the Chinese Exclusion Act was eliminated after its existence for more than eight decades, and America witnessed a new wave of Chinese immigration. Since the 2000s, Chinese-English bilingualism in U.S. has gained a more favorable environment. English has become a global language and Chinese has gained more and more attention with the rise of China in international arena as an economic and political power. Moreover, the Sino-American relationship is at work, as indicated in a 2005 bill, United States–China Cultural Engagement Act, introduced by Senators Joseph Lieberman and Lamar Alexander (McGinns, 2005). This in reality translates into China’s
support for overseas Chinese language teaching and U.S.’s allocation of national resources, resulting in a rise of 3% of Chinese language programs in public schools while other language programs decreased (New York Times, 2010). At the national level, the Department of Defense calls for heritage language programs to be established through “government”, “academic” and “private” enterprises in order to meet the national political and economic need (McGinns, 2005).

Chinese language schools in the United States have evolved from private, one-room schools to dynamic, creative, and practical institutions of primary and secondary education serving both the Chinese community and mainstream American society. (Chao, 1997)

Despite the rise and fall of Chinese schools in America, the teaching method has remained much the same throughout history. The primary goal of Chinese early literacy is children’s mastery of the basic units of Chinese written language system — characters. During the earliest period, classes in Cantonese were held for Chinatown residents in large cities (Chao, 1997). Chang (2004) gave a sketch of these schools known as Kuan:

The earliest of these schools appear to have been informal arrangements between scholars and Chinese immigrant families. Known as Kuan, and held in the private homes of their tutors, they consisted of classes of twenty to thirty children who learned the rudiments of Chinese language, calligraphy, philosophy, and classical literature. (p. 182)

Nowadays, there are different types of Chinese schools young children attend: Sunday school, Chinese heritage school and bilingual immersion school. Usually Sunday schools are non-profit organization affiliated with religious groups (Chao, 1997). Chinese heritage schools usually charge tuition, and provide not only language classes but also
classes for dancing, music instruments, chess, or calligraphy. Bilingual immersion school features instruction of both Chinese and English languages.

The teachers in Chinese school are usually volunteering parents or Chinese immigrants with varied degree of training in Chinese teaching (Chao, 1997; Rohsenow, 2004; Curdt-Christiansen, 2006). Their beliefs about early literacy and teaching are often heavily influenced by their own Chinese learning experience in China. The emphasis of early literacy is on the children’s accumulation of knowledge of Chinese characters and words. The learning method often involves traditional ways of character copying (Li, 2002, 2006), word drilling by doing homework and recitation (Curdt-Christiansen, 2006; Pu, 2010), which were designed to help them memorize the form, meaning and use of words in texts. For example, Curdt-Christiansen (2006) noted teaching Chinese reading in the traditional way follows three stages: word recognition, sentence interpretation and paragraph reading, for which the learning approaches mostly are memorizing characters, and reciting texts. Similarly, Pu (2010) compared Chinese children’s early literacy experiences in their elementary school and Chinese heritage schools. She found the teachers in Chinese class emphasized children’s knowledge of Chinese language, including Chinese character, stroke orders and Chinese syntax rule. Reading instruction focused on word meanings and text comprehension by character recognition and fact location, which usually entailed rote-memorization.

Traditionally, reading is believed to be the stepping stone for children to learn writing. Writing is deemed to come naturally once a child becomes well-read and has learned to write a good number of Chinese characters. For example, in Pu’s (2010) study, the teacher with the more traditional approach believed writing is too difficult for
beginning students and it will come naturally when they read enough. Writing following
the model of classic literature is highly desired: “Being able to quote and appropriate the
beautifully written phrases and sentences in classical literature is seen as a talent and
ability in writing” (Curdt-Christiansen, 2006, p. 201).

Given the traditional view on reading and writing, young children are not
expected to write until they read enough and have internalized a good amount of textual
models. For young children, learning writing is often about copying characters and
establishing good habits of writing strokes and characters correctly. In Pu’s (2010) study,
the teachers assigned students to copy characters repetitively in order to help students
write characters correctly, and exactness in written form is what teachers gave most
feedback on in students’ workbooks and writings. Compared with Chinese teachers’
emphasis on written conventions, public school teachers’ focus is on the ideas conveyed
in children’s writings, rather than correct spellings.

The early literacy classroom favors the teacher-centered direct instruction
following textbooks. For instance, both teachers used a bottom-up approach decoding
every character in sentences (Pu, 2010). Curdt-Christiansen (2006) also noted the role of
teacher as a transmitter of knowledge in Chinese class in her two-year study of seven
classrooms in a large Chinese heritage school in Montreal. She noted the overall
classroom interaction to be teacher centered and teacher controlled. Teachers’ utterances
take up to 60% of classroom discourse. And the teachers maintain their control over the
class mainly through IRE (Initiation-Response-Evaluation) mode of interaction or they
tend to “limit the students’ responses to simple utterances within a restricted range of
grammatical and syntactical constructions” (p. 193). Aside from the overall teaching
centered approach, the teacher also used different strategies to engage children in learning like the use of playful language and also a mix of IRE and IRIRIR to give students more space to display their knowledge. In this overall “authoritative discourse” which is associated with the transmission model of teaching, preferred learning methods are dictation, reciting, and memorizing. Though it appears less engaging for children to participate in learning activities, the author argued they are appropriate and meaningful ways to teach Chinese language in Chinese heritage language school context. For example, many Chinese teachers viewed reciting as a way not only to memorize what they learn but also deepening their understanding of the text. And memorization of classic literature will benefit children’s future writing development. However, she also pointed out that such contrast between authoritative discourse in Chinese school and the more liberal discourse in public school can cause confusion among children when they compare the two discourses and some develops negative attitudes towards Chinese language and their own cultural background.

There are also a couple of studies discussing the new ways of viewing and teaching Chinese literacy in the North American context. Such ways of teaching have much to do with individual teachers’ shifting beliefs about literacy. Some Chinese teachers adopt more American ways of connecting literacy with children’s daily life (Jia, 2009). Some pay attention to the interrelationship between reading and writing: reading can be a good opportunity for writing instruction in class. For example when students learn a Chinese poem, the teacher will ask the student to write a Chinese poem to make use of what they learned about the structure and ways of conveying meanings of a poem (Pu, 2010). And there is an increasing literature studying children’s early Chinese reading
and writing development from the emergent literacy perspective. Lin (2007) observed two Chinese toddlers’ pretending reading and invented characters at home. However, so far few Chinese schools in America context have adopted such an approach in promoting early Chinese literacy development.

In general, most studies focus on literacy experiences in home environment and formal heritage school settings (He, 2008; Hirvela, 2010). Chinese Sunday school attracts comparatively little attention. Since the children know each other and the parent-teachers very well, they have an intimate relationship among themselves. This is very different from the formal teacher-student relationship in heritage school, or parent-child relationship at home. How this will influence the teaching activity, classroom interaction, and their Chinese learning as well as their Chinese identity formation makes study of Chinese Sunday school a valuable contribution to the current literature. Moreover, with a language socialization perspective, this research makes it a central focus to examine the socialization role of writing practices and the process of becoming culturally intelligible writers in the Chinese class, which is lacking in the current literature on Chinese heritage language teaching and learning.

2.6 Literacy Socialization Studies in Schools in Bilingual and Multilingual Settings

Literacy socialization has been a major theme since the conception of the language socialization framework, within which literacy activities are seen as a cultural practice and considered together with other cultural events. Two themes emerging from literacy, especially writing, socialization in schools are: interactional reproduction of
subjectivities through literacy practices at schools and fluidity in literacy socialization processes at schools in contact situations.

2.6.1 Reproduction of subjectivities through literacy practices at school.

“The social relationships and interactions in which an orientation to literacy is presented to the learner are fundamental to understanding the social and cultural processes of literacy socialization” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 180)

That’s why literacy socialization research examines the organization and structure of literacy events and pay close attention to “the form, function and content of the discourse itself” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 183). This part will review how culturally intelligible subjectivities are produced in literacy events and how the discourse of or the organization of interaction in literacy event contributes to that process.

He (2003) studied the classroom interaction of Chinese children acquiring literacy in a Chinese heritage school. She found that the social and cultural organization of interaction differs greatly from mainstream English classrooms, in terms of the speaking and hearing roles the children are socialized into. The children are socialized to talk and listen as a whole. The collective speaker is expected: The teacher invites the children to participate as a collective in giving expected answers. In contrast, individual speaker role is constructed, appropriated or deleted for the sake of teacher’s interaction with the class. Individual speaker’s voices are intentionally constructed to create an opportunity for the whole class to learn what the teacher feels is important. Sometimes an individual speaker’s voice is appropriated or even ignored by the teacher to focus the interaction between the teacher and the class as a collective. Also the teacher tends to address the
class as a collective. In some cases, the teacher seems to address an individual student, but actually the whole class is the ratified participants. Though He (2003) talked about the interactional subjectivity, she did not reveal the kinds of literate subjectivities shaped in the process, namely the kinds of readers or writers the children are socialized to become.

Moore (2008) illustrated the multimodal practices the teacher and the child use to manage the transfer of sacred text during the first phase of a Qur’anic lesson. Such practices include body positioning, pointing, and eye gaze oriented towards the written text as well as their utterances in Arabic and Fulbe. Such practices not only coordinate their attention and action, but also are intentionally used for the long term goal of Qur’anic schooling. Looking and pointing at the text has to do with the developmental trajectory of a child’s learning of the text; sitting bowing over the tablet on which the sacred text is written is part of cultivating children’s submission to God’s Word; and children’s submissive posture demonstrates children’s respect for their teacher.

Sometimes similar literacy practices produce contrasting subjectivities via operation in differing interactional discourses. Moore (2008) discussed rote learning in Qur’anic school and public school in Fulbe, Cameroon. She framed it as guided repletion, a practice for teaching and learning including four phases: modeling, imitation, rehearsal, and performance. Though both schools adopt this practice as the dominant way of organizing teaching activities, they are carried out differently and for different purposes. One important difference is the distribution of authority: in Qur’anic school, only the expert or the teacher has the authority to transmit Qur’anic knowledge while in public school any student can be a potential modeler. Moreover, different moral and social
beings are desired from the two schooling systems. Qur’anic schooling aims to socialize children into “reproductive competence” in Arabic, and into values of self-discipline, respect for authority, and submission to God’s Word. That’s why guided repetition in Qur’anic school put emphasis on self control, respect for teachers, and verbatim rendering of the text. While pubic school is intended to cultivate the supra-ethnic Cameroonian citizenship, individuals speaking and writing French for socioeconomic purposes in a modern democratic state. That’s why guided repletion in public school values peer interaction and demonstrates more fluidity in expert and novice roles.

These studies provided analytical models and tools for this research to reveal the process of becoming culturally specific writers and learners by closely looking at the overall and discourse organization of writing learning activities.

2.6.2 Fluidity and hybridity in literacy socialization process.

In bilingual and multilingual societies, multiple literacy beliefs and practices coexist and interact with each other, making room for an even more diversified, and sometimes hybrid beliefs and practices in writing. Community-based institutions are found to be sites undergone changes influenced by broader social, economic, political context. Ochs and Duranti (1986) examined the literacy practices in a Samoan village undergoing changes under western influence. They demonstrated how literacy instruction in the pastor’s school moves closer to more western values on individuals and shapes young children to become individuals with values very distinct from their community. This has to with a belief that being able to read and write is an essential part of becoming employed in urban areas, where individual achievement is highly valued.
More recently, Moore (2008) discussed change in socialization practices in three settings: Qur’anic school, public school, and the Fulbe community. Both Qur’anic school and public school were undergoing a modernization process. In the Fulbe community, guided repetition, a practice dominant in Qur’anic schooling and public schooling, was borrowed to socialize children to tell Fulbe folktales. Such diffusion of guided repetition into the community probably reflects Fulbe people’s effort to maintain their folktale tradition by using a practice that is more familiar and effective for the children participating more and more in both schools.

Sometimes different beliefs and practices are produced within the same community, especially in non-religious, less established communities, where values can be more diverse and emergent, thus allowing more space for different literacy practices and their meanings to be negotiated. Jia (2009) found two contrasting models of literacy practices employed by teachers of children in the same Chinese heritage language school: student-centered and teacher-centered approaches. In the two student-centered classes, literacy practices, both reading and writing, were placed in their contexts and students were encouraged to discuss and negotiate the text meanings relating to their own life experiences. For example, in one class, the teacher asked the children to rewrite a text “three little pigs”, a story with the moral value of hard working, by adding roles of pigs’ parents and later acting out the story at the school. In the other class, in addition to encouraging the students to talk about meanings of texts in their books, the teacher also organized a literacy circle, where students were asked to tell their opinions about the same news story. The teacher’s ideologies play important roles in these two teaching approaches. In the first class, the teacher borrowed practices from her English class
experiences in America. She believed that literacy is more than concrete skills of reading and writing, what matters is also their functions and purposes. While in the second class, the teacher regarded literacy circle as a way to help the children become good moral persons who appreciate hard working and value equality. In this sense, literacy is more a means than an end in itself (Jia, 2009). In these two classes learning is more collectively negotiated, and literacy is more a social practice than concrete skills. In contrast, in the teacher-centered class, the teacher believed learning occurs with individual practice and memorization. She valued the training basic skills like copying characters and drilling sentence patterns. She felt that they were important for a successful Chinese learner. Such belief in training specific language skills has to do with her own learning experience back in China: these practices had worked for her.

In the current study, the researcher will bear in mind that in contact situations, literacy practices have been influenced by its social context and undergone changes. Literate practices in these settings show fluidity in shaping the relationships surrounding the children, and the subjectivities produced in the process.

To sum up, so far there hasn’t been a study specifically looking at the early literacy socialization of Chinese children in America in a holistic way— across preschool, Chinese Sunday school and home settings. Most of the studies are either in single setting (He, 2009), or two settings (Jia, 2008, 2009; Li, 2002; Pu, 2010). Nor has early writing been the focus of their studies. Mostly heritage language is talked about as an umbrella term, without taking into consideration the potentially differential socialization of reading, writing, and speaking abilities. This research contributes to the literature by taking on the endeavor to look at language socialization across three settings, and highlights writing
socialization, as well as focusing on preschool children who for the first time in their life are exposed to bilingual and biliterate socialization in schools.

2.7 Major Goals of the Study and Research Questions

In my study, I will look at early writing practices in three settings: the preschool, the Chinese Sunday school and home setting. In each setting, following studies in early writing as a cultural practice, I will examine the writing learning process, and the relationships involved, as well as cultural ideologies about child, learning and writing. Given the data collected, the focuses are in two school settings. But I also talk about what parents believe and do about children’s writing at home in connection with findings from the two schools. Following earlier literacy socialization studies, my research focus is not only on the linguistic and cultural reproduction, but also the fluidity and hybridity in socialization in bilingual settings. The first focus will examine the process of language socialization at two school settings; the second focus will explore the agency of both the socializer and the socializee: the hybrid practices developed by parents and teachers encountering different schooling and cultural systems; and children’s agency in interacting with different schooling and cultural systems.

The theoretical and methodological feature of language socialization, namely holistic ethnographic perspective supported by longitudinal collection and analysis of natural interaction with a focus on micro-macro linkage (Garrett, 2008), allow this study to contribute to the current literature on early writing studies in three aspects:

- To look at the learning process by examining moment-to-moment audio- and video-recorded natural interaction and also longitudinal change.
To examine the cultural parameters of becoming a young writer and learner

To explore the potential fluidity and hybridity of writing socialization practices across settings.

The major research questions are:

1. What are the practices adopted by the teachers in preschool and Sunday school in socializing Chinese children to write?
   a. What are the writing learning activities?
   b. What are the linguistic and paralinguistic resources teachers employ in the writing learning activities?
   c. What are the features of the teacher-student interaction in each setting?
   d. In what ways do the teachers’ practices in two schools resemble or differ from each other?

2. What kinds of writers and learners are the children socialized to become in learning writing in each school setting?
   a. What are the skills that emergent writers are expected to develop in each school setting?
   b. What are the culturally specific characteristics of emergent writers and young learners shaped in writing learning activities in each school?
   c. What are the teachers’ beliefs about early writing and learning in each school?
   d. In what ways do the kinds of writers and learners in two classes resemble or differ from each other?
3. What are parents’ beliefs and practices about English and Chinese writing and learning at home and how do they differ from or are similar to those at preschool and Sunday school?
   a. What are parents’ beliefs and practices about English and Chinese writing and learning at home?
   b. How do their beliefs and practices resemble or differ from those at preschool and Sunday school?
   c. In what ways do parents’ beliefs and practices affect children’s acquisition (or not) of writing skills in English and Chinese?

4. What are the change and hybrid practices in socialization process across preschool, Chinese Sunday school and at home?
   a. In what aspects do teachers’ and parents’ beliefs and practices, and children’s learning display change and hybridity?
   b. What are the factors that give rise to such change and hybridity?
   c. How do such change and hybridity contribute to children’s emergent bilingual and biliterate subjectivity?
Chapter 3: Methods

This section discusses this study’s research design, the community and population it focuses on, the two major research settings, and the methods it used in collecting and analyzing data. Garrett (2008) summarizes four essential methodological features of language socialization studies:

- longitudinal design;
- field-based collection and analysis of a substantial corpus of naturalistic audio or audio-video data;
- a holistic, theoretically informed ethnographic perspective;
- paying attention to both micro and macro levels of analysis as well as the linkages between them

(p. 193).

These features have guided this study’s overall design, data collection and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

In order to document the bilingual and biliterate socialization process and explore insiders’ view of bilingualism in the community, this study followed the participants longitudinally in a six-month ethnographic study. The researcher was a participant observer of the children’s daily activities in the child care center, at home and in the Chinese Sunday school. Also the researcher audio and video recorded their interaction in the above-mentioned settings. Longitudinal design allows the researcher to systematically track developmental changes of the focal children. Also ethnographic design enables the researcher to locate meanings within the community. Ethnography is about the
description and analysis of local culture (Savoille-Troike, 2003). From an ethnographic perspective, sociocultural knowledge is believed to be embedded in participants’ everyday routine activities. Such insider meaning can only be reached through observation, participation, audio and video documenting. With a comparative approach, this research hopes to reveal the cultural meanings of emergent writers and learners constructed in two classrooms and at home, which are conveyed in and through language.

3.2 Community and Population

This section looks at the features of Chinese community, and international student and professional family as well as their children in this study.

3.2.1 The expanding Chinese community.

According to the U.S. 2005 census, California and New York were the two states with the largest number of Chinese speakers. They have a total of over 8 million Chinese speakers (see chart below), nearly 70% of all Chinese speakers in the U.S. It is understandable since California is where the first wave of Chinese immigrant workers set their foot at the time of the gold rush while New York also attracts Chinese immigrants for mainly economic reasons. One thing interesting to observe in the census data is that while the traditionally concentrated Chinese communities saw a decrease in population from 2000 to 2005, there has been a steady increase of Chinese population in Midwest states like Ohio and Illinois, and in Southern states like Texas and Georgia. In 2000, the state of Ohio has 21,585 Chinese speakers and around 4,000 of them cluster in its capital city Columbus, where this study takes place.
3.2.2 International student and professional family in a transnational space.

Along with the expanding Chinese community, the number of Chinese international students and professionals (post docs, visiting scholars, and employees) has also soared in America. Take the university where the research is carried out for example. In 2010, it has experienced a 70.4 % increase in the number of international freshman over autumn quarter 2009 (Office of International Affairs, 2010). The number of new international graduate students on campus is also on the rise with an increase of 14.7%. The majority of freshman international students are from China, making up nearly 70% of the total, following by those from South Korea, India, Taiwan and Canada while the graduate international students primarily come from China, India and Korea. Given the large number of Chinese
international students, they show a great level of diversity. In the chosen research site, residents are usually graduate students pursuing doctoral degrees or doing postdoctoral research in education, biological, chemical or physical science. They usually live on scholarship or graduate assistantships. Depending on the number of family members, the household income may range from below poor level, low income to comparatively well-off (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2010). For them, life can be stressful, given the family responsibility and the demanding academic work. Many of the families have grandparents take care of their children. It is a common scene that grandparents take care of the grandchildren while the parents go to school or study next door in the study room at the community center. Another thing of particular interest to this study is the transnational feature of the community. Brittain (2001) proposed the concept of “transnational space”, which allows people to establish and maintain ties between their country of origin and their receiving country. It is transnational in the sense that the parents orient themselves to both U.S. and China: whether to return to China or stay in U.S. is often part of their talk about the future. Its transnational nature also resides in the connections they have with China: regular chat with family members, friends, coworkers and gift exchanges on holidays and special occasions. One significant phenomenon is the travel of grandparents to U.S. to take care of the grandchildren. They stay in U.S. for three months to one year to be the primary caretaker of the children. Thus the children at home are usually exposed to Mandarin and at least one dialect of Chinese. In most cases, this means resuming the use of hometown language (regional dialect) in the family. Also related to transnationalism is that parents take their child back to China sometime during their stay in America. Some families make such travel more frequently than others while there are also families, under certain circumstances, who
send their children back to China to be taken care of by their grandparents. The transnational nature of this community is significant for Chinese children’s bilingual and biliterate development: it makes Chinese language maintenance both a necessity, and a possibility.

**3.2.3 Children at the center of hybrid culture.**

Children are at the center of the hybrid culture: in preschool, they speak English with American teachers and their classmates are of different ethnicities: Anglo American, black American, Mexican and Turkish etc; at home they mainly speak Chinese, and may alternate between Mandarin and different dialects depending on their parents’ or other family members’ language background; on the playground, they speak English more as a lingua franca, where interactions occur in English among members from two or more linguistic and cultural backgrounds and for none of whom English is the mother tongue (House, 1999). In early literacy development, they learn to read and write in English at preschool. At home parents read them both Chinese and English children’s books. Some of them go to Chinese school to learn to read and write Chinese characters. How would this hybrid culture influence their language use and literacy acquisition? Or vice versa: how do they learn to use languages and literacy skills to deal with the hybrid culture—in this case, the Chinese culture in contact with U.S. culture? How would they perceive themselves differently as they grow up entering into different interactions across various settings? How do the sociocultural discourses come into play in the process of their education on the day they entered the preschool, the very first step leading them into the American public education system? It takes an in-depth ethnographic research from a critical perspective to answer these questions.
The specific features of this community—historically the residents are part of the third wave immigration, spatially connecting China and U.S. in the globalization, socially at the intersection of modern Chinese and American culture—makes it a unique site for studying the bilingual and biliterate development of Chinese children in U.S.

3.3 American Preschool Class

This is a preschool class at the childcare center in a university affiliated student family housing area. There are 18 students in the classroom, five being Chinese children. More than half of the children are bilingual or multilingual, from Indi, Arabic, Korean, Spanish, or Chinese speaking homes. In the classroom, the teachers often ask them to share their languages and culture. For example, children were asked to sing the “Happy Birthday” song in different languages. Teachers often use a word or two of a certain language, which they have learned from the children.

Two full-time teachers work in the classroom. Aside from the full-time teachers, there is a flow teacher who helps whenever a class is short of hands. There are also teaching assistants coming to the class from different majors from local universities, including early childhood education, veterinary studies, and financial management. Some of them are bilingual too, speaking German, Chinese, or Korean. But they all speak English in the classroom.

3.4 Chinese Sunday School Class

The Sunday Chinese School is affiliated with one of the largest Chinese churches in the area. The class is organized by volunteering parents who value the maintenance of
Chinese language and want to do it from an early stage of their children’s life. The parents take turns to teach the class every two months. During my observation, it was Jenna’s mom’s turn to teach the class.

There are 6-8 students in the class depending on attendance. Four of them are about 5 years old. Only two of them are teenagers whose Chinese literacy level is more on the beginning side. That’s why they are in the same class with younger kids. One or two of the students are boys, and the rest are girls. Their parents are from mainland China or Taiwan. The students speak Mandarin, and one of their home languages. Also they speak English very well since they have been in English-medium schools long enough to grasp the language.

3.5 The Participants

This preschool classroom was chosen because it had the largest number of Chinese children. Also the researcher had observed this classroom for a couple of course projects, which gave her easier access to the class and the teachers. After the study started, the researcher heard from Jenna’s mom about the Sunday school and included it in the study. In the preschool, the participants are two full-time school teachers (Ms. Pam and Ms. Ann), one teaching assistant (Britney), four focal children (Evan Wang, Evan Lang, Jun Jun, and Jenna) and six non-focal children. In the Sunday school, the participants are one teacher (Ms. Zhou), one focal child (Jenna) and five non-focal children. Seven parents participated in the study, including parents of Evan Wang, Jun Jun, and Jenna as well as Evan Lang’s mother. Evan Lang’s father did not participate in
the study because he worked in another state in the U.S. The participants of the study are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preschool</th>
<th>Sunday School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Two full-time teacher: Ms. Pam and Ms. Ann</td>
<td>Ms. Zhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One teaching assistant: Britney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal children</td>
<td>Evan Wang, Evan Lang, Jun Jun, and Jenna</td>
<td>Jenna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal children’s parents</td>
<td>Parents of Evan Wang, Jun Jun, and Jenna as well as Evan Lang’s mother</td>
<td>Jenna’s parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-focal children</td>
<td>Six</td>
<td>Five</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The Participants

3.5.1 The preschool teachers.

Ms. Pam and Ms. Ann, the full-time teachers, and Britney, the teaching assistant participated in the study. Ms. Pam is a female American teacher. She has been a preschool teacher for more than 25 years and has been in this preschool for three years. She is very resourceful in carrying out children’s activities: drawing rainbows, making paper planes, singing songs, dancing to music, and reading group stories, etc. She has two preschool age boys. Ms. Ann is an Egyptian, who immigrated to the U.S. in her 20s. She
has worked in the preschool for 16 years and has three daughters. She is very close with the children, giving them hugs and kisses a lot. Everybody in the room loves her bakery in the class. Britney is a college student majoring in early childhood education in a local university and has been a teaching assistant in this class for over three years. She is easygoing and gets along very well with the children. She often reads or writes together with the children. In addition, she seems to have an informal relationship with the children, often joking with them.

3.5.2 The Sunday school teacher.

Ms. Zhou is one of the volunteering mothers teaching in the Chinese Sunday School. She is the mother of Jenna, one of the focal children in the study. She and her husband have been in the U.S. for about ten years. She studied and lived in the east coast and moved to the Midwest in 2008. She is a post doc researcher with a local children’s hospital lab.

She and her family go to the church regularly. She knows the students and their parents outside the class. There is an intimate relationship between her and the students. In class, Ms. Zhou is caring about the students’ needs. As a teacher, she is very patient in explaining the meaning of Chinese characters. She tried to make the class fun and interesting by including games into the class.

3.5.3 The focal children.

The four focal children are three boys and one girl: Evan Wang, Evan Lang, Jun Jun and Jenna. They each are very different in their language background and preschool
experience. In May, Jun Jun moved out of town with his family and the researcher wasn’t able to follow him longitudinally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>English Language Level</th>
<th>Time in China</th>
<th>Date Starting Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evan Wang</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>beginning</td>
<td>December 2007-May 2010</td>
<td>November 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan Lang</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>He hasn’t been to China yet</td>
<td>September 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun Jun</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>fluent</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenna</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>fluent</td>
<td>August 2007-August 2008</td>
<td>September 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The Focal Children

Evan Wang is 4 years old and was born in America. His father is a post-doctoral researcher at the university and his mother stays at home. He was taken back to China when he was about one year old and stayed with his grandparents for about two years. He came back to the States in May 2010 and was enrolled in the classroom in November 2010. When the research started, he had been in the preschool for about four months. One teacher commented he didn’t make much progress because he spoke Chinese with other Chinese boys all the time. It is true that the three Chinese boys often hang out together.
and speak in Chinese. And the teachers have to separate them during lunch time, one at a table, so they can speak English. But despite his language proficiency, he is quite a warm little person and the teaching assistants like to have small talks with him. They commented he understood a good amount of English, and produced more too. At home, he is exposed to Mandarin and Wuhan dialect. He loves watching Chinese and English cartoons on TV and likes listening to Chinese and English stories on electronic tablet and computers. He had good exposure to Chinese stories, poems, songs and dances when he was in preschool in China. He goes to swimming class and baseball class every week.

Evan Lang is also 4 years old and was born in America. He was enrolled in the classroom since September, 2010. His father works in a different city and mother is a doctoral student at the university. When the research started, he had been in the preschool for six months. He understands English pretty well, but doesn’t produce much in the class. At the beginning of the research, he appears to be a minimum English speaker: he only uses English whenever it is absolutely necessary, like defending himself in a conflict with other children. As time went by, he started to interact more with teachers. His family comes from the northern part of China, and he speaks Mandarin only. His mother commented he sometimes told her the English words he learned at school. He doesn’t like watching cartoons. The only cartoon he watches is Xì Yang Yang and Hui Tai Lang (Happy Lamb and Grey Wolf), a popular cartoon among Chinese children in Mainland China. He has a dozen Chinese children’s books, like Da Tou Er Zi and Xiao Tou Ba Ba (Big Head Son and Small Head Father). Some of them are from his cousins and nephews in China, including a Children’s Encyclopedia. One of his favorites is Bei Ke and Shu Ta, the fairy tales about two mice by a popular Chinese children’s writer, Yuanjie Zheng.
Jun Jun is five years old and has been in the preschool for almost two years. He used to speak only English at school. At that time there were two other Chinese boys and two Chinese girls in the class; and none of them spoke Chinese during my observation unless the teacher asked them about how to say something in Chinese. But now he speaks Chinese all the time with the two other Chinese boys. And he is the one who translated for Evan Wang when something happened to him, or translated for the teachers when the teachers asked about what they were talking about in Chinese. His parents started to teach him to read and write Chinese characters at home. His mother told me he mainly “read” the characters by connecting them with the associated pictures. Unfortunately, I wasn’t able to follow him longitudinally since his family relocated to another state in May 2011.

During the week of recruitment, Jenna left for China. In late May, she returned to the classroom and became the only girl among the participants. She is five and speaks both English and Chinese fluently. She used to remain silent at preschool and would never speak a word despite the teacher’s and parents’ effort. The silent time lasted for about a year and it was difficult for her and her parents. But she now talks a lot with both peers and teachers. She is the only one starting learning Chinese reading and writing at Sunday school. She likes giving me Chinese riddles, which she learned at the Sunday school. She loves watching Han Zi Gong (Chinese Character Palace), an educational series teaching young children the origin of Chinese characters with stories. Also she needs to practice writing Chinese characters at home, though not as many as children in China. She likes reading English books and watching English cartoons on TV. At school, she and Evan Lang get along very well with each other and play together very often. The teacher commented after she returned to the classroom that Evan Lang talks a lot more
since they usually play together. Since August, however, she mostly plays with girls. The other three Chinese boys often play together.

3.6 Data Collection

This section covers methods used in data collection, including participant observation, audio and video recording, interview and playback.

One thing particularly important for longitudinal ethnographic study is that data collection and data analysis are not necessarily separated from each other. In many situations, how field notes are taken or how video is recorded may determine whether some data is usable or not, like verbatim notes, capturing the focal interaction or interlocutor. Thus, in this study, on the one hand, the researcher has data analysis in mind when collecting data and tries to make the data more analysis-ready. On the other hand, initial data analysis has been done at a monthly interval in order to narrow down research questions to answerable ones and guide further data collection. Thus, the data collection and analysis processes go hand in hand in the research process.

3.6.1 Participant observation.

Garret (2008) emphasized the depth and breadth of ethnographic observation. Since children have to build their repertoire of practice (Rogoff, Moore & Solís 2007) to be capable of using language across different cultural communities, the researcher has to look across broad contexts to see how the novices use language to participate in different activities, including everyday routines, exceptional events and periodic events (Garrett, 2008). Similarly, Agar (2006) elaborated the parameters of ethnographical study,
including “scale” and “events” as well as “event linkages”. “Scale” refers to the extent to which an ethnographer is committed to the participants’ subjective experience; “events” is concerned about the range of time and space the ethnographer means to cover: the number of communicative events and settings the members participate in; “event links” looks at how events stretch out in time and distribute across space (Agar, para 35). These parameters not only guide data collection but also help the researcher analyze data across cases, time and spaces.

From April to July, 2011, I observed the preschool classroom weekly. As the data built on in August and September, I decided to observe biweekly, alternating morning and afternoon observation, to analyze more and collect data in a more focused way. It was not easy to take field notes in the room since the children moved around the classroom almost all the time. And I had to move around with them to video tape their activities. Whenever possible, I took “verbatim” (Emerson & Shaw, 1995) notes of the comments teachers or children made to help write extended field notes afterwards. Each time, I tried to observe different types of interaction in the class, like teacher-child, teacher-teacher, and child-child interaction. In August, I started observing the Sunday school class. Compared with the preschool, it was easier to sit down and take notes because the class was structured in terms of physical arrangement and learning content: students usually sit through the class and the teacher followed a set of routine learning activities. I also visited and observed three focal children’s home activities with their parents.
3.6.2 Audio and video recording.

Audio and video recording enables the ethnographer to collect natural and detailed data. The development in technologies has enabled the researcher to study verbal as well as non-verbal behaviors of participants and made possible micro-level analyses of communicative interaction (Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002). Also Video and audio recording together with note-taking allows the researcher to document a longitudinal record of interaction between children and their interlocutors. This helps the researcher to explore how young children are socialized to draw on multiple codes to “constitute shifts in communicative acts, activities, identities, affects and other facets of the situation” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1995, p. 253) in linguistically diverse communities.

The researcher audio and video taped children’s activities involving early literacy, especially writing, in preschool, Sunday school and home settings. When audio or videotaping, the equipment was used in such a way that it appeared least intrusive for the children’s daily activities so as to avoid “camera behavior” (Duranti, 1997) of the participants. Given children’s natural curiosity, I gave them chances to know more about the equipment, like showing them the pictures I took, and the videos I shot. Gradually, they got used to the idea of having a camera around. As a university-affiliated preschool, the preschool teachers were also quite used to having student researchers in the classroom observing, audio and videotaping. For parents the camera effect was more visible. I tried to put the equipment in a less obtrusive location to reduce the effect. In time, it became better as the researcher and the participants knew more about each other in the community. In both preschool and Sunday school class, I used a video camera and an audio recorder at the same time. Most of the time, the video camera captured good
quality conversations. If not, the audio recorder would be the backup, to which I would return in order to find that part of conversation. At home, I videotaped children’s indoor and outdoor activities. Two of the parents helped record bed-time stories for me.

3.6.3 Interview and playback.

Aside from ethnographic methods like participant observation, audio-video recordings, other supplemented methods like interviews and playback sessions were arranged depending on the data needed to address a particular research question.

Given the longitudinal design of the research, the research carried out ongoing informal interviews about teachers’ and parents’ opinions about the children’s backgrounds, their language learning and use. More focused interviews were conducted in May and June 2011 with two full-time teachers and four parents including Evan Wang’s parents, Jenna’s mother and Evan Lang’s mother. The interview questions (see Appendix G and Appendix H) were designed based on the literature review, research questions and initial data analysis and used to confirm or disconfirm researcher’s observations and interpretations, or answer particular research questions like language ideologies of the teachers and parents. Since originally this study was designed to explore cross-cultural issues in Chinese children’s bilingual development in general, there were more interview questions used in the focal interview than what’s included in the Appendixes. In December 2011 after the study was completed, particular video clips were edited and shown to the parents to elicit more insider knowledge in each community. Interview questions were designed in a way to avoid leading questions and elicit more participant opinion. Only Evan Lang’s mother participated in the playback interview.
3.7 Data Organization

For six months, the researcher made 17 classroom visits and 10 family visits and collected about 60 hours’ audio and video data. Below are an overview of data set by type, and data set by case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preschool Class</th>
<th>Sunday Class</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45h AV</td>
<td>2h AV</td>
<td>15h AV</td>
<td>4h AV</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning/Afternoon</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Drawings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In/outdoor</td>
<td>Indoor</td>
<td>In/outdoor</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Writings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher guided/peer</td>
<td>Teacher guided/peer</td>
<td>Adult guided/peer</td>
<td>Initial/follow-up</td>
<td>Documents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Data Set by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Sunday School</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evan Wang</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Water play, BBQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan Lang</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Water play, BBQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenna</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>zoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun Jun</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Data Set by Case
Originally, the study was designed to look at language socialization practices at preschool and home settings. That is why most of the data were collected from these two settings. Given limited access, data collected from home settings was less than that from the preschool. In the final month of the data collection, the researcher heard about the Sunday school from Jenna’s mother and observed the class twice. In analysis, data from the Sunday school formed interesting contrast with those from the preschool and turned out to be another focus of the final writing-up of the dissertation.

I organized and analyzed my field notes with Weft QDA, which is a free software analyzing textual data like field notes and interview transcripts. It has basic coding functions and is easy to search and compare among coded notes. For audio and video data transcription, I used Transana, software developed by University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Education Research. It allowed me to have all the audio and video data in one place and view them easily. Also it facilitated the transcription process, which allowed for initial transcription and later extended transcription. In addition, it also helped build up collections for literacy activities, which facilitated a more focused analysis of core writing events. Moreover, it linked each audio or video clip with the transcription, which was convenient in looking at a particular transcription. The transcription used in this paper followed conventions in conversation analysis (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008).

3.8 Data Analysis

This section discusses the data analysis procedure, including coding process and a variety of analytical tools. Based on the research questions, stories or scenes in the field notes and the audio/video data were identified. Then through an inductive way, general
coding were named. After that, more similar scenes within each big category were collected in the raw data in a deductive way to gain more evidence. Then sub-codes representing different levels of within each general code were identified and supported in this inductive and deductive process. For example, one general code was writing. Within this general codes, some sub-codes were writing practices, writing ideology, and writing artifacts. Sometimes further codes were identified within a sub-code. For example, within writing practices at preschool, four kinds of practices were named: circle-time documentation, teacher-present free writing, peer free writing and enriching text environment.

After the data were coded, the research went through the data, found pieces directly connecting with a particular research question and transcribed them. Then the researcher analyzed them using discourse analysis (Johnstone, 2008), and connected linguistic features with sociocultural meaning by exploring their indexical relationship.

Finally, the researcher made a comparison of writing events across settings. I find it helpful to focus on a particular phenomenon that is both universal and local in Chinese and American culture. For me, the universal-local features helped to do cross-cultural comparison. The socialization of writing discussed below is one of the universal-local cultural phenomena. Both cultures have it; but it is socialized in different ways, and different social meanings about being a young writer.

3.9 Researcher’s Role

The researcher has multiple roles in the community, being a participant observer, a mother, a community resident, and a doctoral student and beginning researcher. These
different roles allowed me access to different aspects of children’s daily life and to form different kinds of relationships with the teachers, children and parents. Being a mother of a one-year-old, my understanding of and enthusiasm for young children made it easier to reach to and communicate with parents, teachers and children. Living in the community, the researcher had chances to talk to and interact with the participants in community activities and other non-research settings, which helped build trust and friendship, and allowed access to children’s activities in community settings. During the six-month research period, the researcher had gradually become more competent in handling multiple relationships and her skills in conducting research had been strengthened. Overall, the understanding of the research topic developed and the meaningful relationship built in the process had made this research not only an intellectually fulfilling but also a personally rewarding experience for the researcher.

3.10 Reliability and Validity

In this research reliability and validity were realized in the following ways. It followed classic language socialization research in data collection and analysis. Also the data collected via observation, audio-video recording and interview were combined for analysis. Moreover, the researcher looked for recurrent pattern over a longer period of time. In addition, counterexamples were looked for to strengthen interpretation. Lastly, the initial findings were shared with participants for member check.
Chapter 4: How Children Are Socialized to Write in American Preschool

The major question this chapter tries to answer is: how are children socialized to write in the preschool classroom? Given the classroom philosophy of learning through play, the learning process in this class may appear to be invisible for those who are unfamiliar with early educational settings. To address this question, this chapter: (1) first talks briefly about the classroom philosophy of learning through play, (2) then looks at the curriculum, time and space arrangement of the class, (3) tries to uncover the multiple learning opportunities afforded by various kinds of play in this class for the young children starting learning writing, (4) discusses the cultural meanings of becoming a young writer, (5) then talks about the cultural parameters of becoming an age-appropriate learner, and (6) concludes with a discussion of parents’ beliefs about children’s English writing and learning, and their understanding of the school philosophy of learning through play.

4.1 The Philosophy of Learning through Play

Play has always been part of a child’s life. It was not until the early and mid twentieth century that its importance in child’s development was supported by findings from psychoanalytical and cognitive studies (Heidemann& Hewitt, 2009). Sigmund Freud (1961) found play provides ways for children to deal with difficult feelings like anxiety or traumas. Erik Erikson (1950) discovered children accomplish emotional tasks like developing trust through their play experiences with caregivers. Not only does play
promote healthy emotional and mental development, it is also believed to promote children’s cognitive and social development. Jean Piaget believes children play with objects to make sense of the world around them; gradually it enables them to integrate new information and move to a deeper cognitive understanding. “It is indispensable to his affective and intellectual equilibrium” (Piaget, 1969, p. 58). Vygotsky extends Piaget’s focus on children’s interaction with object to the relationship involved in play. Children learn through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). It is the distance between the actual developmental level 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 (Vygotsky, 1978). Play is vital for a child’s development because it creates a ZPD.

In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. (Vygotsky, p. 102).

Such scientific evidence of play in child’s development have greatly influenced early childhood education in U.S. Walking into the preschool in this study, one can see and hear the evidence of the educational philosophy of learning through play almost everywhere. Children’s developmental goals are included in different classroom playful activities in the class. The four major developmental goals—social, cognitive, language, and physical development — are realized through play in different activities (Appendix B and C):

- Social development like cooperation can be realized through imaginative play or creating “group art”, like printing rings on art paper as a group;
• Cognitive development activities include learning math concepts by playing blocks with numbers or developing self-concept by drawing pictures;
• Language development activities cover listening to stories and sharing ideas, and writing words in various languages around the room;
• Physical motor skills can be promoted through indoor activities like playing cars, trucks and outdoor activities like water exploration.

Not only does learning through play promote emotional, cognitive and social development, it also ensures the children can develop their own knowledge. One quote from the class posting says:

I value play as an important medium for learning. I have developed a broad range of developmental goals with the focus on play. This program provides children with play experiences that enable them to develop and accumulate their own knowledge. (Appendix A).

Though interacting with the physical and social world around, children are believed to have the capacity to discover, develop and build up their own knowledge.

The same is true with learning to write. From the very beginning, writing is packaged within different classroom activities like making crafts, drawing, or doing classroom projects. For example, oftentimes children learn to write their first letters by recognizing names on a painting, and later sign their own names. Children’s doodling, either their crafts or paintings, was displayed with their names signed around in the classroom, on cupboards, walls and windows. Such practice shows respect for children’s ideas. Moreover, it’s the way the children start learning writing, by recognizing and later on signing their names on the painting they drew. Ms. Ann said:
It's very special to them; it's very special. I paint this paper and I write my name on that paper. That's very interesting and that's how they learn. This is something special to you; this is you're writing letter A, or your name starts with letter A or start with K and you put it on the paper... It meant something to them, and it is important to them. I did this, like they are proud of themselves...even if it's scribbling; it starts like that... You see the progress; you see those kids’ progress, even if they are playing...They learn through the play: when they are playing, they learn. (Ms. Ann interview 20110613133500)

In meaningful play activities like signing names on painting, writing letters becomes personal and meaningful. And in doing different paintings, children practice their writing skills in a fun way repetitively, moving from scribbling to gradually writing letters, and their names.

The lead teacher Ms. Pam expressed similar ideas when she talked about the way this classroom was organized.

Most of my experience, really most of my professional experience, has been in more of a Reggio based program, where the curriculum is very child-guided, very child-centered. Instead of having a curriculum that's more based on- we are gonna make them all sit down and write the letter A, you know, so we can learn the letter A. It’s more if they are interested in cooking, then maybe we will write the recipe out, let them see the recipe and learn letters that way, so they are learning a lot more through play. (Ms. Pam interview 20110617132110)

A Reggio program is named after Reggio Emilia, a major city in northern Italy. Founded by Loris Malaguzzi after the Second World War, it emphasized children’s emotional, social and cognitive development through long-term group projects while catering to individual child’s interest. Since the program is influenced by several philosophers and educators like Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky and John Dewey (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998), it also high values the role of play in child’s development. In
the example given by Ms. Pam, children can learn the functions of writing a recipe in the pretend play of cooking.

4.2 The Curriculum, Time and Space of the Class

This section looks at the class curriculum, and its time and space arrangement.

4.2.1 The curriculum.

According to information from the Child Care Center website, the curriculum is aligned with the State Department of Education Early Learning Content Standards (Below referred to as the Standards). The standards cover four essential domains of school readiness for children from birth to age 5, including social and emotional development, physical well-being and motor development, language and literacy, cognitive and general knowledge. These four domains are adapted and reflected in the planned curriculum in this classroom, also known as the classroom Possibilities Plan (see Appendix B), covering the four major developmental goals including social development, language and communication, physical health/self-help skills and cognitive development. The goals of the Standards are two-fold: one is to ensure the development and well-being of young children, and the other is to foster their learning. When they finish preschool, they are ready to go to kindergarten in terms of the four domains. The overall explanation of the four domains by the State Department of Education is listed below:

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2 In 2012, the Standards have been updated to include a fifth domain: approaches towards learning, covering children’s initiative, engagement, and creativity in learning.
Social and Emotional Development. The standards for social and emotional development involve behaviors that reflect children’s emotional growth and their growing ability to successfully navigate their social worlds through interactions with teachers and peers. These standards include a focus on children’s developing abilities to regulate attention, emotions, and behavior, and to establish positive relationships with familiar adults and with peers.

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development: The standards address motor skills and health practices that are essential for children’s overall development. These skills include the ability to use large and small muscles to produce movements, to touch, grasp and manipulate objects, and to engage in physical activity. These standards also describe the development of health practices that become part of children’s daily routines and healthy habits such as nutrition and self-help.

Language and Literacy: The standards for language and literacy reflect knowledge and skills fundamental to children’s learning of language, reading and writing. Young children’s language competencies pertain to their growing abilities to communicate effectively with adults and peers, to express themselves through language, and to use growing vocabularies and increasingly sophisticated language structures. Early literacy skills include children’s developing concepts of print, comprehension of age-appropriate text, phonological awareness, and letter recognition.

Cognition and General Knowledge: This domain includes those cognitive processes that enable all other learning to take place, as well as children’s knowledge of the social and physical world. Cognitive Skills refer to the underlying cognitive mechanisms, skills and processes that support learning and reasoning across domains, including the development of memory, symbolic thought, reasoning and problem-solving. General knowledge include those concepts and skills in sub-domains, like Mathematics, Social Studies and Science.

We can see language and literacy development is one of four goals of the class curriculum. Below is a more detailed explanation of standards on writing development:

Writing Process:

- Use a 3-finger grasp of dominant hand to hold a writing tool.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the structure and function of print.
• With modeling and support, print letters of own name and other meaningful words with mock letters and some actual letters.
• With modeling and support, demonstrate letter formation in “writing.”
• With modeling and support show awareness that one letter or cluster of letters represents one word.

Writing application and composition:

• “Read” what he/she has written.
• With modeling and support, notice and sporadically use punctuation in writing.
• With modeling and support, use a combination of drawing, dictating and emergent writing for a variety of purposes (e.g., letters, greeting cards, menus, lists, books).
• With modeling and support, use a combination of drawing, dictating and emergent writing to tell a story, to express ideas, and to share information about an experience or topic of interest. (Composition)
• With modeling and support, discuss and respond to questions from others about writing/drawing.
• With modeling and support, participate in shared research and writing projects using a variety of resources to gather information or to answer a question.

(Ohio’s Early Learning and Development Standards, 2012b)

In the standards on writing development, we can see the goals of writing development cover two aspects. One is concerned with writing process: motor skills, understanding of structure and functions of written texts, skills in writing one’s name and simple words, awareness of conventions in writing English letters and words. The other is about writing application and composition: using both conventional and nonconventional writing to communicate with others in a number of genres, composing ideas through writing and sharing with others, talking about writing, and doing writing projects. It is worth noting that the variety of goals of writing development connects writing development with other development goals. For example, writing can connect with motor development when a child is able to hold the writing tool using a 3-finger grasp of a
dominant hand. Also it can connect with social development when a child writes a letter to someone else. In addition, it can connect with cognitive development when children are involved in problem-solving activities using writing. It is the same in this preschool class, the writing activities are often where children develop holistically, not only in language skills but also in social, physical and cognitive abilities.

4.2.2 The time and space arrangement.

The time and space arrangement in the class ensures the quality of play and gives children easy access to playing area and materials. The classroom schedule shows how much play is emphasized in this class. There are a variety of activities routinely going on in this class: routine activities, free play, circle time, and outdoor play. Routine activities include nap, meals, potty and clean up. Free play includes activities where children play by themselves (peer play or individual play) or an adult play as a participant (teacher-present play). Circle time is usually staged and directed by adult teachers like group storytelling (teacher-directed play). It is usually done by the lead teacher Ms. Pam, and occasionally by teaching assistant as part of their training. A summary of four types of activities is demonstrated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of class activities</th>
<th>Time length</th>
<th>Percentage of class time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine activities</td>
<td>Around 4 hours</td>
<td>Around 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free play</td>
<td>Around 4 hours</td>
<td>Around 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle time</td>
<td>Around 40 minutes</td>
<td>Around 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor play</td>
<td>Around 2 hours</td>
<td>Around 20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Time Arrangement of Activities in Preschool Class
Children’s play time—free play, circle time, and outdoor play—takes up about 65% of their total time in the class. Children’s free play, both indoor and outdoor, almost five times that of teacher directed play. Such arrangement gives the child opportunities to fully explore their own interest (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2009).

The classroom is divided into different areas to meet children’s daily routine and play needs. The daily routine areas include: closet area, food bar, potty room, sink area, and teacher’s desk, which line up along the right side of classroom. The different play areas include: the story area, writing and painting table, block area, sensory table, and media center, which line up along the left side of the room.

Figure 2. Space Arrangement of the Preschool Class
1. entry door
2. closet
3. bathroom
4. teacher counter
5. food bar
6. sink
7. exit door
8. story couch
9. small book case
10. large book case
11. writing table
12. journal cupboard and painting rack
13. paper cupboard
14. block cupboard
15. toys cupboard
16. small table
17. microscope, CD player
18. “I am ready” bench
19. lunch table
20. arts table
21. sensory table

The entry door is in the middle of glass walls, through which students can see people in the corridor walking by. After one comes into the classroom, on the right side is the closet area. On three sides of the area are closets marked with each student’s name. Vertically each student’s closet is divided into three levels: the two hooks on top for hanging jackets, the space in the middle for storing nap-time pillow and quilt, and the area at the bottom for shoes. The area is so narrow that it only allows one adult to turn around.

Next to the closet on the same side is the potty room with three toilets on the one side and a sink for washing hands on the other. The potty room is shared by two classrooms, with doors on both sides leading to each classroom. Beside the potty room is the one-meter-wide high counter for the teachers to use computer and store important
documents like roster. Teachers can also access email, keep record of each child in the room on the computer, or print out class documents or pictures for the children.

The food bar is next to the computer center and it is shared by two classrooms, too. Teachers usually bring food and drinks for the children and put them on the table. There is a large refrigerator in the food bar. Further from the food bar is the sink area. Children drink fountain water, or wash and dry their hands there. A cupboard over the sink stores different cleaning materials like table cloth and table cleaners. On top of the cupboard are small baskets where some artifacts materials are kept, like water colors or play dough. The exit door is next to the sink and leads to the playground.

On the other side of the class, along the glass wall from the entrance door side is the story area. A comfortable emerald green couch sits right alongside the glass wall, facing a square large rug for kids to sit on during story time. Next to it is small book case about the height of the couch. A bigger and higher bookcase is in the front.

Painting and writing area has a large round table and several chairs. A shelf with students’ drawings and writings, and different pens and pencils is along the wall decorated with several water paintings of blue, red, yellow and mixed colors. And another cupboard stands in between the painting area and block area holding different kinds of papers. Occasionally in the writing area, room will be made for pretend games like putting in a tent, or other dramatic plays where children wearing costumes.

The block area is a large cupboard holding big blocks, about the height of a child. A carpet is in the front of it, where the kids play on. It’s also the area where the lead teacher does circle time. On the corner of that side is a small table and the area for plastic blocks.
A microscope sits on a small table near the glass wall. Next to it is a CD player. Later in August this area used for an audio story center where children sit around and listen to stories wearing large headsets, while the teacher listens too, and holds up the book for them. A long “I am ready” bench sits next to the exit door, where children wait before they go outside and it was once used as a stand for the plants children grew.

In the middle of the classroom is a long rectangular wood table for children to have lunch and snacks. Next to it is a large round table for free play, like carving pumpkin, making bread or drawing. Sometimes children read magazines there, like Times and National Geography. A sensory table in the middle of classroom is filled with sand or water and allows the children to feel, smell, see, and hear things.

There are seasonal things coming to the class as well, like a caterpillar box, in which children can observe how they turn into butterflies. Sometimes, the class updates their equipment, like a tent in April, a new drum in May, and an audio book center in July.

4.3 Multiple Learning Opportunities in Play

Given the class philosophy of learning through play, children often learn and practice writing in an invisible manner. Sometimes parents feel surprised that their children could write English alphabet after attending preschool for about six months because they don’t see teachers’ explicit teaching of letters in the class and they themselves haven’t taught the child either. This section discusses the multiple learning opportunities afforded by various kinds of play in this class including: teacher directed circle time play, teacher present free play, peer play, and child’s self exploration in enriching text environment.
Goffman (1981) talked about the ambiguity of the role of a speaker. He identified three different roles a speaker takes on in producing an utterance: animator, author, and principal.

“In the case of a lecture, one person can be identified as the talking machine, the thing that sound comes out of, the ‘animator’. Typically in lectures, that person is also seen as having ‘authored’ the text, that is, as having formulated and scripted the statements that get made. And he is seen as the ‘principal’, namely, someone who believes personally in what is being said and takes the position that is implied in the remarks.” (p. 167)

Such a differentiation of the separate roles and functions of a speaker is similarly useful in looking at a writer. The animator is the person who produces the written text form, the author is the person who composes the idea encrypted in the text, and the principal is the one who believes what is written. In this chapter, I focused on two of the roles: the author and the animator. These two roles can be taken by the same person: the animator who produces the physical format of a written text is also the author who formulates the text. But sometimes these two roles are taken by different persons.
This is especially true in the preschool: the animator and author in a piece of writing are often taken on by different persons. Below I consider some excerpts from my recordings of everyday interactions involving writing in the preschool. My focus is the kind of writer (author or animator) the children are socialized to become, and what is the role of language in the process-how socialization to use or not to use linguistic resources, both oral and written, contributes to the process.

4.3.1 Circle time play-documentation.

Circle time can take different forms in the class. It can be group storytelling, or group dancing, or group games. And sometimes it can be group writing, which the lead teacher refers to as “documentation”. Usually, the teacher poses a question and elicits ideas from children. In the process the teacher jots down their ideas, makes a list, then types them out, and finally displays the document around the classroom. During my observation, some of the documents are: What families do? What can we do with bubbles? What do you like best about mud day?

In documentation, the role of author is expected from the child. A child should be able to express their idea clearly as a response to the framing question posed by the teacher. “What-question” is a preferred tool to elicit children’s ideas and encourage children to become an author. The following excerpts are taken from an interaction happening during circle time. Ms. Pam gathered the children in the circle and told them sometime that day they would play with bubbles. She then asked them to give their ideas about what they could do with bubbles.
Photo 1. What Can We Do with Bubbles?

201108170836423 05:58-07:184 (Excerpt 1 and 2) & 09:53-10:52 (Excerpt 3 and 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Focal children</th>
<th>Non-focal children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA-Pam-Lead teacher</td>
<td>EW-Evan Wang-Chinese boy</td>
<td>AE-Anne-American girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR-Britney-Teaching assistant</td>
<td>JE-Jenna Li-Chinese girl</td>
<td>LN-Linda-American girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CH: Children</td>
<td>JL-Julie-American girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IH-Ish-Indian boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Excerpt 1.**

1 PA: Here is what I want to ask you. ((showing the clipboard to the children))

What

I am going to write my word, ready? ((facing the class))

((starting writing on the clipboard))

2 EW: ((Looking at Pam writing while holding her arm and leaning on her shoulder))

---

3 The video ID in the data.

4 The starting and ending time of the video transcribed.
Ms. Pam initiated the process by posing the question. She framed the question in such a way that makes it sound really important and interesting. Firstly, she created an information gap to arouse the child’s interest: here is what I want to ask you. I am going to write my word, ready? And then she said out loud the question word by word as she wrote on the clipboard, creating an image of her writing words with intervals on paper. Her production of the question through both auditory and written channel established joint attention to the writing between the teacher and children. The children happily
murmured the words in the question following her. When she finished the question, the
children couldn’t wait to give their ideas. After successfully elicited an idea from a child,
she expressed her excitement about the idea by using an exclamatory remark: Ah oh,
which indexes her value of the child’s idea and his role as an author. Then she confirmed
the child’s authorship by quoting his words and writing them down on the paper. For the
actual writing on the paper, the teacher successfully established the child as an author
through asking them open questions, while she herself is the animator producing the
written form of children’s ideas.

When children’s answers to “what- question” are ambiguous, the teacher would
ask them more questions in order to figure out their ideas and establish their role as
authors.

Excerpt 2.

1 EW: in WATER! ((Turning his body and looking at Ms. Pam))
2 AE: I said blow them. ((looking at the clipboard))
3 PA: >What else can we do? < ((looking at Evan))
4 EW: Water. ((/wOt@/)) ((looking at the clipboard))
5 BR: water. ((/wOt@r/)) ((Pam continue looking at Evan))
6 PA: Put them in water? ((looking at Evan))
7 EW: ((nodded and looking at the clipboard))
8 PA: ((writing on the paper clipboard))
9 AN: [We can ((looking at Pam who is writing on the paper clipboard))
10 IS: [Poke them with water! ((looking at Pam who is writing writing on the clipboard))
11 PA: Hold on ((writing on the paper clipboard))
Evan said water; we can put them in water.

When Evan Wang said out loud “in water”, Ms. Pam followed him with “what else can we do?” as if she didn’t hear clearly and this real question gave him a chance to clarify his idea. Evan Wang seemed challenged a little by the question, and gave just one word “water” in a low voice, which is even more ambiguous than his previous answer “in water”. Probably because Evan Wang’s pronunciation of water sounds more like waiter, Britney repeated Evan’s word “water” to help Ms. Pam. But Ms. Pam neglected her help and persisted with Evan Wang. She guessed his intent and asked him “put them in water?”, and Evan Wang confirmed that was what he meant by nodding his head. Whatever is written on the paper should come from the child himself. When Ms. Pam wrote on the clipboard, she tried to be as faithful as possible to Evan’s role of author in the actual writing: “Evan said water; we can put them in water”. The indexical meaning behind is that she established Evan Wang as the author of the word water and the meaning putting them in water. Such writing practice is significant for young language learners like Evan. On the one hand, this respect for incomplete production of language on Evan’s part established him as a capable author, and his language ability is equally recognized and regarded as more a developmental stage rather than an error to be corrected. On the other hand, the teacher, in addition to the role of animator, also takes on the role of co-author “put them in water”. Her question helped refine Evan Wang’s ideas, and put it in a “writable” way, conveying a clearer message. This models language use in its context is especially important for beginning English language learners like Evan, whose oral language often lags behind their English speaking peers.
Children are not only socialized to become authors, they are also socialized to become certain types of authors. Compared with factual ideas like blow a bubble or pop a bubble, there is an evident preference for more imaginative and creative ideas. Such ideas are usually when the teacher explicitly draw the whole class’ attention to, or give explicit praise.

*Excerpt 3.*

1 PA: Is there anything else we can do with bubbles?  
   ((writing on the paper clipboard))

2 AN: We can=  
   ((looking at the clipboard))

3 IS: =pop them in water  
   ((looking at Pam))

4 JE: HIGH in the SKY  
   ((looking at and talking to Linda))

5 PA: High in the sky?  
   ((reaching out her hand to Jenna, and looking at her))

   We can make one so high in the sky, Jenna?

6 JE:  
   ((looking at Pam))

7 LN: NO, we can make it really big, really big as a house, and we can craw inside, and  
   we can flow  
   ((looking at Pam))

8 PA: OH, listen what Linda says  
   ((starting writing on the paper clipboard))

   Linda said we can make a bubble  
   as big as a HOUSE, and CRAWL inside and  
   ((writing on the paper clipboard))

9 LN: FLOW  
   ((looking at Pam))

10 PA: and flow away.  
   ((writing on the paper clipboard))

11 IS: That's what I am thinking too, LYN  
   ((smiling at Linda))

12 PA: Oh, my goodness, you were thinking that too,  
   ((looking up, and smiling at Ish))
**Excerpt 4.**

1 PA: Anne needs to have a turn, and Julie is waiting to say something.  
   ((facing the class))
   Julie, what would you like to tell me?  
   ((looking at Julie))

2 JL: We could dip some,  
   ((looking at Pam))
   we could put,  
   dip our hands into some paint,  
   ((dipping her right hand))
   and paint a bubble

3 PA: We can PAINT a bubble!
   That’s a good idea.  
   ((Reaching out her hand in Julie’s direction, and smiling))
   Dip our hands in paint and paint a bubble.  
   ((writing on the clipboard))
   Anne, what’s your idea?  
   ((keeping writing on the clipboard))
   (1.0)

4 AE:  
   ((Looking at Pam writing, trying to think of an idea, and mouth moving a little))

5 PA:  
   ((Finished her writing, looking at Anne, leaned her ear toward Anne))

6 AE: (.3)
   ((speaking very quietly to Pam’s ear))

7 PA: You wanna paint a bubble too?  
   ((looking into Anne’s eyes))

8 AE:  
   ((noded and looked away at the class))

9 PA: Paint a bubble, like Julie, with her hands?  
   ((started writing on the clipboard))

10 AE: Yeh, hh  
   ((looking at Pam writing))

In the first example, when Linda told Pam her idea of making a bubble as big as 
house which she could crawl in and flows away, Pam drew attention from the whole class.
by using an exclamatory remark “Oh” and directed the class to her idea using an imperative “listen what Linda says”. As she wrote on the paper, she not only quoted Linda but also emphasized her idea by raising her voice with words like “house” and “crawl”. These verbal and nonverbal features indexes that Linda is a good author, a highly desirable one. This is probably why Ish expressed the idea to be the same author as Linda.

In the second example, Ms. Pam explicitly praised Julie’s idea of painting a bubble, and showed her favor over the idea with a smile, and a reaching-out hand gesture. This preference over imaginative ideas from the author prevented Anne from telling her idea because she felt her idea was not as good as Julie’s. She already had an idea before Julie told hers, and was waiting for her turn. However, when she got her turn, she hesitated and waited for 10 seconds trying to think of a good idea. When Pam looked at her, requesting a response by leaning her ear over to her, Anne kept silent for a little while. Then seeming embarrassed to speak out her idea, she spoke quietly to Pam’s ear with almost a blank face. She, like Ish in the first example, expressed the desire to become the same author as Julie. In socializing the children to become authors, the teacher not only use questions to elicit children’s idea and encourage them to be expressive of their own ideas, but also uses emotional remarks, facial expression, eye contact, and gestures to show imaginative ideas are preferred and creative authors are desirable. Such desire over creativity and imagination are socialized into the children, which are explicitly demonstrated by some children’s appropriation of other’s creative ideas, and suppression of their own “plain” ideas.
Although the core idea of documentation is to socialize children to become an author of their ideas, they don’t always have the chance to become an author depending on the timing of their participation. The interaction between teacher and individual child is at the center (see Figure 4). In other words, the teacher interacts with only one child at a time. Only the child whose turn is picked up by the teacher has the opportunity to become an author.

Figure 4. Teacher Interacts with Individual Child in Documentation

Excerpt 5.

1 IH: POP! ((looking at Pam))

2 AE: We can blow them. ((looking down at the clipboard))
3 PA: Ah oh, Ish said pop them. ((writing on the paper clipboard))
4 PA: Ah oh, Ish said pop them. ((writing on the paper clipboard))
5 JE: Blow. ((facing Pam))
6 PA: Jenna said blow them. ((writing on the paper clipboard))
7 AE: So do I. ((looking at the clipboard))
8 EW: in WATER! ((Turning his body and looking at Ms. Pam))
9 AE: I said blow them. ((looking at the clipboard))
10 PA: >What else can we do? < ((looking at Evan))
11 EW: Water. (/wOt@/) ((looking at the clipboard))
12 BR: water. (/wOt@r/) ((Pam continue looking at Evan))
13 PA: Put them in water? ((looking at Evan))
14 EW: ((nodded and looking at the clipboard))
15 PA: ((writing on the paper clipboard))
16 AN: [We can ((looking at Pam who is writing on the paper clipboard))
17 IS: [Poke them with water! ((looking at Pam who is writing writing on the clipboard))
18 PA: Hold on ((writing on the paper clipboard))

Evan said water; we can put them in water.

Overall, the teacher controls the interactional beginning and end. She decides who has the right to interact with her, and eventually becomes an author of his or her ideas. Such rigidity is largely due to the fact that she can’t speak with a child and write down his or her words at the same time. The right turn is often when the teacher indicates she has finished her writing of an idea, which is usually marked by her quoting of the
author’s word, like in line 13 of excerpt 1 she said “Ah oh, Ish said pop them”. That’s why Anne’s idea (line 12) is not picked up by the teacher and she was interpreted as interrupting Ish’s turn while Jenna’s idea (line 14) was picked up and interpreted as a beginning of a new turn. Those who talk during her writing are often not taken up, and sometimes put on hold (line 18, excerpt 5). Ms. Pam tried to finish writing down Evan’s idea and put Anne and Ish on hold. Interestingly, it seems beginning English language learners often are very sensitive to this level of interaction, and use multimodal resources to secure their turn with Ms. Pam, like Evan turned his body facing Pam, and spoke in a loud voice (line 1, excerpt 2). While those who speak English as a mother tongue like Anne or more advanced English learners like Ish can have their verbal quickness (line 9 and 10, excerpt 2) get in their way, jumping into a turn before the teacher finishes writing and starts a new turn. In order to become an author in the collaborative writing, a child not only needs to talk, but also what to talk, when to talk, and how to talk.

In general, the role of children as animators is separated and kept at a distance by the teacher who was writing in her private space on the clipboard. Only those who sit near are able to see the written form of English letters, words and sentences. The sitting position results in differentiating learning opportunities in terms of socializing the role of animator: Once Jia noticed the difference between printed letters and cursive letters and it was noted down by Ms. Pam.

Jun Jun notices me as I write down the conversation.
Jia: “You are making it not right. You are making a different English. Even my name.”
TJ: “Where is my name?”
Paula, printing Jia’s name: “When I write it like this it’s called printing your name. That’s how you know what the letters are, right?”
Paula, writing in cursive: “When I write like this, or even TJ’s name, it’s called
writing in cursive. See how the letters are kind of stuck together? You’ll learn that when you’re older.”
Jia: “Yep.”

(20110404 A conversation about rain)

4.3.2 Teacher-present free play-free writing.

In teacher directed circle time writing, the socialization process is more unidirectional: the teacher acts as the writing activity controller and uses various linguistic resources to socialize the children to become writers. In teacher-present free writing, the socialization process becomes bidirectional: children have more freedom initiating interaction with the teacher and actively engage the teacher in their writing activities. Such agency on the child’s part has to do with the teacher’s positioning: she acts as an equal participant rather than controller in writing activity; also she presents herself as an appreciative audience for the students’ writing and as a valuable resource for their writing needs.

![Diagram of Bidirectional Socialization in Teacher-Present Free Writing](image-url)

Figure 5. Bidirectional Socialization in Teacher-Present Free Writing
The following excerpts are taken from an interaction among Britney, the teaching assistant, Victor, Evan Wang and Evan Lang. In a warm afternoon in April, they were sitting facing each other at the writing table, writing and talking freely. Britney wore jeans that showed her knee and she joked about it with the children that she was not supposed to wear that. Her relationship with the children is very informal, relaxed and sometimes playful and humorous.

Excerpt 1: Let’s write “From Britney, To Evan Lang”.

20110422144007 00:18-01:48; translation in italics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Focal children</th>
<th>Non-focal children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BR-Britney-Teaching assistant</td>
<td>EL-Evan Lang-Chinese boy</td>
<td>VI-Victor-American boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EW-Evan Wang-Chinese boy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 BR: Don't DRAW on my paper ((to Evan Wang and took back her paper))
2 EW: .hh ((look under the table for his doggie))
3 BR: Here is your dog. ((gave the doggie to Evan Wang))
4 EW: Thanks. ((took the doggie and put it on the table))
6 BR: What are you writing, Evan? (( to Evan Lang))
7 EL: This is for you. ((gave his paper to Britney))
8 BR: This is for me? What's that (. ) What they said? ((looking at Evan Lang))
9 EW: No ((lifted his hand to stop VI))

MINE This is ME ((took the paper clipboard from the table))
10 BR: HERE, Victor.

You cut on that paper (.) Victor’s paper.     ((gave Victor a piece of paper))

11 EW:                           ((scratched on BR's paper))

12 BR: DON'T do that, Evan, that's not OK.   ((holding EW's arm and looking at him))

This is MY picture.

13 EW: .hh

14 BR: Can you write your name on it? ((giving the paper to Evan Lang and pointed to it))

((paper fell onto the floor, EW laughed))

15 EL:                           ((picked up the paper and wrote B on the paper))

16 EW:                           ((draw a waved line on the paper))

LOOK

17 BR: What's that, Evan?     ((to Evan Wang))

18 EW: WATER(:)              ((/wOt@/)) ((looking up at Britney))

19 BR: Water?                ((/wOt@r/)) ((looking at Evan Wang))

20 EL: Hey, your name.

.hh                        ((giving the paper to Britney))

21 BR: That is a B, good job, Evan. Here.     ((writing “Britney” on the paper))

Here, let's write "To: Britney, From: Evan Lang"     ((writing “To: From: Evan L.”))

((Evan Lang and Evan both looking at the paper))

BR:                                                   ((Showed the paper to Evan Lang))

22 EW:                                              ((bent over on to examine Britney’s writing))

23 EL: 別擦掉哦               ((Please don't erase it))   ((to Evan Wang))
Here I will focus on Evan Lang’s interaction with Britney to demonstrate the bidirectional socialization process. At the beginning, Britney showed her interest by asking him what he was writing. Rather than giving her a straightforward answer, Evan Lang turned Britney into the audience and recipient of his writing: He told her it was for her and gave her the paper. Britney realized it was a “gift”, and she acted as an appreciative audience and asked him further what his message was, eliciting Evan’s (the author) idea. Evan Lang didn’t have a chance to answer because his turn was interrupted. Britney had to deal with Evan Wang and Victor’s conflict over writing paper. Then Britney provided further guidance for Evan Lang to become a good author of a gift note by asking him to put his name on it. She was socializing him the specific format of a gift note genre, which is always signed by the sender. Evan Lang did try writing a name on the gift note, but it was the name of the addressee rather than the sender: he wrote B on his paper and waited for his turn to talk with Britney. Later Evan Lang resumed his turn by calling Britney into attention and showed her the name he wrote. Britney first praised him for the writing: That’s a B, good job, Evan. Then she provided a model of the format for writing a gift note:

To: Britney
From: Evan L.

And Evan Lang is very happy about what he has achieved together with Britney’s help and support. He viewed it as something very important and told Evan Wang not to erase it, who was at the time observing the writing on the paper.
In this excerpt, well aware of the teacher’s role as an appreciative audience of his writing, Evan Lang initiated a meaningful interaction between the teacher and himself by sending the teacher a gift note while the teacher guided him to write and finally modeled for him the right format of a gift note. The teacher and the child become co-authors of the gift note.

Not only the children take advantage of the teacher’s role as an appreciative audience and use writing to engage the teacher in meaningful interaction, they also regarded the teachers as a valuable resource, from whom they can learn what they want to learn. In the socialization process, children are always actively choosing what to learn from whom (Pontecorvo, Fasulo & Sterponi, 2001). The following excerpt happened between Evan Wang and Britney. Watching Britney writing name for Evan Lang, Evan Wang showed interest in writing his own name too. This part shows how Evan Wang, despite his beginning level of English language, managed to engage Britney in a good learning experience, who was caring and willing to figure out Evan Wang’s intention.

*Excerpt 2: Hey (.) name.*
1  EW: Eh. (Pointed his pencil at his paper several times))

2  BR: Can you draw milk?   (pointed at Evan Wang’s paper))

3  EW: .hh Eh, eh.  ((looking at Britney, laughing, wielding his pencil in the air))

4  BR: Can you draw a dog?  (pointed at Evan Wang’s paper))

5  EW: Eh, eh.  (looking at Britney, smiling, and shaking his head))

6  BR: Can you draw a (. )

    Ish, PLEASE get off Linda, that is not ok.

    You need to get your glasses on, too, please.  (turning around))

7  IH: I can't find it

8  BR: Go over there (. ) in the block (. ) (pointing at the block area))

    In the bottom block, for the secure (corp)

9  EW:  ((took a short pencil from the basket, snatched Britney’s pencil and gave her the
    short one))

10  EW: Hey,  ((touched BR's leg with his pencil))

     Hey (. ) name  ((scribbling movement on the paper with his pencil))

11  BR:  my name?

12  EW:  (noded))

13  BR: My name is Britney

14  EW: No, MY name ((patted on his own chest and nodded))

15  BR: Your name is Evan

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16 EW: ((lowered his head and moved his pencil on the paper))
17 BR: You wanna to write your name? ((moving her paper closer to Evan Wang))
18 EW: ((Looking at Britney’s paper))
19 BR: E, ((wrote E on her paper and Evan Wang watched her))
20 Ok(:) ((quickly pointed to Evan's paper))
21 EW: ((Wrote E on his paper))
22 BR: Ok
23 BR: V(:) ((wrote V on her paper next to E horizontally and Evan watched her))
24 EW: V ((wrote V on his paper next to E vertically and Britney watched him))
25 BR: Oh, you are going to do it like that.
        Ok, good job.
        A(:) ((wrote A on her paper))
26 EW: A ((wrote A on his paper))
27 BR: N ((wrote N on her paper))
28 EW: N ((wrote N on his paper))
29 BR: W ((wrote W on her paper))
30 EW: W ((wrote W on his paper))
31 BR: ((wrote dot on her paper))
32 EW: ((wrote dot on his paper))
33 BR: good job! ((smiling at Evan Lang))
34 EW: 我能咧！ ((I can!))
35 BR: Or you can do it A, W (.) A ((wrote A on her paper))
36 BR: Victor, that's not paper ((took away the wooden block Victor wrote on))

Here, color on here, color on here, ok? ((gave Victor a piece of paper))

37 BR: N, another N ((wrote N on her paper))

38 EW: ((wrote N on his paper))

39 BR: and then a G ((wrote G on her paper))

40 EW: ((wrote G on his paper))

41 BR: Evan Wang, ((Running her pencil quickly over the name on her paper))

42 EW: Evan Wang, ((Looking at Britney’s paper, smiling))

At the very beginning, Evan Wang tried to convey his intention via body language by pointing his pencil on the paper. Britney thought he wanted to draw something for her to look at and asked him several questions: Can you draw milk? Can you draw a dog? Then he drew her attention, and used sporadic words “name”. Britney at first didn’t get his meaning, and followed with a guess “my name?” Evan Lang nodded and Britney told him her name was Britney. Evan Wang clarified it was not her name but his name. Britney still had no clue of his intention and told him his name is Evan. Then Evan made a last attempt by mimicking scribbling movements on his paper and Britney finally figured out he wanted to write his name. After figuring out his intent, she modeled each letter, and read them out as she wrote. Britney wrote E on her paper and Evan Wang watched; Britney pronounced E and pointed to Evan Wang’s paper, Evan Wang sounded out E and wrote E on his paper. As she taught a child how to write his name, she also read it for him and the child followed her and repeated the sound. Reading out helped his writing in a way that sound and letter have certain connections, a feature that is important
in English early reading and writing acquisition (McGee & Richgels, 2008). The process went on until they finished writing Evan Wang’s name by adding a dot following W. Britney praised him for a second time he did a good job, and Evan Wang exclaimed in Chinese “Now I can!”

Children initiate socialization process by asking questions and engage in “discourse-based (symbolic) social interaction” to expand their knowledge (Pontecorvo, Fasulo & Sterponi, 2001, P. 342). This is especially true with Evan Wang’s interaction with Britney. In terms of learning, Evan Wang took the initiative to start the learning process and employs different means to get his message across: body contact, hand movement, eye gaze and the few English words he knew. And Britney was very patient with him trying to figure out his intent. Since Evan Wang mostly used his body language, and a few words, she asked different questions to guess the child’s intent. The learning occurring later was because both parties worked together. The child expressed the learning interest, and request for help; the teacher figured out what the child needed and provided encouragement and assistance. In socializing the child to become a writer, the teacher is also socialized by the child to become a teacher of writing: she has learned to interpret English language learners’ intention through their multimodal resources, a combination of few words, frequent eye contact, and many body movements and gestures.

4.3.3 Peer free play.

In peer free play, children have the opportunity to experience same-status interaction (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1986). They are removed temporarily from the teacher-student relationship in the classroom. Young children are very sensitive of such
differentiating status and role in their environment. The first day I entered the class, Evan Lang asked me a question: Are you a teacher or a mother? In peer interaction, they can take on a variety of roles, and sometimes appropriate the teacher’s role. For the Chinese children, they have another role to be set free in their peer play-the Chinese speaker, and writer.

Evan Lang and Evan Wang often play a game of writing books. They take turns to ask each other questions and write down each other’s ideas in their journal book. It seems they have appropriated the teacher’s way of documentation during circle time. In teacher’s documentation, children are authors and the teacher is the animator. While in their book writing, they each take turns to be the animator and author. In the interaction below, they initially wrote letters and drew individually on a piece of paper and later Evan Lang proposed to write their books. Then they wrote in a cooperative way, taking turns asking each other what they are going to do in future and writing down the other’s answers in the journal book.

*Excerpt 1: 你问我吧 (You ask me).*

Photo 2. You Ask Me.
20110520160556 00:59-02:30

Evan Wang-EW; Evan Lang-EL; translations in italics.
1 EL: 你问我吧

EL: Can you ask me?

2 EW: 嗯？

EW: Eh?

3 EL: 你问我吧,你问我
4 EW: 哈哈

EL: Can you ask me? You ask me.
EW: .hh

((drawing on the table))

EL: .hh

((looking at Evan Wang

5 EL: 哈哈

What are you drawing?

drawing on the table))

你在画什么呢？
6 EW: 桌子

EW: Table

7 EL: 你在画什么呢？

EL: What are you drawing?

8 EW: 我在画一个家，破了

EW: I am drawing a house falling

((waving circles on the

down. Hurricane is coming, look.

table))

龙卷风来了，你看.

You will wipe it off?

你擦呀
9 EL:
10 EW:

EL:

((wiping it off))

EW:

((draw more lines on the
table))

11 EL: 我不擦了
EL: I won’t wipe any more
我让你画，我不擦了
12 EW: 你以后以后以后以

I let you draw; I won’t wipe any more
EW: What will you do in the future

后以后以后以后要干嘛？

((looking at Evan Lang))

future future future future future
future?

13 EL:

EL:
我以后以后以后以后,

我以后要大人，可是我

((writing down the
In the future future future future

question))

future, I will become adult in the

((looking at Evan Wang))

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future. And I will go to school in the future future future, and then I will die.

EW: Then what will you, what will you do if you could live only for one more day?

EL: I will study.

EW: Eh.

EL: I am going to sleep; I am going to sleep late in the morning.

EL: Ok.

EW: Eh,

EL: EH,

EW: I... Sleeping late in the morning should be drawn like this.

EL: You can’t, I will have to change to another chapter

EL: You can’t, I will have to change to another chapter

EW: My chapter changed too.
Evan Lang initiated the writing play, asking Evan Wang to ask him questions. Evan Wang took the role of animator first and asked Evan Lang what he was going to do in the remotest future by using “seven futures”. Evan Lang first wrote down the question by making a few writing movements from left to right, leaving a few curved lines on the journal book. Then he answered: he is going to become an adult, and then go to school, and then die. Evan Wang probably found that long list hard to write down and asked him again by limiting the future to one day: what are you going to do if you could live only one more day? Evan Lang answered quickly and briefly: I am going to study. Evan Wang then bent over his journal and wrote two lines, two pretend words in the first line and three in the second line. Compared with teacher directed circle time documentation, the relationship between the animator and author is more negotiated: in order for the author to give concise ideas, the animator or elicitor also needs to reframe his question. Then it’s Evan Lang’s turn to ask question and become an animator. He asked Evan Wang what he was going to do in the remotest future by using “six futures”. Evan Wang became an author and answered he was going to sleep, and to sleep very late in the morning. Evan Lang said ok and bent over his journal and making lines and dots representing Evan Wang’s idea. After that, they started another round of questions and answers with a new question: what are you going to do next next Friday? In this way, they sustain the writing activity on both sides: writing in their individual book of each other’s ideas.

In their documentation writing, not only do they take on the roles of both animator and author, they are also able to display their non-school roles of being a child, letting loose and being silly. They are writers of their own daily life and about their daily doings, like going to school and sleeping late in the morning. Moreover, they have the
opportunity to explore their role of Chinese speaker and writer. The default language during mixed group play is English; but here they can speak Chinese as they want, and write Chinese as they want. Their talk in Chinese constitutes the content of children’s writing, and also moves their writing forward. Peer play provides room for the children actively explore their shared bilingual and biliterate resources, namely knowledge of oral and written modes of both English and Chinese.

4.3.4 Enriching text environment.

This section talks about how the text environment in the class works as textual and functional models for children. The overall setting in the class is creative, print-rich and full of visual images, like pictures, paintings and graphs. They are all at the height of the children. Such setting provides them with many learning opportunities through exploring the environment they live in. They serve as textual model and demonstrate the different functions of writings. It’s true that form and function are blended together. And textual model also has certain functions, too. I chose to separate them out for the ease of discussion.

Textual models.

The environment provides textual models for both letters and numbers.
Firstly, Children’s paintings signed with their names are displayed on large opening areas around the class. One of the popular spots is the glass wall near the exit door to the playground. Before going outside during morning or afternoon outside play hours, children will sit on the “I am ready” bench in a line and the teacher will run the roster, calling out their names one by one and check their name on the form. Children usually play with each other at the bench and very often they talk about the paintings on the window. Often they recognize their own paintings and their names on the painting. Gradually, they are able to “read” each other’s names by connecting the sound with the form. Teachers also help them or check their knowledge of each other’s names by pointing to the letters on the paintings. Paintings like this serve as natural materials that
help them recognize the written form of different letters. They learned not only to read their own names but also their friends’ names and finally, the alphabet.

Secondly, aside from letters, children also have models for numbers displayed around the class. There is a timer on the wall right beside the teacher’s center. The timer is used frequently in the class as an indicator of the beginning or the end of an activity. The teacher set a timer for five or ten minutes and then when the time rings, the children are expected to stop the activity in progress and start a new one. Usually, it is used for cleaning up. As Ann said in the interview:

“When it's clean up time, we usually give him first 5 minutes. We say we give him a warning, like after five minutes, the bell is gonna ring and we are gonna clean up. So we did not just catch them off guard: it's clean up time, everybody leave everything. When you give them five minutes, they know: they have five minutes left until clean up, so finish your idea or if you wanna to save your idea we can save it somewhere else because we're gonna be cleaning. And then we ring the bell or set the alarm, set the timer, on five minutes. And when the five minutes, when the timer goes on, that means guys let’s clean up now; let's clean up.” (Ms. Ann interview 20110613135622)

Children can also have a chance to set a timer, on a turn-taking basis. They set the timer and turn it off when it runs. Sometimes the children are very curious about how it works and once Ms. Pam taught Jia how to use the timer. Older children in the class are able to read the clock and the timer, like Jia and Jenna. Numbers around the room give them a daily model for them to read and use the numbers in a meaningful way.

*Functions of writing.*

Aside from the textual models in forms of letters and numbers, the texts around the class also demonstrate the functions of different types of writing. By examining the six fundamental factors in verbal communication (Figure 6), Jakobson (1960) identified
six basic functions of language (Figure 7). The two figures correspond to each other with each factor determining a different function of language. Such a correspondence is not to say that there is only one function for an utterance, but that one function predominates given its verbal structure.

![Figure 6. Six Factors in Verbal Communication](Adopted from Jakobson, 1960)

![Figure 7. Six Functions of Verbal Communication](Adopted from Jakobson, 1960)
As we can see in Figure 6, the six factors in verbal communication are the addressee, the addresser, the message, the context or the referent the message referred to, the contact or the channel sustaining the communication, and the code in which the communication is carried out.

Corresponding to the six factors, we can see in Figure 7 the emotive function is oriented towards the addresser, focusing on the speaker’s attitude in a message. The conative function is oriented towards the addressee, emphasizing the impact of an utterance. The poetic function “focuses on the message for its own sake” (Jakobson, 1960, p. 356), like verbal art. Oriented towards the context, the referential function highlights real world information in the message. The phatic function emphasizes that a message serves primarily as a way to sustain communication. The metalingual function is when a message is oriented towards the code itself.

Following Jakobson (1960), the functions of writing in this classroom include: referential, conative and phatic.

Firstly, one important function writing serves in this class is to convey information about real world or referential function. In Table 5, we can see a form (picture 1) listing what children have eaten every day. Number 1 is for milk, 2 for mac & cheese, 3 for pear and 4 for tropical fruits. The numbers besides each name represent what the child has eaten for each meal. For example, the first child on the form eats only 1 and 4, and that is milk and tropical fruits. This form is posted on the glass window near the entrance door for the parents to see what their children have eaten in a day. It is informative, communicating children’s meal information. Sometimes, children learn to read what the numbers refer to and talk about the food they have eaten.
Another example of writing serving referential functions is that it can also be a narrative. The family pictures with names and time written on them tell stories about each child and their family (picture 2). For example, Jenna’s pictures told a story about her visit to grandparents in China and also her visit to the zoo with her parents. And another story was created on March 5th, 2010 (picture 3). The writings combined with pictures and forms showed how the children and teachers counted the number of different blocks in the class. They first sorted and stacked the blocks, then they counted the number of each type of blocks, and finally they wrote numbers and letters on the graph, which demonstrated the result of their counting project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referential</td>
<td>Communicating information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling a story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. The Referential Function of Writing
Secondly, writing in this class also performs conative function. In other words, writing that is primarily aimed to impact its reader’s behavior or emotion. For example (see Table 6), on the door to bathroom there is a stop sign (picture 4) posted both in English and in Chinese. It tells the children not to go into the room without teacher’s permission. It regulates children’s behavior.

Another example of writing serving a conative function is that printed materials are used for personal leisure, like books and magazines. They read picture books individually or together. Jenna reads very often. So does Evan Lang. When children read together, they often talk with each other about the prints. It is very interesting to see the children read magazines for adults, like Times. Since they can not read the words, mostly they are reading the pictures and enjoying exploring the grown-up world. There was also a Chinese picture book in the class for young children to learn Chinese Pinyin and Chinese Characters. Jia and Evan Lang once “read” it together. Since Jia was able to point to the Pinyin on the upleft corner of the page and “read” correctly, like “Shizi” for 柿子 (shizi, persimmon), I thought he could read Pinyin. However, later on his mother told me that he was only memorizing the pictures. Jia “read” most pictures correctly. Evan Lang mostly read wrong, and “read” out make-up sounds like “marou lala”. Nonetheless, they were familiarizing themselves with the sound and form of the Chinese language system.
Thirdly, in this class writing can be phatic, serving as a channel to sustain communication. Two examples are shown here (Table 7). In picture 7, the students were asked to guess the results of different things they put in the sensory table with water: what do you think will sink? What do you think will float? And the teacher marked their answers by writing checks in the corresponding column. It serves as an interactive medium between the teachers and the children. In this sense, the form is more like a survey, gathering children’s opinions and making a record.

Picture 8 shows writing can be used as a medium for play. The teachers wrote letters from children’s names and glued them on the coconut tree. Then they played the
game: chica chica boom boom, will there be enough room? For __ and __ up the coco nut tree? This kinds of game exploration of letters left a deep impression on the children. When Jenna saw this picture in February 2012, half a year after the study finished, she remembered the game very well and told her friend “oh, the chica chica boom boom, I remember that”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phatic</td>
<td>Creating interaction with others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. The Phatic Function of Writing

In this text-enriching environment, children experience different functions of writing. They relate writing as important, entertaining, informative, diverse, and creative. They are exposed to a variety of genres like a form, a story, a survey, a graph, a game and a map. All these positive associations they develop with writing are essential steps in their future development of writing.
4.3.5 Children’s own exploration of writing forms, genres, and functions.

In free play, children are given space to freely explore their roles as a writer, including animator and author. As an animator, they have the chance to experiment with different writing tools, and materials. As an author, they also have the freedom to experiment with writing forms to communicate their meanings.

A wide choice in writing materials.

Interacting with objects is an important way for children in this class to gain knowledge of their own. In the classroom, children were provided a wide choice of writing tools. The paper can be of different qualities and sizes for different purposes, like paper for water coloring, copy paper for writing, a torn piece of paper for individual scribbling, an oversized wall paper for group art project. They also have a range of pens to choose from: colored pens, markers, crayons. They are intended for a wider purpose than just for writing, like crafting, making airplanes, etc. However, they can all be used for writing by the children. Such freedom in choice is necessary to meet the different interests of the children.

Drawing and writing.

In this class, it can difficult to tell writing from drawing. And sometimes the teachers use “draw” and “write” interchangeably. And very often the children use symbolic writing to convey their meaning. They are also known as “representational drawings”, which are “intentionally constructed and look something like the object or person the child-drawer intends to create” (McGee & Richgels, 2008, p. 36). Writing at this premature stage can be seen as “self-expression” (Chan & Louie, 1993, p. 98)
For instance, Evan Wang used a waved line on top and a linear line at the bottom to represent “water”.

In Evan’s representational drawing of water, he showed a creative symbol of water: waved lines represent the rippling surface of water and bottom line shows the boundary of the body of water. He did a couple of different representational drawings of water, a waved line on the left top corner, a waved line with a round line on left bottom corner, and a narrowed version of waved line with a linear bottom line on the right side. He seems to experiment different ways to represent the water image in his mind. For him, writing or drawing is symbolic of real world objects, which has certain visual features.

Another more elaborated representational writing is done by Evan Lang. One day he showed me a drawing from his journal book and said “rain”.

Photo 3. Water
Rain was represented by circular lines on top of each other and the dots among them, which is vivid to the readers, conjuring an image of storm with clouds, wind and pouring rain. Aside from representing rain, it also had to do with what was going on in terms of the social events. For this particular case, it had to do with the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011. In the following month of April, children’s drawing of rain, earthquake, and house falling down was a recurrent theme. Very often after they draw a few lines, they would say “look, earthquake”. This is referred to as “romance representations”, which are “unintentional marks that a child later names” (McGee & Richgels, 2008, p. 36).

In writing, children use multiple resources from both in and out of school. It is one of the many activities children relate to their daily life at school. They try to represent real life objects and events creatively in a symbolic way.
Pretend gift note.

In exploring the different forms of writing, children also actively explore the diverse functions of writing. Children’s symbolic drawings are expressive of their own ideas. Here I want to focus on their exploration of writing as an interactional tool, communicating a message to someone else in or out of the classroom.

One of the children’s favorites is writing letters or gift cards. The picture below is a gift sent by Evan Lang to Evan Wang. They were writing and drawing together at the sensory table and sending pretending gifts—pieces of paper—to each other.

On the left top corner in the first line he wrote some “mock letters” (Clay, 1975) and his own name, which means it was sent from Evan Lang. Mock letters are symbols look like alphabet letters and include many letter features like vertical and horizontal lines (Lavine, 1977). On the second line to the right side he wrote Evan W., which means it was sent to Evan Wang. In the body part, he wrote many “L” and some lines to represent the gift. We can see he was well aware of the “text format” (McGee & Richgels,
2008, p. 15) or visual features of a gift card. The form of the card reflects Evan Lang’s concepts about a gift card, including a sender, addressee, and body.

**Numbers on map.**

This part shows an example of children’s writing being informative. Evan Lang, Jiajia and Britney were sitting at the table drawing maps of their homes and schools. As they finished their map, Evan Lang and Jia wrote their apartment number on it, 3188 and 2613 and showed them to me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jiajia’s map</th>
<th>Jiajia’s home number 3188</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Jiajia's map image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Jiajia's home number image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evan Lang’s map</th>
<th>Evan Lang’s home number 2613</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Evan Lang's map image" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Evan Lang's home number image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Numbers on Map
Letters for play.

Very interestingly, the children are able to use writing imaginatively in their free play.

20110902150336 00:03-01:15

Evan Wang: EW; Evan Lang: EL; translation in italics

Photo 6. Letters for Play

1 EW: 这个是 ABCDEFG. EW: This is ABCDEFG ((pointing to the letters on paper, singing out))
我告诉你 I tell you
你的车要认识这个歌, Your car needs to recognize the song.
(给我) (to give me)
ABCDEFG (pointing his finger to the letters, singing out))
知道吗 You understand? (gave the piece of card to Evan Lang and walked away))

2 EL: ABCDEFG EL: ABCDEFG ((pointing his red car to each letter, singing out))
At the beginning, Evan Wang demonstrated to Evan Lang how to use the script to teach the car to recognize and read the letter song. Then Evan Lang followed him and let four of his cars sing the song. In this scene, they were using written letters for the purpose of play. This is very different from their use of writing in the previous examples, which are mainly for communicating information.
With their beginning writing level, it is amazing to see the many functions they use writing to perform: personal, interactional, informative and imaginative. They write to express their ideas, to communicate messages, to inform others around and to play games.

Summarizing children’s own exploration of writing forms and functions, we can see in this class they make meaning and convey meaning through a combination of drawings, mock letters and letters. In addition, the children in this class are well aware of the communicative function of writing. They become versatile consumers, and producers of different forms of writing in this class. Free writing affords them plenty opportunities to explore and express themselves in different forms of writing, using multiple sources from both in and out of school. Even before they are able to write conventional letters, words, sentences, they are able to write to communicate and to play. In their exploration, writing is symbolic, semiotic, and multifunctional.

To conclude, the different kinds of play in the class allow for multiple socializing processes: unidirectional, bidirectional, and peer socialization as well as self-exploration. Children are socialized to become mainly authors, but also animator and consumer of writings and use writing to achieve a variety of communicative functions.

4.4 Discussion

After discussing how young children learn to write through play. This section will look at the types of writers and learners they are socialized to become.
4.4.1 Becoming a culturally specific writer.

I will talk about the cultural meanings of becoming a writer, focusing on beliefs about early writing, and the relationship between writing and speaking, and the relationship between writing and reading.

What is early writing?

Early writing has different forms and functions in this class.

Firstly, early writing is both nonconventional and conventional. As discussed earlier in children’s exploration of writing forms, child’s writing in this class is more than just conventional writing of letters or words. It is much closer to anything a child can do with a pen or pencil—making lines, dots, circles. All the scribbling and doodling are counted as beginning writing skills. We have seen their symbolic writings, mock letters, pretended writing. Nonconventional writing allows space for children to explore various writing forms. They are valued as much as conventional writing. This gives the child the sense of becoming a capable writer before they really have the skills, which Cazden (1981) referred to as “performance before competence”. Teachers believe it is beneficial for a child to build their confidence. They also see it as a developmental stage necessary for them working on physical skills of controlling writing materials. Eventually, children are expected to develop conventional skills as writing letters and basic words by the end of preschool, as Ms. Ann mentioned:

“You see the progress during the year: when they start and when they end, and you see that all. Yes, they are learning; they are ready to go to kindergarten. Yes, they know the letters; yes, they know the color, all the color, the alphabet; they know the number, until 20, from 1 to 20.” (Ms. Ann interview 20110613133500)
Secondly, early writing is communicative and multifunctional. Children not only learn different forms of writing, they also learn their functions. Writing has a purpose beyond itself, like the questions Britney asked about Evan Lang’s writing: What they say? What’s the message? People want to see the message from children’s writing. The text environment models a variety of functions writing performs. In their free play, children also show a strong sense of writing being functional: a gift note, a map, and song lyrics etc.

Thirdly, children are encouraged to develop a strong sense of ownership of their writing. The forms and functions are very much a personal product, whether it is gained through individual exploration or peer play or teacher scaffold play. The name activities they do with writing also contribute to this because by signing their names, the drawing or writing becomes something he owns.

*Write and talk.*

In this class, writing and talking closely relate to each other. In the teacher support and child support section, we can see how the teacher models writing as conversation as written down, and how teacher and peer talk helps elaborate meaning in writing. Teachers’ questions made children give a meaning to their doodling. Also there is a moving forward of the story line as they talk and write. Talking about the drawings or writings not only gives meaning to it, but also elaborates the meanings in it. Given the close connection between children’s writing and their talk, it is very difficult to make meaning of their symbolic writing without accompanying recording of their talk.

One thing worth noting is children’s use of Chinese oral language in writing activities. The children in this class speak Chinese very often, especially the two Chinese
boys. Many factors come into play in child’s language choice: the types of class activities, the structuring of class activities, the class norm and culture, and the number of Chinese children, as well as gender. What does this mean for their learning of writing? It would be a main drawback if we see it in a monolingual way. Literature has shown that children speaking another language are at a disadvantage because of their lack of oral vocabulary and oral comprehension, which are believed vital for a child to comprehend books and write compositions (McGee & Richgels, 2008). However, if we look at it from a bilingual perspective, we can see in this class speaking Chinese promotes their writing in English. The close relationship between talk and write enabled them to take advantage of their mother tongue to sustain their writing activity and also elaborate the meanings of their writing. In other words, they are participating in the classroom English writing practices using both languages. Such hybrid practices raise questions for language socialization in this class, and language socialization studies as well: what is the appropriate language of use in the class, and when?

*Read and write.*

In the preschool class, reading and writing are connected to each other in more than one way. In the enriching text environment, children learn to read different writing genres including forms, poem, graphs, and narratives. They familiarize themselves with the different formats and functions of writings in their context. In the group story reading time, children are being read to and develop an idea about prints of being entertaining, enjoyable and highly valued. The same is true with their own exploration of picture books and magazines.
To sum up, in this class, the children are socialized to become a writer who write both non-conventionally and conventionally, who write to achieve multiple communicative functions, who are expected to develop a strong sense of ownership for their writing, who write about what they talk and talk about what they write, who reads and being read to daily. They become active consumers and producers of different writings in the class.

4.4.2 Becoming a culturally specific learner.

This section discusses the complex learning beliefs embedded in this class, and also examines the specific cultural parameters of becoming an age-appropriate learner by focusing on characteristics of the adult-child relationship in this class.

Learning writing as a cognitive and social activity.

Firstly, in this class writing is seen as a cognitive activity. It is part of the child’s inborn ability just the same as their other physical abilities, like walking, running, touching or seeing. That’s why writing activities in this class are very child-oriented and based on each child’s interest. As long as a child is provided proper opportunities, it will develop by itself. They don’t have to write similarly, or take the same process. Writing is each child’s inborn ability, and each child has their own way to develop it. On the one hand, child can figure out writing language system through their own exploration with writing, no matter how unconventional it looks like at the beginning. On the other hand, writing or drawing with pens are signs of children’s cognitive development and more importantly it promotes their cognitive development. It views writing and drawing as a way to “organize and conceptualize the world” the child lives in (Appendix 1).
very much Piagetian way of conceptualizing children’s exploration with objects, and writing activities too.

Secondly, learning writing is also seen as a social activity. Children learn through interaction with people around. Adult and peers provide support for their learning. I will talk more about this side of learning later in the discussion of adult-child relationship.

Learning in this class has both its cognitive and social side. What happens in the class is not guided only by one educational philosophy, we can see traces of Piaget’s idea of child learning and Vygotsky’s idea, too. The classroom is more like a multilayered learning context, where things worked in different historical period leave traces to the teachers’ mind and to the school curriculum. At one historical point, one philosophy may seem more prominent, either in practice or in documents; but in practice, we can see different layers of practices and the beliefs behind them when we examine daily routines in the class closely.

*Adult-child relationship in this class.*

This is a child-centered class, and the child’s interest is highly valued. This section summarizes the relationship revealed in different learning opportunities discussed earlier.

Firstly, in collective writing, the teacher staged the activity based on children’s interest and came up with the guiding question “what can you do with bubbles?” In the process, the child gave their own responses, and the teacher acted as an appreciative audience and wrote down their answers. Sometimes she helped the child clarify her ideas by asking further questions or rephrase their idea. The enthusiasm she showed in the process conveyed a message to each child that their ideas were important and valued.
They are socialized to become authors. A close-up look at the data shows creative and imaginative authors are favored. Since the teacher can’t write and talk at the same time, not all children have the chance to become authors. Their turns may be put on hold or ignored. The interaction is very much teacher-controlled, and the socialization process is more unidirectional.

The socialization process becomes more bidirectional during teacher present free play. The teacher let the child take control of what kind of help they need while she presented herself as an appreciate audience and a resource. She asked the child questions to make sure of the kind of help the child need, like the guessing of Evan Wang’s mind. Then she would provide help accordingly. The children had more freedom initiating interaction with the teacher and seeked the help they needed. One thing particular about multiparty talk in free play is that it often causes competition among child. They must not only be able to take the initiative in starting conversation with the teacher to learn what interests them. And for beginning English language learners, that could be more difficult because a large proportion of communication still relies on body language. Moreover, they sometimes need to learn to hold their turn, Evan Lang was interrupted several time in his turn by other children. He had to wait for the turn to be resumed by the teacher or by himself. It can be challenging for both the teacher and the child to sustain the learning process in multiparty activities. Individualized scaffolding would require more teachers and one-on-one learning opportunities. In addition to be an initiator and a sustainer, children also learn as observers watching the teacher interact with other children.

Thirdly, in children’s free play where they explore various forms and functions of writing, the teacher’s role is more indirect or absent. They are providers of materials like
pens, paper, and documents. Other than that, children are expected to actively explore by themselves. They have the chance to experience same-status play with their peers.

The children’s individuality is valued and the desirable learner characters in this class are imaginative, creative and expressive of their ideas, initiating interaction with the teacher and peers, and active in exploring the material environment.

Given the above discussion, the two main characters of teacher-child relationship is (1) The teach-child relationship is teacher listen, child talk; (2) The interaction between the teacher and individual child at the center. What are valued in the class are individual child’s personal ideas.

Such emphasis on individuality in the classroom can be related to larger societal patterns of individualism in American society. Hofstede (2001) classified America as a small power distance individualistic nation, where ties between individuals are comparatively loose and individuals need to look after him or herself and his or her immediate family only. The classroom is a microcosm of how individuality is materialized in the classroom child-centered philosophy, classroom idea-based activities; individual authorship focused writing practices, and dyadic adult-child interaction.
Though individuality is the focus in the class, there is also an emerging effort on forming a sense of groupness among the children. The ties among the children are made closer. Ms. Pam’s interview:

“I think the trick to that is Ann and I work really hard to create a real sense of family and community in our group; so when one child loses sth. we have a mystery, Julie lost her shoes, can we help find her shoes, can we help her? And we all stop whatever we are doing and help each other, and sometimes when sb. is hurt, everybody come and look, let us help her feel better, because we are all one family. I like to do large group activities, because that helps our whole sense of; if you notice the art work in our classroom, it one big piece of art, instead of each individual piece; though it is important to do their each individual art work because they can be more creative and show their own creative expression that way; I also think it is really important to do big group mural type of things because we all work together because we are all one big happy family and we made this and it belongs to us and we did it together, all of us.”

(Ms. Pam interview 20110617132110)
4.5 Home-Preschool Connection in Writing Practices

In this part, I will discuss parents’ beliefs and practices about children’s writing at home, and their understanding of and reactions towards the school philosophy of learning through play.

4.5.1 What do parents believe and do about English writing?

The parents show some similar beliefs and practices about English writing at home. While at the same time they differ from each other in terms of parenting style.

*Evan Wang.*

Evan Wang’s parents felt that, since their son doesn’t speak much English yet, they didn’t expect him to write. It may come later for Evan Lang given the fact that he returned to America half a year ago after almost 2 years stay in China.

For them, learning writing in English starts with letters. Once they taught their son to write letters, asking him to copy letters. It was not very effective. Evan Wang’s parents stopped doing that and think it is better to let him take his own learning course.

Forcing him is not going to work. He takes his own course. He studies when it is time and when he sees other children study (at school). (Evan Wang parents interview 20110616)

他不是压迫出来的，他是自然而然的，自己知道学了，看别人学了，就学了。
And they feel happy about their child’s progress at school since now Evan started
to tell them the letters he learned at school.

_Evan Lang._

Evan Lang’s mom seems to observe her son’s progress in learning writing very
closely. She recalled her son’s obsession with letters one time. And also written form
matters for her.

In terms of learning, Evan’s mom feels Evan is very lucky for not having to go
through the fierce competition young children face in China. However, she also stressed
even if it were in China, she would not be so “严格” (yan, strict). Literally 严格(yan, strict)
means strict. It is an adjective that can be used to describe a mother (严格母, yan mu), a
father (严格父 yan fu) or a teacher(严格师 yan shi), an image of somebody who puts high
standards on a child and enforce them very strictly. She feels study will come naturally
when the child grows up as long as he has the attitude. It has to do with her learning
experiences back in China.

When I was young, no one pushed me. My parents were very open and let me
take my own course. Even though they do not push me, I remembered when I
reach a certain age, I want to please my parents, or I feel study is something I
should do. I feel Feifei is doing fine in this respect. He is not the kind of child
who always wants to have his wills. Rather he has a sense of responsibility: he
knows when to do the right thing. He is reasonable. (Evan Lang mom interview
20110715)

在国内我也是比较懒散的家长, 不会 push 学他什么, 我小时候也没有人
push 我, 我妈我爸比较宠啊, 顺其自然这种。而且我觉得不被 push, 自己
小时候就有那个印象, 小孩 到一定年龄会有责任感的, 就是他让家长高兴
些呀, 或者自己觉得学习是一个就是比较应该做的事情，我觉得飞飞这方面
应该还行，不是放任自己的那种小孩，他有一定的责任感，什么时候什么样
做是对的啊，他不泼皮不赖。
Jenna Li.

Jenna writes English letters at home. Jenna’s mom told me at the very beginning for English writing, she gave Jenna a piece of paper and let her draw, and write English letters. Her parents are stricter in Jenna’s learning. They believe in learning through practice and emphasize parent control of her focus during study.

We feel learning requires practice, and frequent practice. This kind of learning, probably teachers at preschool won’t do it this way: if you like, you can play for just two minutes; if you are no longer interested, you just leave it aside. The teachers don’t care how much focus the child has on what she does; at home, if we ask her to do something, we’ll see it through. (Jenna mom interview 20110617)

我们觉得学东西要练习，多 practice。这种可能在幼儿园老师可能不会这样，你爱做，哪怕你玩两分钟，你不感兴趣了，丢在一边。老师不去管你这个 focus 的时间有多长，在家里我们会说你把这件事情做完，再做这件事。

Very different from the preschool class, parents see writing as writing letters and words. More emphasis is on the written form of letters. When they teach their child to write, they usually do it the traditional way and let the child write letters following the textual model. In terms of parents’ beliefs about learning, there seems to be a style difference among the parents. Evan Wang’s parents and Evan Lang’s mom are more “let the child take his own course” style and views preschool to be the major place for the child to learning writing while Jenna’s parents are more “parents supervise” style, and consciously take up the role of teaching Jenna English writing at home.

Despite the differences in writing beliefs and practices from school, there are signs that parents also start adopting school practices. For example, at Evan Lang’s home, there is an easel for Evan to draw and write with. His parents provide materials for him to explore. Also sometimes, children bring school practices home, like the pretend letters
Evan Lang wrote to his mom. She supported him as an appreciative audience, reading out his pretend letters as he expected. She also taught him the format difference between writing a letter in Chinese and in English. It seems to be bidirectional socialization: the child socialized his mom into a new form of written communication while his mom also took the opportunity to teach him the format difference between Chinese and English letters. And in general, there is less parent control and intervention in child’s learning process compared with their peers in China.

4.5.2 What do parents believe about school learning?

The parents have mixed responses towards learning through play. The overseas experience expands the way parents see cultural differences in bringing up a child. They don’t just embrace one or reject the other; rather they are able to see the pros and cons of each one and try to have their children benefit from both. When possible, they let their children to themselves, a unique self bred in the best of diverse culture practices.

Evan Wang’s parents talk about the pros and cons of the preschool’s learning through play approach, in comparison with the preschool in China, where Evan Wang spent more than a year. Evan Wang’s parents mentioned the preschool here in America let the child follow his own interest. It does a good job in cultivating child’s creativity and keenness in observation.

Many play activities here are inquisitive, and the child plays by themselves. There are more types of play too: water, sand, pieces of paper; while in China, they play mostly with toys. (Evan Wang parents interview 20110616) 这边玩是带启发性的，自己玩；玩的种类也多，水，沙，纸片，国内就是玩具。
However, Evan’s father believes the preschool in China did a better job in disciplining a child.

It lets you know the class rules: when the teacher asks you to sit, you should sit. I feel one thing is not so good here in America is that the teacher does not discipline the child. So when he goes to after school programs to learn something, he will not learn if he doesn’t feel like doing it or interested. If he were in China, he should learn whenever asked to. (Evan Wang parents interview 20110616)

Evan Wang’s mom believes this has to do with the number of children in China preschool. Since there are more children, they put more emphasis on rules and order in order to prepare them for elementary school.

Also they feel the teachers in China do more explicit teaching and have a clearer curriculum.

In China, the teachers ask the child to draw pictures, sing songs, tell stories or recite poems. They have textbooks, which are designed for specific age group. The teachers follow the books and tell them several small stories each day. Here, they seldom do that. (Evan Wang parents interview 20110616)

Evan Lang’s mom feels the preschool provides an open and safe environment for the child to be themselves and enjoy themselves. She felt her son is happier and happier. She also felt her son is more and more open. One thing she felt is very different from early education in China is:
In China, the more time children spend at school, the more timid they become. Here things are different: Feifei was a little timid when he was little. I am not sure whether it is the way he grows up or because of his attending preschool; now he can play with other children without a problem and even when it is noisy, he could play like no one else was around. I feel it is important in America, for him to feel safe. (Evan Wang parents interview 20110715)

和国内很不一样,国内小孩是越教胆越小,他们不一样,飞飞小的时候比较胆小,不知道是不是长大的原因,上幼儿园一段时间,他就可以和其他小朋友一起玩啊什么的,都没问题,很吵的环境如入无人之境,自己玩,在美国这个挺重要,他比较有安全感

To some extent, she seems to understand the school’s approach of learning through play. She feels the child can gain their knowledge in their own way. Still, she feels the teacher should teach the child more.

Strangely for Feifei, he could write twenty six letters in full. I have never taught him (to do that). I asked the teachers, and they say they didn’t teach him seriously either. Possibly he pieces them together one letter by one letter, starting with his little friends’ name and then gradually. He might also have toys, and letter song, and then he could write them out by himself. However, it seems there are several letters he can’t write, like letter r and s. Aside from that he could write the twenty six letters from beginning to end. He does pay attention; he does pay attention to things around him, to those things that you might think would just brush his mind and pass without leaving a trace. What he learns first is his little friends’ names. But that’s all he could do, still a bit too little. (Evan Wang parents interview 20110715)

飞飞很奇怪,他现在可以写全26个字母,我从来没教过,我问他们老师,他们老师也说没有 serious的教过,可能他一点点拼凑起来的。从小朋友的名字,然后一点点一点,他可能也有玩具,字母歌,然后它自己可以写出来,好像有几个不会, r、s 好像不会,然后可以从头写到尾,他是 pay attention的,他什么事会注意的,你以为一带而过的东西,他最先学习的是小朋友的名字,他会的也只这么多,还是少了点。

Jenna’s mom felt the children in American preschool have more free choices: they can choose to eat or not to eat; they can choose to nap or not to nap. The teacher won’t discipline them or force them to eat or nap. Children are more independent and develop
more self-help skills, like cleaning up. On the one hand, she liked the class’ emphasis on play and thinks it is important for her daughter to develop social skills.

I like it this way. It’s not that important for the child to learn letters a few years earlier. But it is important to know how to get along with others. So are personality and character. (Jenna mom interview 20110617)
我挺喜欢这样的，小孩早学几年字母不是特别重要，倒是跟人相处，性格重要，脾气重要。

On the other hand, she also expressed concerns about learning in the class.

In preschool, she is just playing. (The teacher) seldom teaches the children; and the children seldom sit down and learn. (Jenna mom interview 20110617)
幼儿园就是玩，教的少，坐下来学的少。

For her, learning is contrary to play: it requires adults to teach explicitly and the children to sit down and learn.

We can see the mixed responses are towards “管” (guan, discipline) and “教” (jiao, teach explicitly) — behavioral discipline and explicit teaching. Parents have different views on “管” (guan, discipline), Evan Wang’s father believe children should be disciplined in their behavior because self-discipline becomes an important part of his future learning: It sustains his learning process and helps him persevere through even if it is something the child is not interested in. Evan Lang’s mother feels that, without discipline, the child could be himself and feel safe in the learning environment. While Jenna’s mother felt the children could be more independent without being disciplined, she did hint at dissatisfaction towards things they should be disciplined like eating meals and getting nap. The parents’ mixed responses towards “管” (guan, discipline) have to do with each child’s unique personality, and living circumstances. For example, the fact that
Evan Lang’s mom does not emphasize “管” (guan, discipline) so much has to do with Evan’s personality, being quiet and shy. And he is taken care of by his mom alone since it’s his father who usually is stricter with him and he lives in a different state.

However, the parents see eye to eye in terms of “教” (jiao): Teacher’s explicit teaching. They all favor more concentrated time of learning when the teacher teaches explicitly and the children sit down and learn. When the school doesn’t seem to teach explicitly, they respond differently.

Evan Wang’s father accepts the learning through play approach and the teacher’s role.

In America, it is like this. We don’t have many expectations. Everyone else has to go through this. You are here and it’s not likely to ask them to tell stories or teach the child things. (Evan Wang parents interview 20110616) 他们美国都是这个样子的，所以我们也没有太多的要求, 大家都是这样的, 因为你在这边, 不能单独要求他去讲故事或者教东西啊。

Evan Lang’s mother expects more explicit teaching from the teacher.

Like math, teachers can teach the kids a little bit. For example, they can teach them how to do basic math, like doing plus and minus with numbers from 1 to 9; developmentally their brain are ready. It’s ok for the teacher to instruct him a little without pushing him to the next level. The teacher should teach him what he should know. It’s too simple for them to recognize numbers. I feel the teacher can teach them something more complex. After all it is called preschool, still a school, right? …He (Evan) can write 26 letters, but stills that’s too little. (Evan Wang parents interview 20110715) 有点教的太少了, 实际上 我觉得不要太 push 他们, 但是像数学稍微要教一点点, 像数学稍微要教一点点, 10 以内的加法总应该要教一点, 智力已经发育到这个程度, 稍微点他一下就可以, 不要 push 他到下一个阶段, 但是他应知道的, 应知道的, 老师还是要点一下应该。（能识数）太浅了, 对他们来说。我觉得稍微教一点深入的, preschool 嘛是吧? 叫 school…26 个字母会写, 知道的还是太少了。
Jenna’s parents seem to take up the traditional teacher’s role and teach her at home.

We would let her learn more at home, though certainly not as much as children do in China. (Jenna mom interview 20110617)

在家里面给她学一些，但是肯定没国内抓得紧。

And Jenna skipped kindergarten and went directly to Grade one after finishing preschool. Her mother told me it was a decision that they hesitated about: she is ready for school in terms of skills, but she is young.

To conclude, the traditional Chinese teacher-child relationship in the parents’ mind is pictured as: a good teacher “管教” (guan jiao, discipline and teach explicitly) students, and a good learner is able to sit down and focus students’ attention on learning, rather than idle play by himself. They see teachers’ explicit instruction and organized activities are valued learning opportunities. A child is not believed to learn by himself, or just interacting with peers or objects, which is more perceived as play.

Living in America, parents showed different responses towards the teacher’s role in preschool, where explicit teaching is played down and children’s explorative learning is advocated. Evan Wang’s parents follow the school practice; Evan Lang’s mother expects more from school; Jenna’s mother adds home learning to complement what’s missing from the school. What does this mean for the children in the long run? Whose approach is better? The discussion is beyond the scope of this research, but it clearly shows the different possibilities when the East meet the West.
Chapter 5: How Children are Taught to Write at Chinese Sunday School

The major question this chapter tries to answer is: how are children taught to write in the Chinese Sunday class? To address this question, this part: (1) first talks briefly about the classroom philosophy of 學 (xue, learning) and 習 (xi, review, practice); (2) then looks at the curriculum, time and space arrangement of the class. (3) tries to uncover the writing learning opportunities afforded in this class; (4) discusses the cultural meanings of becoming a young writer; (5) then talks about the cultural parameters of becoming an age-appropriate learner; (6) concludes with a discussion of parents’ beliefs about children’s Chinese writing and learning, as well as their understanding of the role of Chinese heritage language school in the maintenance of Chinese language.

5.1 The Philosophy of 學(xue, learning) and 習(xi, review, practice)

At the beginning of the study, Ms. Zhou, Jenna’s mom, mentioned the different traditions in early childhood education in America and in China: The American tradition emphasizes more that children learn through play; while the Chinese tradition emphasizes more that children learn through practice (習, xi). When I observed her Chinese class, I began to see there was another level of her beliefs about children’s learning. That is children learn through following the teacher’s teaching (學, xue). Below I talks about the

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5 In this part, the traditional Chinese characters are used when explaining the learning philosophy. For some character, the meaning is embodied in its original and unsimplified form. While simplified Chinese characters are used in discussing the class instruction because it is the form being taught.
philosophy of 學 (xue, learning) and 習 (xi, review, practice), which can be traced back to
Confucius who exerts great influence in education in China.

5.1.1 學(xue, learning).

學(xue, learning) has two folds of meaning in Confucian thinking: (1) It refers to
a process of becoming aware; (2) It refers to transmission of culture, “…the appropriation
and embodiment of the cultural tradition …” (Hall and Ames, 1987, p. 44).

One learns through 聞(wen, hear), or pedagogical interaction and exchange.

The master said, ‘If at dawn you learn of (hear) and tread the way, you can face
朝聞道,夕死可矣。

The way of teaching is through 傳(chuan, transmission). Han Yu, a philosopher
and a politician in ancient Tang Dynasty, said:

Teacher, therefore proselytizes, instructs, and dispels doubt. (Han & Huang, 1991,
p. 65)
師者,傳道授業解惑也

One also needs to critically think about (si, 思) what one is learning. One needs
to personalize what is learned in such a manner as to make it appropriate and
meaningful in one’s own unique circumstances. (Analects 2/15: Ames &
Rosemont, 1998, p. 48)
學而不思則罔,思而不學則殆。

A well learned person is able to 知 (zhi, realize) and 信 (xin, live up to one’s
word). 知 (zhi, realize) refers to know and understand, sometimes it is used
interchangeably with wisdom. Also it refers to “a propensity for forecasting or predicting the outcome of a coherent set of circumstances of which the forecaster himself is a constituent and participatory factor” (Hall and Ames, p. 51). 信 (xin, living up to one’s word) refers to “One has the acquired ability, acumen and resources to enact and make real what one says” (p. 60). It is a precondition for one to become a person and to “qualify as a person” (p. 61).

Hall and Ames (1987) believed that Confucius’ understanding of the activity of thinking is an interrelated process of the above-mentioned four parts: 學 (xue, learning), 思 (si, thinking), 知 (zhi, realize), and 信 (xin, living up to one’s word). Many of the underlying concepts in this class reflect Confucius’ thinking, especially 學 (xue, learning) and 思 (si, thinking).

5.1.2 習 (xi, practice, review).

習 (xi) has different interpretations. Firstly, it refers to practice of skills. For example, Zhu Xi, a Confucian scholar in Song Dynasty, explained in Annotations of the Four Books:

\[ xī, \text{ little birdie flies several times. Practice what one learns continuously is just the same as the little birdie practice flying.} \]

(Zhu, 1915, p. 1)

習，鳥數飛也。學之不已，如鳥數飛也。

Secondly, it refers to reviewing what one learned.

Reviewing the old as a means of realizing the new—such a person can be considered a teacher. (Analects 2/11: Confucius, Ames & Rosemont, p. 78)

溫故而知新，可以為師矣.
A person can be said to truly love learning (haoxue 好學) who, on a daily basis, is aware of what is yet to be learned, and who, from month to month, does not forget what has already been mastered. (Analects 19/5: Confucius, Ames & Rosemont, p. 219)

日知其所無, 月無忘其所能, 可謂好學也已矣.

Thirdly, it can refer to putting what one learns into practice.

5.1.3 學習 (xue, learning) and 習 (xi, review, practice).

Confucius first connects these two concepts together.

Having studied, to then repeatedly apply what you have learned—is this not a source of pleasure? (Analects 1/1: Confucius, Ames & Rosemont, p. 71)

學而時習之, 不亦悅乎?

Given the different interpretation of 習 (xì), it can also has different meanings: to practice or review what one has learned is a source of pleasure.

As discussed earlier in parents’ beliefs about learning, Ms. Zhou feels it is important to practice frequently what is learned. The same is true with learning of writing.

In this class, Jenna learns, reviews and practices writing in different ways.

5.2 The Curriculum, Time and Space Arrangement of the Class

This section looks at the class curriculum, and its time and space arrangement.
5.2.1 The curriculum.

It is designed as a beginning Chinese class. The textbook is edited by Liping Ma, who ran Chinese schools in California for almost 20 years. She developed a series of Chinese textbooks from pre-K to Grade 7. During the period of my observation, the children had finished the pre-K textbook and started Grade 1 book series. The textbook packet includes a textbook, two workbooks, one summer work book, and an A4-size card of different Chinese characters which can be cut out and used as flash cards. Also it has an accompanying DVD with model text read-aloud, model character writing, games for practicing new character and words. There are several characteristics about the curriculum developed by Liping Ma.

Firstly, in the pre-K class, the main purpose is to teach children to recognize and read Chinese characters. Writing characters is not emphasized as much: the students are only expected to learn the basic strokes and write a dozen characters. The philosophy of the textbook is “先认后写，多认少写” (recognizing characters first, writing characters later; more recognizing and less writing). The children would be more motivated and have a sense of achievement if they could read more, given the lack of language environment and their limited time in learning Chinese in the U.S.

Ms. Zhou sees this approach is very different from the way she learned Chinese writing:

The textbook is used to teach them to recognize characters. It emphasizes more recognition and less writing, and recognizing first writing later. Moreover, it doesn’t start with simpler characters. There is a small story, following which the children are supposed to learn (the characters). Characters like “绿” (lv, green), which has more complex strokes, are also included in the text. I don’t know why. It is different from what we learn at elementary school: we started with simple strokes, and are required to write them at the same time, right? Instead, they are
more required to read and recognize characters. I am not sure whether it is because they are here in America, a different context. (Jenna’s mother remarks on 20110715)

就教他们识字。她主张多认字少写，先认后写；她不是从最简单的字，反正就是有那么一个小故事情节，就让你跟着后面学，像那种‘绿’啊，比较繁冗复杂的字，他们也开始学，我不知道为什么，对，跟我们小学的时候学的不太一样，我们是简单的笔画，而且同步要写，对吧；他们要求念和认多，我不是道是不是因为这边的情况还是怎么。

Secondly, the textbook doesn’t teach Pinyin (Chinese phonetic script in Mainland) or Zhuyin (Chinese phonetic script in Taiwan) until Grade 3. Their original purpose for helping children read characters was disregarded and was only used to help type Chinese characters on computer.

Thirdly, the textbook emphasizes the goal of Chinese language learning as a way to maintain Chinese culture in the U.S. That is why it includes many Chinese riddles and poems as learning materials. The children get to know about Chinese culture and identify with their Chinese origin, which is believed to be important for Chinese children growing up in America. As Ma (2012) mentioned:

For Chinese people overseas, the role of Chinese language as a spiritual and cultural belonging is far more important than its role as a way of making a living…And Chinese culture is embodied by Chinese oral and written language. Perhaps, that is the ultimate reason why there are more and more Chinese schools as the number of Chinese immigrants increases (in the U.S).
5.2.2 The time and space arrangement.

The class starts from 9:30am every Sunday and lasts for about 45 minutes until about 10:30. It is then followed by a Bible reading class for young children. A class usually is composed of three parts, a review of a previous lesson, learning a new lesson and students’ practice of writing characters. Here is the usual length of each part.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New lesson</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing practice</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Time Arrangement in Chinese Class

A review of a previous lesson can occur before or after the introduction of a new lesson. With its main purpose being helping student reviewing the previous lesson, especially written form and sound of learned characters, it can take different forms. One is filling in the missing characters. And the other is simply reading out aloud the previous lesson, which is written on the blackboard by the teacher. A new lesson is mainly for explaining new characters in the lesson and reading aloud the lesson together. The class always ends with students practicing their writing skills of four or five Chinese characters.

Writing on the students’ part in this class takes up about 1/3 of the total class time; and teacher’s guided learning through 认字 (renzi, recognizing characters) and 读字 (duzi,
reading characters) takes up the majority of time. It has to do with the textbook they were using.

Now let’s see how the physical arrangement of the class facilitates the classroom learning.

It is a spacious room in a local Chinese church. There is a large blackboard in the front, where Ms. Zhou stands and gives lessons. On each side of the blackboard are two billboards with religious pictures. There are two large tables in the center of the class, where the children sit around. There is a sink on the right. Overall, the class atmosphere is informal: Ms. Zhou knows each child and their parents outside the class since they come to the same church.
5.3 学 (xue, learning) and 習 (xi, review, practice) in the Class

This part looks at a variety of learning activities, materializing the philosophy of 学 (xue, learning) and 習 (xi, review, practice). They are:

1. 認字, 讀字 (recognizing and reading characters)
   a. 學 (xue) - 聞 (wen, hear) and 悟 (become aware)
   b. 習 (xi) - 練習 (practice) - 誦 (song, reading aloud the text)
   c. 習 (xi) - 練習 (practice) - 記 (ji, memorizing characters)

2. 習 (xi) - 練習 (practice) - 寫 (xie, children’s own writing)

3. 習 (xi) - 複習 (review) - 温故知新 (reviewing what is learned)

I will start with the first three learning activities in the new lesson, the main goal of which is to help the children to 認字, 讀字 (recognize and read characters). A new lesson always starts with the teacher writing the text on the blackboard. As she writes character by character, she explains new characters. The children listen and follow her instruction. They become aware of the form and meaning connection of the characters, a process of 學 (xue), moving from 聞 (wen, hearing), 悟 (becoming aware). After she goes through the whole text this way, she has the class read aloud the written text (song, 誦) on the board as a group, usually for more than once, depending on the difficulty of the text in term of the number and complexity of new characters in it. A new lesson finishes with erasing the text from the blackboard by students, reinforcing and testing their memory of the characters just learned (ji, 記).
5.3.1 認字, 讀字(recognizing and reading characters).

認字(recognizing characters) and 讀字(reading characters) enable the child to familiarize themselves with the written forms, get the meaning of writing characters, and connect sound with forms. 認字(recognizing characters) refer to the ability to recognize the form and know the meaning of the character. It is usually seen as the first step for a child to become a reader. 讀字(reading characters) refers to the ability to read out the sound of the character. In China, Pinyin, the romanization system of Chinese language, is usually taught to young children to help them learn the pronunciation of characters. In this class, the teacher models how to 認字(recognize characters), making explicit the connection between form and meaning of characters. However, Pinyin is not taught, and the teacher models how to 讀字(read characters) by saying out the sound. Since the children all speak Mandarin, it is easier for them to connect the sound with the form of characters. So much of the teacher’s effort is spent on explaining the connection between form and meaning of character, namely 認字(recognizing characters).

The outer and inner form of Chinese characters.

Before moving into the class, the basics of Chinese character written form are introduced first, including strokes, order of strokes, size and structure of a character. Coulmas (1990) talked about strokes and their orders, which he referred to as “outer form” (p. 94). I will quote his explanation of strokes and orders; and also add two more things: size and structure of a character.
Firstly, there are eight basic strokes, the composing parts of Chinese characters (see picture below): dot, horizontal, vertical, left-falling, right-falling, rising, hook, and turning.

![The Eight Basic Strokes of Chinese Characters](image)

Figure 10. The Eight Basic Strokes of Chinese Characters (Coulmas, 1990, p. 96)

Each stroke should be written in a specific direction, usually from top to bottom and from left to right. And each stroke should follow its shape: One basic rule is 横平竖直 (heng ping shu zhi): 横 (heng) should be written horizontally and 竖 (shu) should be written vertically.
Secondly, order of strokes is also emphasized. One basic rule is 先横后竖 (xian heng hou shu): 横 (heng) should be written first and 竖 (shu) should be written second. More examples of the correct order writing strokes in a character are demonstrated in the figure below.
Thirdly, a character should be written in the appropriate size. A character should be written neither too big nor too small.

Fourthly, there are five types of character structures: top-down, left-right, semi-closed, closed, and single character

- top-down: 想 (xiang, think)  
- left-right: 故 (gu, past)  
- semi-closed: 房 (fang, house)  
- closed: 国 (guo, country)  
- single character: 口 (kou, mouth)
Without an understanding of this system, it would be difficult to talk about Chinese characters. In her lesson, Ms. Zhou directs students’ attention to the strokes and composing parts because it helps the students recognize the characters and understand their meanings. The basics about stroke, order, size and structure are taught while explaining each character.

Another unique feature about Chinese characters is connection between the form of a character and its meaning. One can tell the meaning of the character by analyzing its composing parts or radicals. There are six most common ways of how Chinese characters producing meaning, which Coulmas (1990) referred to as the “inner form” (p. 98), the principles of character formation:

1. **象形** (pictographic): Characters resembles the visual features of the object, like 山 (shan, mountain).
2. **指事** (simple ideographic): Characters created by connecting meaning to another character, like 刃 (ren, the edge of a knife). It is created by putting a dot on 刀 (dao, knife).
3. **会意** (compound ideographic): The meaning of the character is a combination of its components, like 休 (xiu, rest). The left part refers to a person, and the right part refers to a tree. Combining both parts, it means a person rests leaning against a tree.
4. **形声** (semantic-phonetic compound): Characters have two components: one indicates the meaning, and the other indicates the sound, like 伸 (shen, reach
out). The left part represent it has to do with human body, and the right part shows its sound is *shen*.

5. 假借 (phonetic loan): Characters that “have been borrowed from writing the word for which they were originally create another, homophonous one” Coulmas (1990, p. 99).

6. 转注 (chuan zhu): “A character is used to represent a word of the same or similar meaning, but different pronunciation” Coulmas (1990, p. 99). For example, 乐 (*yue*, music) can also be used as 乐 (*le*, pleasure).

**Collective writing of characters.**

The first thing Ms. Zhou did was writing the text (see figure below) on the blackboard one character by one character. She announced “Let’s write it (on the blackboard)” and turned around, starting writing the title on the blackboard and reading out aloud each character with intervals in between: “小 小 的 梦 想 (*xiao xiao de meng xiang*, small dream)”. The children lifted their heads up from the text on the table and all look at Ms. Zhou writing characters. And some children followed her by saying out aloud the characters. Ms. Zhou framed it as collective writing. Although it was only she that was actually writing characters with a chalk on the blackboard, she used a request that involves everyone in the class “Let’s write it (on the blackboard)”. A collective pronoun “us” indicates that not only she, but also the children are active participants in the writing of the characters. Both teacher and students have their roles to fulfill in the process.

Below is the new lesson in this class (translation in italics).
Ms. Zhou wrote each character clearly and slowly, making sure that the children can see each stroke and stroke order of the character clearly. And she directed special attention to characters with complicated strokes like 最 (zui,-est) to leave a deep impression on the child: This character has many strokes. In addition, she wrote the characters in the right size, not too big or too small. Moreover she wrote character in balanced structure. This could be very different from her daily writing of Chinese. Usually in Chinese, when an adult writes Chinese, she or he usually writes with a personal style, like 连笔 (lian bi, strokes are written cursively), in which 横平竖直 (heng ping shu zhi, horizontal heng and vertical shu) does not always follow. But for young learners, such rule applies. One’s writing should be well trained in the basics before he or she can be more flexible and creative in their writing. Writing conforming to the convention is the first step in writing Chinese characters.
By observing teacher’s writing, the children get to know writing action of different characters, including production of different strokes, stroke order, the right size, shape and the overall balancing of character structure. They familiarize themselves of different forms of characters and are able to recognize their “faces”, and particular features of each character. The sensitivity towards Chinese character form has been developed in the children.

学到(xue)-闻(wen, hear) and 悟(wu, become aware).

Children are expected to become recognizers of character forms, interpreters of character meaning and producers of character sound. It is achieved mainly through the teacher’s explicit teaching and modeling to the learners. The children are taught to become reproducers of the Chinese written system: the form, sound and meaning of characters. For the written text on the blackboard, there is a distance and obscuring of authorship. The text is a means to an end: to help children learn to recognize and read characters, in an easier and fun way.

In this lesson, when explaining the connection between the form and meaning of a character, Ms. Zhou mostly uses 会意 (compound ideographic) and 形声 (semantic-phonetic compound), which are also the mostly frequently used way of creating Chinese characters. She has demonstrated some traditional and some creative ways of explaining the meaning of different characters. Her explanation of different characters usually composes of four parts: (1) she models the sound of the character first, (2) places the character in a compound, (3) and draws special attention to the structure of the character, (4) explaining how the form helps create meaning.

Take 想(xiang, think) for example: It is a semantic-phonetic compound.
1. She modeled sound of 想 as xiang;

2. She formed a compound 梦想 (meng xiang, dream), as putting 想 (xiang, think) into its contextual meaning

3. She talked about the structure of 想 (xiang, think) as up and down:

想 (xiang, think) also has the up-down structure. On the top is 相 (xiang, mutual) as in 相互 (xiang hu, mutual); and on the bottom is heart. 想也是上下的，ok? 上面是个相，相互的相，下面是个心脏。

4. She talks about the meaning indicator of the character is heart.

People say it's in the heart that one thinks. 人们说是心里面想什么。

Ms. Zhou gave more explanation on 会意 (compound ideographic) characters since they do not have a sound connection with their form. Take 安 (an, peace) for instance:

1. She modeled the sound of 安 as an;

2. She formed a compound 平安 (ping an, peace), as putting 安 (an) into its contextual meaning

3. She talked about the structure of 安 (an, peace) as top and down:

On the top is baogai radical; and on the bottom is a girl. 上面是宝盖头，然后下面是个女生。

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6 Individual Chinese character often has multiple meanings depending on the context it is used in. That’s why in order to define the meaning of a Chinese character, it is often put in a compound or put it in a context.
She talks about how both parts produce meaning. A girl stays inside and she is very safe.

4. She talks about how both parts produce meaning. A girl stays inside and she is very safe.

The more complicated the character looks like, the more elaborate Ms. Zhou created a meaning for it, like 美 (mei, beautiful):

A small flower, a small flower, is on the great king’s head. Great is for 大 (da), king is for 王 (wang), combining both together as 大王 (da wang, great king). The great king wears two flowers on his head (it’s how 美 looks like in its form, composed of two dots, 大 and 王 characters). This was how we learned it…now you can remember the character.

一个小花花, 一个小花花, 戴在大王的头上, 大王, 大字, 大王, 大王头上戴了两朵花, 这是我们当时学的时候...这下记得这个字了, 啊。

In explaining the form and meaning of characters, Ms. Zhou on the one hand borrowed from tradition, which worked for her decades ago, like 美 (mei, beautiful). On the other hand, she has been creative in many other ways, like her creating meaning for 安 (an, peace).

In 认字 (recognizing characters) and 读字 (reading characters), learning means following teacher’s explanation and modeling. That’s why the teacher emphasizes children’s collective attention, which is indexed through both verbal and nonverbal channels. Her different ways to capture the children’s attention will be discussed following “attention structure” proposed by Philips (1983). “Attention structure” means “the set of patterned actions by speaker and hearer that occur in order that the conditions for successful transmission of linguistic messages” (p. 6). It includes:

- speaker’s designation of addressed recipient,
• hearer’s recognition of addressor,
• hearer’s designation of addressor,
• and speaker’s recognition of hearer (pp. 7-10).

Class interaction is composed of constant initiating and sustaining the attention structure. I will focus on the multiple ways the teacher designates the addressed recipient or recipients: what is expected from the children in this class is constant attention to Chinese characters on the board and teacher’s words. The following interaction occurs at the beginning of the class when Ms. Zhou was explaining the form of “梦” (meng, dream), and its connection to the meaning of the character.

Photo 7. Ms. Zhou Writing and Explaining 梦 (meng, dream)
1 ZH: 小小的梦想，小小的
DN: small dream, small, small
2 ZH: 梦
DN: Dream
3 ZH: 梦想，
Dream, look closely
4 梦想，看好了
What is the upper part of 梦 (meng, dream)?
5 梦上面是什么?
(dream, look closely)
6 树林，一个树林，
This is 夕 (xi, sunset),
7 这是夕，
夕 (xi, sunset) is about sun,
8 夕是太阳，
The sun falls behind the tree,
9 太阳掉到树、树林底下
DN: 做梦 (meng, dream) as in
做梦 (zuomeng, have dreams)
10 DN: =做梦的梦
11 ZH: 什么呀，晚上了对吧，
What is this about, it’s night, right?
People start having dreams
12 开始做梦了=
DN: Is it the same 梦 (meng, dream) as in 做梦 (zuomeng, dream)
13 DN: =做梦的梦，是不是
163
那个梦？
have dreams)?

ZH: Right, it is the same 梦 (meng, dream) as in做梦 (zuomeng, have dreams), and
梦想 (mengxiang, dream)

At first the teacher turned her body facing the class, and designated the addressed recipients as the children as a whole through body positioning and eye contact (line 3). At the same time, she used finger pointing to direct students’ attention to the character that is in discussion (line 4). Following that, she verbally directed the class to what she was going to write on the blackboard: “Look closely” (line 4). During her writing the character 梦 (meng, dream), she also verbally talking with the class about the part she was written: the upper part is 林 (lin, forest), and the lower part is 夕 (xi, sunset) (line 6 and 7). Then she faced the class again and pointed to the character while creating a meaning-form connection of the character: the sun goes behind the trees, and people begin to sleep and have dreams. A triangular attention structure is established among student, the teacher, and the character, via teacher’s word, eye contact, finger pointing and body positioning.

In the teacher’s explicit teaching, children mostly display their recognition of the teacher through nonverbal channels, like eye gaze on the blackboard, or nodding. Occasionally, verbal recognition is prompted by the teacher.
1 **ZH:** 乡

**ZH:** 乡 (xiang, hometown)  ((writing the character on the blackboard))

2 这两个字是新的, ok?

These two characters are new, ok?  ((facing the class, pointing to the two characters))

3 故乡,

故乡 (gu xiang, hometown)  ((quickly pointing one character after another, reading out as if modeling for the child))

4 故乡.

故乡 (gu xiang, hometown)  ((quickly pointing one character after another, reading out as if modeling for the child))

5 SS: 故乡

SS: 故乡 (gu xiang, hometown)  ((reading out in a choral))

In this interaction, when she quickly pointed one character after another and models the sound of characters to the whole class, she expected the children to give a collective verbal response-repeating the characters after her.

During 認字 (recognizing characters) and 讀字 (reading characters), the teacher’s interaction with the class as a whole is at the center. Children’s spontaneous talk without the teacher’s explicit invitation is discouraged. Ms. Zhou would address an individual mostly nonverbally or indirectly so as not to interrupt the explicit teaching of the character to the whole class. For example, in the excerpt above, she acknowledged Dan’s connection of 梦 (meng, dream) with 做梦 (zuo meng, have a dream) by looking at him.
first, and later giving him verbal recognition by repeating Dan’s idea. Dan was not aware of such nonverbal and indirect verbal recognition or not satisfied with them, he continued telling Ms. Zhou about this connection, and rephrased it as a question, requesting Ms. Zhou’s response. Ms. Zhou then verbally acknowledged him again without turning around to face him, making it a side action of her writing on the blackboard (line 14). As the class went on, Dan still didn’t take a hint of such discouragement of spontaneous talk and continued talking. Even though his talk is relevant to the learning content, he was either ignored or put on hold. The learning space for collective learning of the textbook is emphasized, instead of individual child’s learning interest.

Figure 14. Teacher Interacts with Children as a Collective

T: teacher
C: child
Not only they are socialized to become recognizer and reader of written text, they are also socialized as a collective, rather than as individuals. Teacher’s interaction with the class as a collective is at the center. That’s why joint attention is emphasized in the class, and the learning process is mainly achieved through establishing joint attention via talk, eye contact, body positioning, and finger pointing.

習 (xi)-練習 (practice)-誦 (song, reading aloud the text).

Photo 8. Reading Aloud in Chinese Class

After finishing explaining the form and meaning of new characters, Ms. Zhou led the class in a group reading aloud. It has been a traditional method for teaching young children characters, which helps them memorize the characters’ sound, meaning and form through repetitive practice. Ms. Zhou pointed to each character and slowly read out each character. Following her pointing and her reading, the child read out the character in
position. In the process, Ms. Zhou checked constantly through eye contact with the children to make sure they are reading out and reading correctly.

At this stage, individual independent reading of the characters is not expected from the child. The group reading provides a safe place for the children to practice what they have learned, and seek help from either the teacher, or the peers by following their reading.

In the reading aloud, when the students were able to read independently, they were reading ahead of Ms. Zhou; when they had difficulty, they followed Ms. Zhou as a model. Also when the children skipped a certain character in the rhythm, Ms. Zhou realized they had difficulty reading out the character. Then she stopped for a little bit, explaining the character more. Sometimes she placed it in more compounds, like 最 (zui, -est). She said: “biggest and best, which both have this –est”. Or she will explain again the form, sound and meaning of the character, like 故 (gu, past). She said: “The left side is 古 (gu, old), and it has to do with things old, like hometown”. Then they resume the rhythm.

Ms. Zhou acts as a sympathetic teacher, often thinks ahead for the students, predicting and acknowledging their difficulties and providing help accordingly. For example, at the very beginning, she acknowledged the many new characters in the text, and encouraged the students to give it a try as a group.

Ok, let’s try together. There are quite a few new characters in today’s lesson, together try a little bit
好,我们一起来试一下。啊，今天生字很多，一起 try 一下。
Also as they finished reading the new lesson, Ms. Zhou pointed out the difficulty of this lesson “it’s just it has many (new) characters”. It sounded like she was showing understanding of the students’ stops in between. After showing her understanding of the difficulty of the new lesson, she provided a solution:

We will repeat it for a couple of times, and you will remember gradually, ok? You don’t have to feel pressured (by the lesson); at least we know many color characters in them, right? Like blue, white; and also vast land, cloud, river, and ocean.

我们会再重复几遍，慢慢就记得了，ok? 不着急，至少这里面有好多颜色我们知道，right？蓝，白，大地，云，河流，海洋。

In the read out for the second time, Ms. Zhang didn’t stop or make further explanation for difficult words. But she did emphasize the characters by using a louder voice and establishing eye contact with the children. Through 誦 (song, reading aloud the text), Ms. Zhou realized two major goals of the class: first of all, the children start memorizing the form and sound of the characters; secondly, they learn to make meaning of characters in the context. This is one step further from what the child has learned in 認 字 (recognizing characters) and 讀 字 (reading characters), where they are just exposed to the form, sound and meaning of characters. Now they start to memorize them, and feel their meaning in the lesson.

習 (xi)-練習 (practice)-記 (ji, memorizing characters-erasing characters).

Finishing reading for the second time, Ms. Zhou quickly guided the children into a character erasing game. It appears character erasing game is the most fun part for the children. Children pick out words that they recognize and erase them from the blackboard. It is almost like a competition: since the easier ones goes fast and what remains are
usually difficult ones, they sometimes have to compete for turns. And they feel excited to get their turns; they laugh and have enjoyed the process. So does Ms. Zhou. Turns are usually on a voluntary basis, those who want to erase a character raise their hands. But Ms. Zhou also has a control over turns, making sure each student all has a turn. There are only six students in the class and usually they have more than one turn to come up to the blackboard.

Different from the previous learning activities, the individual child is held accountable for their learning. In order to erase characters, the children have to “pass” a test of their knowledge of their claimed characters. In general, the whole process has five steps:

1. The student volunteers to erase a character;
2. The teacher asks which character the student will erase;
3. The teacher repeats the character the student is going to erase;
4. The child erases the character
5. The teacher comment on the action of the child

Here I will use an example from Jenna to demonstrate the steps:
ZH-Ms. Zhou; JE: Jenna

1 ZH: 好，琪琪.

2 哪一个?

3 哪个字?

4 哪个字?

5 哪个字?

6 JE: 

7 ZH: 告诉我先要擦哪个字?

8 JE: 天

9 ZH: 天，奥，天

10 JE: (擦字-天堂的天)

11 ZH: 很好，

12 JE: 

((watching her coming forward))

Which one?

Which character?

Which character?

Which character?

Tell me first which character you are erasing?

天(tian, sky)

天(tian, sky), Ao, 天(tian, sky)

((erasing tian in tiantang))

((looking for another tian))

Very good

Ok, Qiqi
13 ZH: 蓝天，天

14 JE:

15 ZH: 奥，很好，很好，好，

16 好，good job，

17 好, Joy, you wanna try one?

In step 1: Jenna raised her hand a while ago, and now it was Jenna’s turn. Ms. Zhou acknowledged her turn by saying “ok, Qiqi” (line 1). In step 2: Watching Jenna coming forward, Ms. Zhou continued asking her which character she was erasing. It seems Jenna didn’t hear her and she kept walking towards the chair in front of the blackboard. As she started climbing onto the chair, Ms. Zhou lowered her head towards Jenna and asked her again. Jenna looked at the blackboard and answered “天” (tian, sky).

In step 3: Ms. Zhou first repeated her answer “天” (tian, sky) (line 9). Then as she looked at the blackboard, she exclaimed quietly “oh”, indicating that she saw the character Jenna wanted to erase. In step 4: Jenna erased the “天” (tian, sky) correctly in “天堂” (tiantang, heaven). In step 5: Seeing Jenna erasing the right character, Ms. Zhou praised her “very good”. As Jenna looked for another “天” (tian, sky) in the text, Ms. Zhou gave her a hint “蓝天(lantian, blue sky), 天(tian, sky)”, meaning there is another “天” (tian, sky) in “蓝天” (lantian, blue sky). Then Jenna looked up and down, and found it. As she erased the
other “天” (tian, sky), Ms. Zhou praised her many times (line 15, 16). Then Ms. Zhou indicated the end of her turn by saying “ok” and another turn begins.

It seems Ms. Zhou has a ritual to let the whole class have a deep impression of the characters being erased. She used different ways to make erasing characters, a seemingly individual activity, become a group learning activity, involving other children as observers, listeners and hearers.

In step2, Ms. Zhou asked the child to say out which character he or she is going to erase. On the one hand, she tested the child’s knowledge of the character: the sound of the character and match of its form. On the other hand, she directed the whole class’ attention to her question and the child’s answer. The whole class was on the same page in erasing the character at the moment. In other words, though it is one child erasing the character, it is all the other children observing too. Other children provided help or hint for the child on the stage. For example, when a child was erasing many “的 (de, )” in the text, another child would say “you missed one”, or pointing to the position of the character to be erased “one more there, next to 草 (cao, grass)”.

In step 3, Ms. Zhou repeated the character the child wanted to erase. She not only acknowledged that she heard what the child said. But also it was a way to make sure the rest of the class know the character to be erased. She was repeating the character for the class, engaging the whole class in a character hunting game. Sometimes Ms. Zhou would raise her voice to repeat the child’s choice of words. For example in David’s turn, he told Ms. Zhou he wanted to erase 未来 (weilai, future). Then Ms. Zhou repeated 未来 (weilai, future) for twice; and in the second time she raised her voice significantly, indicating she was addressing the whole class.
In step 5, aside from providing feedback, Ms. Zhou also often repeated the words that have been erased to the class. For example, she would say “Dan erased 未来 (weilai, future)” or “Anne erased 梦想 (mengxiang, dream)” etc, so as to reinforce the whole class’ impression of the character that has just been erased.

After the characters are erased, Ms. Zhou asked them to read the text as a group by themselves, this time reading from the hand-out.

Through 學 (xue, learning) and different forms of 習 (xi, practice) discussed above, each character in the lesson will be repeated for at least five times: teacher’s writing and explanation the first time, reading lesson on blackboard together twice, erasing characters, reading together from the copied text one more time. In the process, children build on their knowledge of Chinese characters, including form, sound and meaning.

5.3.2 習 (xi)-練習 (practice)-寫 (xie, children’s own writing).

In 習 (xi)-練習 (practice)-寫 (xie, children’s own writing), children work on character writing skills. Usually Chinese character writing is as important a part of young children’s learning of the writing system as recognizing and reading characters. However, in this class children’s writing of characters is not emphasized as much, due to the textbook they were using. The textbook designer believes it is better for Chinese children in America to recognize characters first and write characters later.

Children’s own writing practice is always arranged at the end of the class. In this class, Ms. Zhou handed the practice writing sheet. She handed them out to the children, and also gave each one of them a pencil. The children started working on their own.
The practice sheet is a form of “田字格” (Tianzige, 田-shaped cell). Throughout history, 田字格 (Tianzige, 田-shaped cell) has gone through different stages of transformation. The earliest form of Tianzige can be traced back as early as Qin Dynasty, the first imperial dynasty in ancient China, about 2,200 years ago. Nowadays it is still very popular to help young children writing character. In this class, “田字格” (Tianzige or 田-shaped cell) is mainly used to train the children in writing strokes, writing order, and writing structure, and radicals. In the practice sheet, “田字格” (Tianzige or 田-shaped cell) looks like this:

Figure 15. Tian-Shaped Cell in the Practice Sheet

The top part of the practice sheet demonstrates the correct stroke order of each character. For example, the first character 上 (shang, above) has three strokes, and the
order is $\begin{array}{c|c|c} \hline \text{石} & \text{田} & \text{土} \\ \hline \end{array}$. Below are rows of 田-shaped cells. Each row has nine 田-shaped cells: The first cell in the row models the character to be practiced.

For today’s practice, they have four characters to practice “石 (shi, stone), 田 (tian, field), 土 (tu, earth), 木 (mu, wood)”. Jenna would fill in the other eight 田-shaped cells with “石” (shi, stone) for eight times, following the writing order on the top, and the model character structure at the beginning of the row. She is supposed to work on her own. Once she turned around to see her peer’s writing, Ms. Zhou told her to write her own characters. Children are expected to focus their attention on their own writing practice.

Photo 10. Jenna Writing Chinese Characters

Overall Ms. Zhou acted as a supervisor, walking around the class to check each child’s writing progress. In between, she bent over and commented on the child’s writing.
Occasionally, she squatted besides the child, closely observing and guiding the writing process, working like a coach. In general, Ms. Zhou emphasized the exactness of character forms, making sure the children were writing characters with right stroke order, shape and length as well as a balanced structure.

Photo 11. Mr. Zhou as a Coach in Children's Writing Characters

20110814 33:50-34:58

ZH: Ms. Zhou; CH: Christina; translation in italics

1 ZH: 这个，框框，横，然后一竖.

ZH: This, a square, heng, and then one shu.

2 CH: eh.

CH: eh

3 ZH: 对.

ZH: Right.

Inside the cell, write heng first and then shu

4 在里面，先写横，后写竖.

Right, right.

5 对，好.

6 土，土，很好.

((pointing at the practice form))

((writing on the practice form))

((looking at her writing))

((pointing at the practice form))
7 木头的木，
像一棵木头一样，写的更直一点。

8 笔划这里先写这个，一般都先写横。

9 哎对，先横后直，然后一撇，一捺。

土，看好，
先写一横，一般都是先写一横。

CH: Eh

ZH: 先横后竖，对。

You wrote a 士(shi, soldier).

If the lower 横(heng, horizontal stroke) is very short, it becomes a 士(shi, soldier).

These two characters are different.
16 这个是土字，

这个呢?

上面长，战士的士.

This is a 土 (tu, earth).

What about this one?

Its upper 横 (heng, horizontal stroke) is longer, it’s 士 (shi, soldier), as in 战士 (zhanshi, soldier).

CH: Eh.

ZH: Write the length of a stroke correctly, ok?

CH: Eh.

ZH: 长短不能写错，ok?

((looking at practice form))

One basic rule in stroke order she emphasized is 先横后竖 (heng first and shu second) (line 1, 4, 8, 10, 12). Also the shape of a stroke matters. One rule of thumb is 横平竖直 (horizontal heng and vertical shu) (line 7). She also emphasized the shape of the character 木 (mu, wood) should be like a tree, standing upright. In addition, the length of a stroke is also important. For example “士” (tu, earth) and “士” (shi, soldier) are two different characters. When she saw the child’s writing of 土 (tu, earth) resembled more of a 士 (shi, soldier), Ms. Zhou wrote 土 (tu, earth) and 士 on the child’s paper demonstrating the difference between the two characters: in 士 (shi, soldier), the upper 横 is longer than the low 横; while in 土 (tu, earth), it is the opposite— the upper 横 should
be shorter than the low 横. In the process, the child responded with eh, showing her following Ms. Zhou’s instruction.

These different stroke order, shape and length can be quite complex for a five year old. Probably that’s why they are required to write it eight times, to ensure the correct form.

5.3.3 習(xi)–複習(review)–溫(wen, reviewing).

複習(fuxi, review) is regarded as both a method to test what a child has learned, and a method of learning. One accumulates knowledge by refreshing his memory of what has been learned. That’s why it is an integral part of each class. Review of old lessons can take different forms: one is filling in the missing characters, followed by collective read aloud; another is simply collective reading aloud of a previous lesson. Still there is constant reviewing of old characters in the new lesson. I will show an example of reviewing by filling in the missing characters. It checks both the child’s learning of character form, sound and meaning, and their character writing skills.

Ms. Zhou wrote the previous lesson on the blackboard and left several characters out. During her writing, the children all looked at the blackboard and watched her writing.

This is the last lesson we learned, do you remember it? Here I have several characters missing, I need little friends to fill them in, OK? What characters are they? These are several characters we learned last time. 这是我们上次学的课，还记得吗？我这儿有几个缺的字，我需要小朋友填下来，OK？这是哪几个字呢，这是上次学的几个字。
Then she modeled writing the missing characters one by one and asked the whole class about their pronunciation.

Photo 12. Ms. Zhou Modelling the Missing Characters

20110731 01:14-01:24

ZH: Ms. Zhou; S?: Unknown student; SS: Students; translation in italics

1 ZH: 上次学了这个字.  ZH: *Last time we learned this character.*  (Ms. Zhou wrote 千 (Qian, thousand) on blackboard))

2 这个字,  This character,  

3 什么字呀?  What is it?

4 S?: 千.  S?: *Qian.*

5 SS: 千.  SS: *Qian.*  ((looking at the blackboard))

6 ZH: 千，很好.  ZH: *Qian, very good.*
Also she asked about the meaning of the character by having the children put the character into compounds to check their understanding of the character meaning:

20110731 01:28-01:35

ZH: Ms. Zhou; S?: Unknown student; SS: Students; translation in italics

1 ZH: (.2)  
2 这是什么字呀?  
What character is this?
3 SS: 见.  
4 ZH: 什么见?  
Which 见(Jian, see)?  
5 SS: 见, 见.  

6 ZH: 看不见的见=  
7 S?: =看不见的见.  
8 ZH: 看不见的见.  

(Wrote 见(jian, see))
((looking at the blackboard))
((looking at the blackboard))

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After making sure the children can say out loud the missing characters and know their meanings, Ms. Zhou then asked the students to come forward and write the missing characters in the blanks. Although she had model characters written on the blackboard, she encouraged the students to write the characters out from their memory.
I have an example here, but if you can write it without looking at mine, that’s better.
我这儿有一个例子，你如果不用看就能写，更好。

She asked four children forward and they filled in the missing characters (see picture below).

![Photo 13. Missing Characters Filled in by the Children](image)

After each child finished writing the character, she usually commented on the children’s writing. On the one hand, she pointed out what the child can do better—correction; and on the other hand she also gave positive feedback praising the good side of the writing. For example when commenting on the child’s writing of 雨(yu, rain), she said:

There are two raindrops here, Christina; one small gou (turning) here, shu (vertical) zhegou (turning) ((in a secretive tone)). The overall shape is right, ok, there are raindrops, like it’s raining, very good!
这两个雨点，Christina，这上面有个小勾，竖折勾 ((声音小，偷偷的))...大形状是对的，ok，有小雨点，像下雨的样子，非常好！

When she commented on the child’s writing of 千 (qian, thousand), she said:

Here it is a zhi (vertical), if you write it more straight, it would be better, beautiful, good job!
这个小直，要写的直一点，就更好了，beautiful，good job!

In the first example, Ms. Zhou minimized her correction of the child’s lowering her voice to keep it between herself and the child. In the second example, she pointed out her correction indirectly using a concession clause. In both cases, she amplified her praise for their writing by using multiple praises in a loud voice. Doing so, Ms. Zhou established the children as capable and good writers.

Once the children finished filling in the blanks, she then would ask the children to read out loud the text from beginning to end as a group. In the process, the teacher was also reading loud together with them: controlling the rhythm character by character, emphasizing the sound of characters, and also providing positive feedback at intervals.

To conclude, the Chinese writing system is seen as an entity that can be transmitted to the children. Though 學 (xue, learning) and 習 (xi, review, practice), the children in this class are expected to develop mastery of the character sound and meanings, and become skillful producers of character form. Compared with recognizers of Chinese characters, their roles as writers of Chinese characters are marginalized and minimized for children at this age. Characters are viewed as building blocks for their future reading and writing abilities.
5.4 Discussion

After discussing how young children learn to write through 學 (xue, learning) and 習 (xi, review, practice). This section will look at the types of writers and learners they are socialized to become.

5.4.1 Becoming a culturally specific writer.

I will talk about the cultural meanings of becoming a writer in the Chinese class, focusing on beliefs about early writing, and the relationship between writing and speaking, and the relationship between writing and reading.

What is early writing?

This section discusses the forms and functions of early writing in this class.

Firstly, early writing stresses on correct form. Children are expected to follow several basic writing conventions of Chinese characters, including stroke form, stroke order, size and structure of a character. Some of the basic rules are:

- 横平竖直: horizontal heng and vertical shu
- 先横后直: heng first and shu second
- 大小适中: not too small, not too big
- 结构匀称: balanced structure

Writing is a skill to master. Writing means conformance to standard as much as possible. Children should strive for exactness in writing form. There are several reasons on such expectation of form exactness: (1) Given the complexity of Chinese characters, children can write them only when they are well trained in the basics; (2) it prevents misunderstanding: take 土(tu, earth) and 士(shi, soldier) for example, they have the same
number of strokes and same order of strokes, but the lengths of two horizontal strokes are
different. (3) It reflects a person’s character. A person who writes characters beautifully
is considered well educated and has good characters. A Chinese saying goes “字如其人”
(
zi ru qi ren): One’s handwriting reveals his personality. Jia (2009) also mentioned this is
a concept held by many Chinese adults, especially those educated in the 1960s and 1970s,
when one’s handwriting is emphasized.

Secondly, the communicative function of writing is not emphasized at this stage,
but the number of words learned to write is emphasized. They are expected to read 105
characters when they finish the three books in Grade one, and write 20-30 of them. When
they finish Grade 4, they are expected to read about 1500 characters. Early writing mostly
is viewed as building up written language foundation – writing characters; while later
writing is for literary purposes: a child writes to communicate through different literary
genres like describing an object, an event or a person. There is a clear cut-off point of
writing as mechanical skills and writing as communication in literary genres. The former
is emphasized in before grade 4 and the latter is the emphasis starting grade 5.

The early writing materials used in the class are not so much for communicative
purposes, but more for moral, aesthetic and cultural purposes, with a good exposure to
different literary genres, like poems, riddles, and stories, etc.

Therefore, the children don’t have much sense of ownership of writings, but they
develop a respect for written characters, a value and enjoyment of classics. This is very
different from children’s creation or exploration of writings in preschool.
**Write and talk.**

In this class, it is teacher’s talk, rather than child’s talk, that dominates. Her talk is for the purpose of writing and explaining the meaning of characters. Children’s spontaneous talk during writing is discouraged. When practicing writing, the children are expected to work on their own. Talking with each other is viewed as interruptive of one’s learning. In general, talking in the class without the teacher’s request or permission is regarded as disruptive of class order.

Secondly, in Chinese class, writing is seldom everyday conversation written down. This is very different from the preschool where children and teachers write down what they say. Writing can be conversation written down. However, in Chinese culture there is a belief about writing being more on the literary side. They are more deep and condensed compared with oral language.

Thirdly, in general there is a discouragement of using English. But it is ok if teacher and students code switch\(^7\) to English to facilitate their understanding of Chinese character. For example, the teacher used hometown to explain 故乡 (guxiang, hometown), providing an English translation immediately after modeling the sounds of the characters.

It seems the teacher is taking advantage of their spoken English language and to help them understand the meaning of certain characters. Code-switching becomes an effective teaching and communicative strategy. However, sometimes it can be confusing. For example, when the teacher asked about the meaning of 暖房 (greenhouse), the

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\(^7\) This paper follows Winford’s (2003) definition of code switching as “those cases where bilingual speakers alternate between codes within the same speech event, switch codes within a single turn, or mix elements from two codes within the same utterance” (p. 103). In the Chinese school, the code switching is usually within a single turn, or within the same utterance.
children guessed its meaning to be “warm house”, a literal translation of 暖 (nuan, warm) and 房 (fang, house). Aside from helping meaning making, the teacher also uses English in procedural language, like “try 一下” (let’s try a little bit) and “good job”. In a word, English is limited to when it facilitates learning of Chinese: as a bilingual resource and as a class management tool.

**Read and write.**

Firstly, in terms of the relationship between “认字” (renzi, recognizing characters) and “写字” (xiezi, writing characters), the philosophy of the textbook is “先认后写, 多认少写” (recognizing characters first, writing characters later; more recognizing and less writing). It believes given the lack of language environment and limited time in learning Chinese, young children in America would be more motivated and have a sense of achievement if they could read more and write less. For students in this class: writing is given less emphasis in their earlier stages of learning. They are expected to recognize and read about 1500 characters when they finish Grade 4, which are the mostly frequently used in written Chinese, and expected to write 500 of them. Though it may not appear to be a large number, it is enough for the Chinese children to read in daily life. This is one advantage of Chinese language-each character is rich in meaning and is versatile in producing meaning with different characters.

Secondly, reading is believed to be the foundation for writing. On the one hand, when recognizing and reading the characters, the children get to understand the form-meaning connection. Give the unique feature of Chinese characters, the meaning is often encoded in the form. That is why in the Chinese class a reading instruction turned out to be a writing instruction too: the teacher explains the structure of characters and examines
how their composing parts (radicals) together produce meaning. On the other hand, the number of characters accumulated in reading is believed to be important for good writing at later stage.

In the Chinese class, children learn reading and writing in a more connected way because they are reading the characters themselves. In order to do that, they have to memorize the form of characters, and understand the meaning of each character in the context. This helps later writing of characters, and short articles.

**Read aloud and write.**

In this class, writing is both oral and textual. It is oral in the sense that writing is something to read out loud, together—誦 (song, reading aloud the text). The texts in the class are usually short in length, and have parallel structures, which are good for rhyming. They are tailored to child’s interest, easy to remember, and fun to read out. Take a poem for example (translation in italics):

| 一去两三米， | At the distance of one two three meters, |
| 路边四五家； | There are four five houses along the road; |
| 门前六七树， | In front the doors of which six seven trees stand, |
| 八九十朵花。 | In which eight nine ten flowers blossom. |

Figure 16. A Chinese Poem

There are also many riddles (translation in italics):

1. 上边毛，下边毛，中间一个黑葡萄。
Hair up, hair below, a black grape is in between.

2. 红公鸡，绿尾巴，一头钻到地底下。

Red rooster, with a green tail, heads down the earth in a blink.

3. 左一片，右一片，中间一座山，两边看不见。

One on the left, one on the right, a mountain in between prevents them from seeing each other.

During my interview with Jenna’s mom, Jenna was very excited giving me riddles. She gave me four riddles in a row, which were all from their textbook.

Reading aloud also builds on these children’s strength of the Chinese spoken language. Since they already know how to speak the language, it is easier for them to connect written forms with sounds and read out the characters. But the downside is that sometimes the children do not necessarily read the characters but just recite them from memory. For example, the children often read ahead of the teacher’s writing. This according to McGee and Richgels (2008) is a way that children making sense of printing by matching it with spoken units (pp. 18-19).

To conclude, early writing in the Chinese class stresses children’s correct reproduction of character meaning and forms. They seldom write and talk at the same time, their reading and recognizing of Chinese characters is emphasized more than their writing, and they read aloud to memorize the text and characters within. They are socialized to become reproducer of the written form of Chinese language. Early writing in the class is not so much for communicative purposes, but more for moral, aesthetic and cultural purposes. Therefore, the children don’t have much sense of ownership of
writings, but they develop a respect for written characters, a value and enjoyment of classics.

5.4.2 Becoming a culturally specific learner.

This section discusses the learning beliefs embedded in this class, and also examines the specific cultural parameters of becoming an age-appropriate learner by focusing on characteristics of the adult-child relationship in this class.

Learning writing as a cognitive, behavioral and social process.

Firstly, learning is viewed as a cognitive process. Knowledge is more viewed as passed on from the teacher to the student. It is a process of transmission. And the child becomes aware of or understands the teacher’s explanation. These features are especially evident in 認字 (recognizing characters) and 讀字 (reading characters). Aside from understanding teacher’s teaching, learning is also cognitive given the emphasis on memorization. Different techniques are employed in the class to facilitate children’s memory: repetitive memory during reading aloud, short term memory during erasing characters, and long term memory during reviewing old lessons. Learning emphasizes the quantitative accumulation of knowledge inside the children’s head.

Secondly, learning is viewed as behavioral, which is evident in children’s practicing writing skills. Through repetitive copying of model characters, the children gradually sharpen their skills writing Chinese characters: writing stroke form correctly, following the right stroke order, and producing a well balanced structure. In the end, they develop a skill to write characters clearly and beautifully.
Thirdly, the teacher came up with different strategies to facilitate the child’s learning. And she supported their learning by providing encouragement, or giving hints, or making the tasks easier for the child to perform. For example, in filling in missing characters, she first modeled the characters missing and then asked the children come forward and fill in the blanks by themselves.

**Teacher-learner relationship.**

This section summarizes the relationship revealed in different learning activities discussed earlier. Firstly, in 認字 (recognizing characters) and 讀字 (reading characters), the learning process is very much children’s following a teacher’s explicit teaching. The emphasis on both parties is: Teacher’s explicit teaching through explanation (傳, chuan), and child learner’s hearing and understanding through attention and focus (聞, wen). In the explanation of new characters, the children’s role is mainly that of a recipient and follower of the meaning created by the teacher. When Ms. Zhou explains new characters, the children should listen, hear, follow, and become aware. In the process, children’s spontaneous talk is discouraged. Children seldom pose questions. There was one boy who constantly putting forward questions; Ms. Zhou would deal with him in different ways: simply acknowledge him, put him on hold, or ignore him.

Secondly, in reading aloud, erasing characters, and reviewing old lessons, the teacher resembled more of a preschool teacher, mainly providing support for the child’s active participation in learning. She modeled reading text, staged erasing character as a game, and turned individual filling in blanks to a collective learning activity. She was mainly a supporter and guide while the children were active users of the knowledge they just learned from the teacher.
One thing common in different learning activities is that the teacher usually interacts with the students as a whole, rather than as individuals. In 认字 (recognizing characters) and 讀字 (reading characters), Ms. Zhou’s attention is directed to the whole class. In reading aloud, children are expected to read in a choral. In children’s own practice, the teacher is mainly a supervisor, with occasional tutoring for a child who had most difficulty. Erasing characters and filling in blanks are probably the two activities in which the teacher interacted mostly with the individual child, though she also kept an eye on the group attention.

Given the above discussion, we can see two characteristics of teacher-child relationship in the Chinese class are: (1) teacher teaches and child follows; (2) teacher interacts with the children as a collective, instead of an individual. It is because of these two features that the teacher emphasized individual child’s attention in different learning activities.

Teachers in Chinese class tend to interact with children as a collective. This has been recorded in literature on interaction in other Chinese class, too (He, 2003). On the one hand, it probably has to do with the Chinese tradition of collectivism, a society in which people are integrated into “strong, cohesive in-groups (Hofstede’s, 2001, p. 225). On the other hand, it also has to do with the American context: Chinese children are more likely to be treated as a collective and the inter-group differences among Chinese are minimized to sustain overall learning motive of Chinese language and its maintenance. Based on my observation and overall feeling of the class, another reason is the students’ collective identity as Chinese is emphasized. In English class, they are socialized to become a kind of American, not American in general. In Chinese class, the pan-Chinese
identity is emphasized. They don’t have to develop Chinese ways of doing things, but they have to identify with Chinese people and Chinese culture. (Though inevitably, they learn to become certain types of learners in interacting with Chinese teacher.) Coming to the Chinese class, learning to read and write Chinese characters demonstrate their identification. The teacher’s job is to teach them all something and let all have a sense of learning and knowing, and performing (read aloud). He (2009)’s study also described Chinese language as important for maintaining Chinese identity, and the differences among Chinese language is de-emphasized in order to support pan-American Chinese identity. For example, both simplified and traditional Chinese are valued at school, although they usually are connected with different social and political meanings. In other words, minor differences are put aside to seek common ground in being Chinese in America.

Although the interaction between the teacher and children as a collective is at the center, there are also moments of individual focus, like filling in blanks, erasing characters, and individual coaching in writing characters.

One thing worth mentioning is that, in the class, given the double role of a mother and a teacher, Ms. Zhou showed some mixed features of both roles: on the one hand, she explains and the children listen; she provides and the children participate; she corrects and the children follow; on the other hand, she was very sympathetic with the children, showing understanding of their learning difficulties, praising them very often for their learning, and very often shifting her role from the helper to the helped. For example, when she asked the child to fill in the missing characters, she asked the child “Can you
help me write it?” Such motherly roles make the traditional practices less boring for the children, but more a responsibility for them to learn and endure through the process.

5.5 Home-Sunday School Connection in Writing Practices

Very interestingly, Chinese learning at Sunday school resembles parents’ expectations about their child’s Chinese language development. In addition, parent’s expectations of the teacher-child relationship are similar to that in the Sunday school.

5.5.1 What do parents believe and do about Chinese writing in U.S.?

The expectations of the parents for their children’s Chinese language show similar features in general. They expect their children to speak and read Chinese while writing is mostly regarded as beyond their expectations. Such expectation of writing is closely related to their beliefs about the role of Chinese language in U.S., which is discussed case by case in this section:

_Evan Wang._

Evan Wang’s parents regarded Chinese as a communicative tool with their child. They particularly emphasized the role of Chinese language in disciplining the child.

Chinese language is important because it is the language we use to educate him. I don’t think it’s going to be a problem for him to be able to speak English because he eventually will learn it at school. But when he grows older, it is almost impossible to educate him in English. What if he talks back to you in English, you are going to talk him down in English? Not likely at all. (Evan Wang parents interview 20110616)

因为小孩子教育啊什么东西是要用的：他以后对英语来说，我一点也不愁他以后不会说英语，上学什么的都是说英语。但是他要是再大一点，以后，你要是用英语教育他，根本不可能的。他要是用英语给你顶嘴，你用英语回，根本不可能。
That’s why his parents feel Chinese is important for them, but not so much for Evan. It is the language in which they communicate best with the child, especially when it comes to education: disciplining the child’s behavior and teaching him moral values.

In addition to communication and education, Evan’s father also feels Evan Wang can use Chinese to fulfill school requirement for learning another language. He feels it would be easier for him to learn Chinese (reading and writing) because he already speaks the language.

For Evan’s parents, Chinese is the language they could not only communicate in daily, but also the language in which they maintain their authority in educating the child. It also gives him an edge in fulfilling school requirement of learning a foreign language. Their beliefs about the role of Chinese language have a direct impact on their expectation of their child’s Chinese language.

In terms of expectation of Chinese level, his parents expect him to speak the language. Evan’s mother wants him to be able to read, though he does not necessarily have to write the characters. While his father thinks it would be very difficult to read and write. There are circumstantial constraints, like there may not be a Chinese school around. And teaching him at home is not a realistic option either.

_Evan Lang._

Evan Lang’s mother emphasizes the affective side of communication with Evan in Chinese: the closeness, the exactness, and the humor flavor, which she can’t get if they speak English.

For example, when Evan started learning to speak (Chinese), he made all sorts of
mistakes, and sometimes those mistakes make sense: why didn’t it occur to me like that? Like highway, in comparison with high, he would say low way. But in English you can only say local. I can’t tell exactly. It’s just things like this, which you can’t feel if you speak English. There is something missing (when speaking English). (Evan Lang mom interview 20110715)

比如刚学语言的时候，他就会出错，有时候说还挺 make sense 的，为什么我就没想到会这样，比如说高速公路吧，相对与高，他就说矮速公路，用英语只能讲 local，不知道该怎么讲，就是诸如此类的一些东西吧，用英语的话体会不到了，总是隔着什么东西。

That’s why she mentioned speaking in Chinese with her boy is more for the sake of her personal feelings.

Aside from her expectation on the personal communicative and entertaining needs, she also sees the economic and social value of Chinese language. “It’s good for his future. You don’t know what he is going to do in the future. Having an extra skill means an edge”. (Evan Wang parents’ interview 20110715)

Her beliefs about Chinese language also impact her expectation of Evan’s Chinese language level. Her only expectation for Evan is to speak Chinese and write his Chinese name, which is her bottom line. Ideally, she expects him to be able to read for entertainment purposes, like popular novels or Kung Fu novels and roving martial legends. However, Evan’s father disagreed. According to Evan’s mother, his father and grandma have higher expectations. They expect him to be able to write. On the one hand, they regard writing Chinese as part of being Chinese; on the other hand, they believe being able to write Chinese would put him in an equal position with his peers if he goes back to China for his career. Evan’s mom said:

She (grandma) feels it is an easy thing to do: In China, other kids can do it, surely you can too. However, in U.S. without the Chinese learning environment, how can it be so easy? (Evan Lang mom interview 20110715)
Jenna Li.

Jenna’s mom talked about the importance of Chinese for Jenna in three aspects.

Firstly, mainly Chinese is used for daily communication. This is especially true when most of her extended family are in China.

Also in terms of knowing Chinese culture, she expects her to read Chinese books.

It will be natural for her to become part of American society. However, it is hard to keep the Chinese part, there is not such an environment. (Jenna mom interview 20110617)

In addition, learning and maintaining Chinese will help her in the future in her identity issues.

I have met some children who are undergraduates or graduate students, who want to return to and connect with their own Chinese culture. It can be very difficult, maybe not very difficult, but requires a lot of work: they have to learn Chinese characters from scratch. At that time when they grow up, they have a need to look for their roots, they need an identity. For now, she doesn’t feel that need yet: children from different countries play together, but later she will have her personal feelings and need (to Chinese roots). (Jenna mom interview 20110617)

Such consideration of her child’s future identity on the mother’s part is not to say that she wants her to be Chinese, rather, Chinese being part of her. She realized that her daughter might not be an exception of children growing up in America.
In general, she will at most say she is a Chinese American. I don’t know. I see children grow up and gradually refer to themselves as Americans. They, their worlds, need identification from her friends, who are mostly Americans. (Jenna mom interview 20110617)

The mother’s hope for her daughter’s identity is not bound by nationalities or ethnicities.

But I hope her nationality doesn’t impact the kind of person she will be. I hope she-, people in different countries are the same, ultimately being a human with integrity is all the same. Here in America the conditions are a bit different and she can have more freedom in exploring her own potential, not like in China the competition among children are fierce. (Jenna mom interview 20110617)

Given her beliefs about the role of Chinese language, she thinks it is important for Jenna to learn to write Chinese characters. She started letting her study in the Sunday school when she was 4.5 years old; and at home the parents teach Jenna Chinese, too. Jenna practices writing characters at home, too.

We can see parents show some similar features in Chinese language expectation: they expect them to read and speak the language, ideally write. Such expectation is similar to the textbook used in the Sunday school. It is indeed based on the American circumstance, where children don’t have much real need for writing characters.

Both Evans’ parents say they will send their child to Chinese school if possible. Evan Wang’s father regarded it as the most important place for the child to learn to read
and write Chinese since he doesn’t believe it is realistic for parents to teach him at home. Evan Lang’s mother would give him the choice of going or not going to Chinese school, depending on his interest. But she also acknowledged

Chinese children in America usually go to Chinese school when they start public school. It is the time when the children’s Chinese language starts diminishing. It’s like two forces competing with each other. The child wouldn’t listen if the parents teach them (Chinese). That’s why they are sent to Chinese school to reinforce their Chinese. (Evan Lang mom interview 20110715)

这边的中国孩子一般“上学都会去，一开始上学中文就会退步，像两股势力在打仗，家长教教，小孩又不听，就送去，强化一下。

Joanna’s parents have already enrolled her in the Sunday Chinese School for about a year since September 2009. For her it is an important practice to help her child to maintain Chinese language and culture.

When parents send the child to the school, they have their expectation for the school: to communicate, to read, and ideally to write. In addition, school provides an environment that is missing in the American context. Also it serves as a counter force once the children started formal schooling in kindergarten. Beyond the language level, for some of the parents it is a place where Chinese culture could be read about and talked about. And eventually their language and cultural experiences could go into their identity formation, and help them be socialized by the best practices of Chinese culture.

5.5.2 What do parents believe about learning?

In terms of learning, the Sunday school practice also shares some similar features with parents’ beliefs’ about learning and teaching. In the former section, we discussed
Chinese parents expect teachers to teach, and it is what’s happening in Sunday school—teacher’s explicit teaching takes majority of time.

Another similarity I want to focus on is the emphasis on the child’s focus in learning. In the class, Ms. Zhou used different ways to focus the child’s attention: mainly nonverbal and occasionally verbal. This value of a learner’s focus has been discussed earlier:

…they (the teachers) don’t care about how much focus the child has on what she does; at home, if we ask her to do something, we’ll see it through. (Jenna mom interview 20110617)

他们不去管你这个 focus 的时间有多长，在家里我们会说你把这件事情做完，再做这件事。

Such philosophy about learning in general also comes up in interviews with other parents. In my interview with Evan Wang’s father, he told me about the story of kitty goes fishing

He listens to the story intently, and sometimes tells us about the story. When something happens later on, I will use stories in there to talk about it. In general he remembers the story and can apply the story in the context. Take Kitty goes fishing as an example, sometimes when he is not focused doing things, I will say you are the kitty going fishing; he would defend himself: I am not chasing the butterfly, haha. (Evan Wang parents interview 20110616)

他听的挺专心的，有时候会把故事讲给我们听；后面发生了什么事情，我用里面的故事讲给他听，基本上他都记得，他就把他用到上面去，比如小猫钓鱼，有时候做事不专心啊，我说他小猫钓鱼，他说我没有去追蝴蝶，哈哈。

Evan Lang’s mom also talked about her expectation of the preschool to provide some concentrated learning experience.

They can learn more as long as they don’t feel miserable. For example, if he can concentrate for 10 minutes, then they learn something in the 10 minutes, instead of playing all the 10 minutes away. (Evan Wang parents interview 20110715)
To conclude, many of the parents’ expectation of Chinese language in general, and writing in particular, as well as learning experiences are realized in the Chinese Sunday school. These findings add to evidence that community-based organization like the Chinese school is an important socialization venue for minority children in the U.S. (Zhou & Kim, 2006).
Chapter 6: Conclusion

This section presents a comparative discussion of the major findings from two school settings, discusses their differences, similarities, and changes in socializing young children into early writing practices. It also discusses the educational and theoretical implications of the findings, concluding with some practical suggestions for schools, parents and communities in bilingual and multilingual contexts.

6.1 Comparative Discussion of Findings from Two School Settings

The comparison is done in two very different settings. Aligning with the local state Department of Education, the American preschool aims for children’s development in four domains that are essential for their school readiness, including social and emotional development, physical well-being and motor development, language and literacy development, and development in cognition and general knowledge. The goal of language and literacy development, including early writing development, in the American preschool is to prepare the children for public schools. Moreover, it is often intertwined with development in the other three domains. Writing activities in the preschool class are multifunctional: they not only promote children’s writing knowledge and skills but also help their social, physical, and cognitive development as well as building up their general knowledge of the world around them. In contrast, the Chinese Sunday school is a

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8 The comparison between home and preschool, and that between home and Sunday school have been discussed in Chapter 4 and 5 respectively. Here it focuses on the comparison between the two school settings.
community-based organization to help the first generation Chinese children maintain their home language and their connection to Chinese culture. Chinese language serves as a medium for transmitting Chinese culture, rather than a medium for academic success. Writing materials and activities are usually designed to help children memorize Chinese characters, practice writing skills, and increase their knowledge about Chinese moral and cultural values.

It is important to compare socialization in these two very different educational settings because both of them are often times integral parts of the lives of Chinese children growing up in the U.S. The purpose of such comparison is to break down cultural stereotypes and promote our understanding of the differences and similarities of the two educational settings. Such knowledge would help children’s English learning at preschool, their heritage language learning at Chinese school, and bring school, home, and community together in bringing up young bilinguıals and multilinguıals in America.

6.1.1 The differences.

This section looks the differences between the two classrooms in socializing young writers, which include differences in the types of writers and learners the children are socialized into. They are a result of different cultural and classroom values, early literacy beliefs, the difference between Chinese and English languages, and the specific context of Chinese in America.

The different kinds of writers socialized.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>English preschool</th>
<th>Chinese Sunday school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Author &gt; animator; ownership of writing; to communicate</td>
<td>Recognizer, animator &gt; author; respect for writing; to inherit and transmit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about early writing</td>
<td>A variety of forms; multi-functional</td>
<td>Correct conventional form; literary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write and talk</td>
<td>Combined—writing can be conversation written down</td>
<td>Separate modes—writing is more on the literary side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write and read</td>
<td>Read and write at the same time; Reading helps writing</td>
<td>Read first, write later; Reading builds the foundation for writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write and read aloud</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Writing is both textual and oral; children match text with spoken units; Read aloud helps memorize characters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. The Different Kinds of Writers Socialized

In preschool, children are socialized to become authors. Their individual ideas are valued more than the written form. That’s why a variety of written forms are recognized and valued, like drawing and scribbling. Their roles as animators are not emphasized at
this stage. At Chinese Sunday school, however, children are encouraged to become recognizer and animator of individual Chinese characters. Their roles as authors are not a focus of training. Rather their understanding of the written text and correctness in written form is emphasized. They learn to inherit the written language system and culture embodied within. In the process, they are expected to develop a respect for written text and value Chinese culture.

Very often Chinese children in preschool can’t write the actual words; but they do write for communicative purposes, like composing letters and gift notes. Chinese children at Sunday school can write actual characters; but they do not write for communicative purposes. Such practices on the one hand are a result of early writing ideologies. Early writing in English is viewed as performance of functions and children’s ideas are valued; while early writing in Chinese is viewed as performance of writing skills instead of functions, and their ideas are not expected to be expressed at a later stage. On the other hand, they are a result of differential functions of writing playing in English and Chinese societies. In mainstream English society, people write cards and letters to each other; while in Chinese society people seldom write each other cards and writing is seldom everyday conversation written down: in Chinese, writing is regarded deep and more for literary purposes.

In preschool, the children learn to read and write together. However, in Chinese Sunday school, reading is taught first, and writing later. Reading is believed to be the foundation for children to write. Reading aloud is valued an effective learning method, helping children memorizing the characters form, sound, and meanings. This resembles the traditional teaching of early Chinese literacy. However, it also differs from the
traditional practice: traditionally, Chinese character writing is emphasized as much as reading characters, if not more so; here in America the Chinese character writing is minimized. The textbook they were using believes such practice would sustain children’s learning interest, and let them have a sense of achievement. Writing characters too much could be too demanding for the Chinese children in the U.S.

The different kinds of learning valued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English preschool</th>
<th>Chinese Sunday school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of learning</td>
<td>Cognitive, social</td>
<td>Cognitive, behavioral, social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning philosophy</td>
<td>Through play</td>
<td>Through 學 (xue, learning) and 習 (xi, review, practice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner</td>
<td>Creative, imaginative, adventurous</td>
<td>Focus, discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning content</td>
<td>Child-centered</td>
<td>Teacher-decided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching approach</td>
<td>implicit</td>
<td>explicit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. The Different Kinds of Learning Valued

In the preschool, learning is viewed both a cognitive and social activity, emphasizing children’s exploring physical world and interaction with people around them. A variety of play activities give the children the space to do so: to develop their own interest and also seek help when needed. In Chinese school, learning is viewed a cognitive, behavioral and social activity, emphasizing children following teacher’s explanation and their own practice of the content of learned. Learning occurs through 學
(xue, learning) and 習 (xi, review, practice). In preschool children are becoming more creative, imaginative, and adventurous learners; in Chinese Sunday school children are becoming more focused and disciplined learners.

**The different kinds of interaction valued.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English preschool</th>
<th>Chinese Sunday school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T-S interaction</td>
<td>T-S center</td>
<td>T-Ss center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T’s role</td>
<td>T-control: modeler, guider</td>
<td>Mainly T-control: modeler, transmitter, explainer;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mainly T-present: supporter, audience</td>
<td>T-guide: modeler, supporter and guider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mainly T-absent: provider</td>
<td>T-present: supervisor and coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S’s role</td>
<td>participant, speaker;</td>
<td>recipient, hearer, follower;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>initiator;</td>
<td>participant;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>creator and explorer</td>
<td>copier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual vs. Group</td>
<td>Individual&gt;group</td>
<td>Group&gt;Individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13. The Different Kinds of Interaction Valued

The different types of learners are also socialized through the interactional routines in each class. In the preschool, the interaction between the teacher and individual
child is at the center. Sometimes the individual child’s interest is valued so much that it may result in the overlooking of group authorship, and amplifying individual credit. Though peer interaction does happen, like a child speaks for another child, or peers build each other’s idea, such interactions are often misinterpreted by the teacher as individual idea, rather than an effort of peer interaction. In the Chinese Sunday school, the interaction between the teacher and the children as a collective is at the center. Sometimes the individual child’s learning interest is put on hold to focus on the whole class learning. And sometimes, the teacher turns her interaction with an individual child to a group learning opportunity. There is an orientation towards collective learning in the Chinese class. The individuality of children becomes obscured, and this sometimes results in child’s confusion, and frustration sometimes. For example, the Chinese boy tried again and again demanding teacher’s direct oral response to his question.

**The differences between English and Chinese writing systems.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Script</td>
<td>Alphabetic</td>
<td>Ideographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning-making</td>
<td>Combination of letters</td>
<td>Mostly a single character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound –form</td>
<td>Sound-letter usually connect</td>
<td>Sound-symbol often disconnect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>system</td>
<td>26 letters and vocabulary</td>
<td>2000 common characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status in American context</td>
<td>English as a second language</td>
<td>Chinese as a heritage language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. The Differences between English and Chinese Writing Systems
In English, the early meaning making of reading and writing is the combination of letters into morphemes. Also there is a connection between the sound of a letter and its form. “Sound-letter relationships are the ways in which particular letters are associated with particular speech sounds. For example, “the letter b is related to the sound /b/” (McGee & Richgels, 2008, p. 16). That’s why when the teachers model for the children to write letters, they read the letters out for them. The children could see individual letters are connected with certain sounds, which helps their writing. However, in Chinese, an ideographic system, the meaning making of writing is achieved through recognizing single characters. A single character usually corresponds to a morpheme (Rogers, 2005). A character’s meaning is usually produced by its physical composing parts; there is the symbol-meaning connection. That’s why in the Chinese Sunday class, the teachers spent most time decoding each individual character, and making explicit how its composing parts produce meaning together. Very often, one cannot tell the sound of a character by examining its form and composing parts. That’s why repetitive reading out is emphasized to help establish the connection between a character and its sounds.

Moreover, the communicative environment of the two languages in the U.S. also contributes to the differential socialization process. In English writing, children are socialized to become individual authors of their ideas to achieve a variety of communicative functions since there are many opportunities for them to write to achieve real communicative needs in America. However, in Chinese class, children are socialized to relate Chinese writing more with cultural and aesthetic needs than for communicative purposes since there is a lack of written communicative needs in Chinese in America.
6.1.2 The similarities.

Interestingly, when looking more closely, there are some similarities between the two schools.

**The similarities in writing beliefs and practices.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing and reading connection</th>
<th>English preschool</th>
<th>Chinese school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing and speaking connection</td>
<td>Write and talk</td>
<td>Write and read aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading helps writing</td>
<td>Reading builds the foundation for writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. The Similarities in Writing Beliefs and Practices

In terms of writing, both school settings see the interrelationship between the different modes of language: reading and writing, writing and speaking. In preschool, reading helps develop concepts of print or the form and functions of print, which provides model for children’s early writing development. In Sunday school, reading is believed to build foundation for children to write. They serve as textual models and resources for children’s own writing.
### The similarities in learning activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English preschool</th>
<th>Chinese school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning activities</strong></td>
<td>Mainly learning through play</td>
<td>Also learning through playing games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also learning through practice</td>
<td>Mainly learning through practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher-student relationship</strong></td>
<td>Teachers take on a variety of roles; equal T-S relationship</td>
<td>The teacher also has a variety of roles; more equal T-S relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers control, too</td>
<td>Mainly the teacher controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction</strong></td>
<td>Individual child at the center</td>
<td>Promoting individual sense of achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairness in allocating turns</td>
<td>Children as a collective at the center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16. The Similarities in Learning Activities

In terms of learning, there is also practice in the U.S. preschool disguised as different forms of play. For example, children practice writing their names repetitively by doing different paintings. The practice is not as focused as in the Sunday school, like copying a character eight times, but is stretched out over a period of time and clothed in a fun way. The same is with Chinese class, there is also play in practice, like character erasing game, and filling in blanks. The difference between learning through play and practice is not absolute but more a difference of emphasis, frequency, and the type. In
preschool, children play more, and often engage in art or exploration games. In Sunday school, children play less, and engage in literary games like riddles and poems. Play is universal, but kinds of play are culturally specific. It’s a difference of emphasis, frequency, and also a difference of type and kind.

In both preschool and Chinese Sunday school, the teachers take on a variety of roles: modeler, provider, supporter and supervisor. In preschool, there are also more teacher-controlled activities, like circle time documentation. And in Chinese Sunday school, the teacher also takes up a more equal and negotiated relationship with the children, like erasing character game. In preschool, though the interaction between the teacher and individual child is at the center and children’s individuality is highlighted, teachers also express the plan to develop the sense of a group among the children who belong to and act as a family. In Chinese Sunday school, though the interaction between the teacher and the class as a collective at the center and collectivity is promoted, the teacher showed signs to promote individual sense of achievement by amplifying praise and pointing out correction indirectly when interacting with individual child.

6.1.3 Changes and hybridity.

In contact situations, individuals and communities may change their traditional practices in order to meet their current needs. Some of the practices may take on hybrid forms that build on but also differ from the original practices in the community.

The process of hybridization is an important contributor to the continually changing repertoires of individuals and communities, especially when individuals and communities with different traditions interact. (Rogoff & Moore, 2007, p. 509)
In this study, there are signs of changes in writing teaching practices in preschool and Chinese Sunday school. Some of the practices in Chinese Sunday school are perceived to be hybrid, building on but also differing from the original practices in China. Given the limitation on data collected, it is difficult to see whether these practices are a routine or just temporary one-time. Nevertheless, they are presented here to present a more complete and fair picture of the teaching and learning of writing in both class settings, and for potential future research.

In preschool, writing is mainly learned through play and seen as emergent in the preschool class. However, there was also one instance of the teacher’s explicit instruction of one essential skill in beginning literacy based on Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR), namely phonemic awareness. “Phonemic awareness” is awareness of phonemes, the smallest unit of sounds in any language, like b/p. It is different from phonological awareness, which pays attention to the sounds of spoken language, including phonemic awareness, and awareness of syllables, rhymes and intonation patterns, etc (McGee & Richgels, 2008, p. 78). One feature of English written language is the sound-letter connection. For example, the letter p is related to the sound /p/. When we see the word pat, we can sound it out as /p//a//t/, and blended the sounds together to say the word pat. Such sound-letter connection is not always a one-to-one connection. Sometimes a letter connects with different letters, and sometimes a letter is silent. There are quite a few techniques teaching phonemic awareness, including rhyming, phonemic segmentation, sound matching, and phonemic blending (Vukelich & Christie, 2009, p. 10). In the instance, some of the techniques had been used by the teaching assistant Britney in explicitly teaching the child sound-letter connection, reading or spelling a
word, and putting a word in a sentence. In the process, the teacher explained the connection between a sound and a letter, and asked the child to produce a letter corresponding to a sound in a certain word to teach him the sound-letter connection. Gradually she asked the child to produce the sounds of word by blending individual sound of each letter in the word with visual aid – word made of letter blocks on the carpet. Through connecting individual sounds with letters, the child learns to read printed words by himself. This reading of printed form is the beginning step for the children to spell words and write them out. In explicit instruction, the teacher models and explains while the child follows; the teacher asks questions and the child provides expected answers. The child is expected to read and reproduce the conventional written form, instead of displaying their own creative or imaginative voice. Writing is used for teaching purpose rather than communicative goals. Such changes in teaching methods could be the individual teacher’s decision to do what she thinks is effective. Or it could have to do with parents’ expectations of more explicit teaching.

Ms. Pam also mentioned the teaching content or activity change with more Asian students in the class. The class added more math and literacy experiences through toys. Such change in the class activity is partly because the children’s displayed interest in this content, and also because some of the parents had made such suggestion.

It's interesting because some of the kids coming into our group, especially the Asian children, they are much more involved in, they love to do little legos, more of, I guess sciencey kind of projects and the map; they are really focus on those building things, structures and; we've done more of those things because that's where their interest is, so we play with those toys more often. We provide math and literacy experiences through those toys, a little more often… a little bit of that is that's what the children are interested in, so we try to work with what they are interested in and provide those learning experiences; also we had several of
parents, a few of parents of the Chinese-speaking children asked us to do more math, sit down and do more math. (Ms. Pam interview 20110617132110)

In the Chinese school, it seems the traditional methods may take on new meanings. Though her practices in the class are traditional, there is a lack of accountability required from the children, at least in the class: during read-aloud, they are not required to read out independently or to recite the text; in practice writing characters, they are not required to dictate the characters, which is the traditional way of testing character writing (Curt-Christiansen, 2006). It seems the result of their learning is not as monitored as children in China. And I feel this has to do with the goal of Chinese teaching: to maintain their connection with Chinese culture, and identifying with their Chinese part. Such class goal of identifying with Chinese may play down the actual learning of reading and writing Chinese characters. And children’s small performance may be overtly praised, and their mistakes are usually pointed out indirectly, without hurting their confidence. The actual language proficiency doesn’t seem to matter very much compared with children’s being in the class and sustaining their long-term learning interest. Fishman (2001) has also mentioned the downplaying of actual heritage language proficiency among the heritage language individuals and communities, “it is the historical and personal connection to the heritage language that is salient and not the actual proficiency of individual students” (p. 411). Knowing or knowing about Chinese language is part of their Chinese heritage. And that’s a key for them to know Chinese culture. The Chinese class gives them a chance to speak Chinese, read and write Chinese characters, and know Chinese cultures. The parents are not socializing the children to become Chinese. They are realistic and think their children most likely will become American. Rather they are trying to maintain their
connection to Chinese culture. That’s why they want to instill part of Chinese into them. The Chinese class is a temporary sheltered space for them to connect to their Chinese part of identity and connect to Chinese culture.

6.2 Implications

This section discusses the educational and theoretical implications of these findings.

6.2.1 Educational implications.

Firstly, the findings confirm the cultural nature of early literacy development. Early writing development is shaped by the sociocultural context it is located in. The significance of understanding different beliefs and practices in early literacy lies in the fact that there is not a linear process for writing development. The kinds of writing practices are not right or wrong; but a result of sociocultural context. For example, invented spelling (Read, 1975) can be seen as a cultural product, rather than a cognitive product, as some researchers claimed who described it as a developmental stage in early writing: a child figuring out the rule of the written language. Invented writing occurs because it is in a culture that allows it happen. For example, in Chinese culture, a child writing is always corrected, and there isn’t a chance for them to produce invented writings. But in the English context, a child can produce Chinese invented writings (McGee & Richgels, 1998). This shows even what people believe to be cognitive behavior-- invented writing in this case--can be a result of cultural practices: one allows it and one doesn’t.
Secondly, the findings have significance for our understanding of different learning styles. Given the American context, there is often a sense of superiorism in cultural differences: There are some teachers who still think the American way is the only and right way or what is different from American value is wrong. Especially learning through play draws children’s attention immediately, which seems to be more fun. McGee and Richgels (2008) talked about “… three- and four-year-olds learn best when they are actively engaged in manipulating materials. Preschoolers do not learn effectively when they must sit for long periods of time and merely listen to the teacher” (p. 185). The Chinese children’s learning in the Chinese class may be interpreted as not appropriate for young children like Jenna, since they mostly sit in the class and listen to the teachers. But in the Chinese context, learning occurs when a child sits down, and when a teacher teaches a child. This is a distinct way of conceptualizing learning, and learner. Teachers’ interpretation of different teaching and learning styles, without an understanding of the cultural context that gives rise to such difference, may result in the child’s negative attitude towards their own culture. That’s why a cross-cultural understanding is needed.

Thirdly, the findings have significance for our understanding of the different interactional styles among students. In preschool, the value on children’s participation based on their own interest and initiative may appear uninviting for some Chinese children, who are socialized to interact with the teacher as a collective and their individual need is often anticipated by the teacher rather than expressed by themselves.
6.2.2 Theoretical implications.

Bilingual socialization becomes bidirectional socialization, and this bidirectional socialization can occur in different settings the children participate in.

At preschool, the children speak both Chinese and English. From a bilingual perspective, speaking Chinese promotes their writing in English. The close relationship between talk and writing enables them to take advantage of their mother tongue to sustain their writing activity and also elaborate the meanings of their writing. Such hybrid practices raise questions for language socialization in this class, and language socialization studies as well: what is the appropriate language for use in the class, and when?

At Chinese school, the children are connecting to their Chinese part of being. But that doesn’t mean their English-speaking identities are not there, or are prohibited to display. To the contrary, sometimes, their English-speaking identities are evoked, to facilitate their Chinese learning, like teacher’s use of English for explaining the meaning of Chinese character or for class management. The children are socialized to know when to use which code, and with whom. English or Chinese is no longer a “we code” or “they code” (Gumperz, 1982), but a bilingual resource to draw from to acknowledge their bilingual identity. On the one hand, Chinese class teaches them Chinese to reinforce their identification with Chinese culture, and also Chinese ways of being, invisibly, through interaction with teachers and peers. On the other hand, their English, bilingual and bicultural identity is taken as a matter of fact, and the teacher draws from the other code English when she feels it is appropriate for their Chinese learning.
At home, they bring their school practices home, which reshape their parents’ early literacy and learning beliefs. There is continuity: writing is seen as a skill of letters, words and there is more emphasis on writing form. There is also change: there are less parent control, and playing pretend writing games with the child. Moreover, some of the changes in socialization practices are not a difference between east and west, but a historical difference. For example, the role of multimedia becomes significant in socializing children’s early literacy at home. The children learn literacy through multimedia at home. It is not just a difference of east and west, but also a difference of historical period from their parents’ learning experience in China. Language socialization practices have been updated in a new historical period given the technological development.

It seems bilingual socialization is an emergent process. It is different from language socialization not only for the children but also for the teachers and parents. They don’t always have the expert role in interacting with these children and they don’t always have a clear goal of bilingual competence. Nonetheless, as the Chinese saying goes: they are trying to pass the river feeling the stones on the river bed. In many ways, bilingual socialization is very different from monolingual socialization. It has some part from either one but is not the combination of the two. How much part is taken from either one is very much a personal choice, choices made based on their beliefs about children, beliefs about learning, beliefs about bilingual goal, and beliefs about their children’s becoming in the future.
6.3 Practical Suggestions

This section provides some practical suggestions for schools, parents and communities in bilingual and multilingual contexts.

6.3.1 Preschool: teachers and parents.

Based on the findings from the preschool and the dynamics between home and preschool, this section provides suggestions for preschool teachers and parents.

For school.

In some research (eg. Heath, 1983), mainstream school is seen as the major site of negotiation and reform, teachers and children work as ethnographers who build bridges across school and community settings.

Firstly, it is necessary for school to promote communication with parents, not only through brochures or meetings, but also by bringing parents to class, demonstrate an activity and showing how the child learn through play. The teachers can communicate the learning philosophy, and explain learning process as well as results to parents. Moreover, the teacher’s role and child’s role in learning could be made more explicit to the parents.

Secondly, for beginning young language learners, more teacher-directed and teacher-present play can be arranged, during which they could have more scaffolded learning opportunities for both oral and written language.

Thirdly, more bilingual books can be provided for the children to explore their bilingual and biliterate capacity, and bridge home and school learning. It not only makes home-school connection for the Chinese children, but also provides a multilingual and
multicultural environment for other children, which they will grow up with in the American context.

For parents.

Firstly, it is necessary for parents to reach out to the school. They can be more proactive and try to understand the school practice through communication with the school. They can also talk with teachers about their expectations. In traditional Chinese culture, parents usually trust the teachers and try not to give the teacher extra work by asking questions or making suggestions. It is not easy for them to communicate their expectations, which they feel could potentially challenge teacher’s role and be disrespectful. Language can be another barrier. Learning English as a foreign language, they often feel a lack in the communicative competence with English speaking teachers, like the social norms and interactional etiquette.

Secondly, as the main bilingual model for their children, the parents are faced with more challenges in their role of an expert in socialization. Traditionally, parents view their roles as more educating the child in moral character, than teaching them academics, and schools in China not only teach academics but also instill moral value, the latter of which is felt missing by some parents.

In America the cultivation of personality and character are the most important in a child’s upbringing.

Everyone is born with different talents. But how you conduct yourself in the society (is something that can be cultured), especially when today’s society is very much a chaos. When we parents can have some influence on her now, we will do something. We will have little influence on her after she turns 15. American public school doesn’t do much in this respect. (Jenna mom interview 20110617)
Thus, in the American context, they may need to shoulder both roles facing a different learning philosophy. Like Jenna’s parents teach her Chinese and English literacy at home.

Moreover, the parents are faced with the challenge of bilingual socialization in their adult life. They need to reach out to the larger society, and to make the bilingual and bicultural connections for the children. For example, hidden in the conversations with parents, one expectation is the development of their children’s social skills. The parents realize they are important because it is how their children are judged as having good manners or not. One way could be for the parents to reach out to the English speaking community at large and make it part of their children’s life. Some of the parents in the study send their children to after-school programs to develop their sports or music interest, or participate in American holiday activities like Easter, Halloween and Christmas. Another is through literacy activities, like reading books. In this respect, reading in both languages turns out to be a good idea. Evan Wang’s father read him bedtime story for socializing politeness like saying thank you. The same is true for their development of Chinese moral values. For example, Evan Lang’s mom read him Chinese story for socializing hygiene. Readings in both languages would be a very good way to do at home for parents if they want to connect both school and home culture. But then again there is the question of what are the good books to choose.
6.3.2 Sunday school: teacher and parents.

Based on the findings from the Sunday school and the dynamics between home and Sunday school, this section provides suggestions for Sunday school teachers and parents.

*For teachers.*

The teacher can create real needs for learning Chinese writing and connect it with children’s everyday life in America. They can expose the children to Chinese writing that is specific to their American life experiences, not just Chinese children’s literature. Teachers need to realize learning Chinese literacy is an important way to convey not only traditional Chinese values to the younger generation, but also things important for growing up as a Chinese American in U.S. This is especially true when the children grow older. For example, Jia’s (2009) study shows the heritage school is also an important place to convey values that are specific to the American immigrant experiences, like the appreciation of their parents’ hard-working as new immigrants. In this sense, the teacher is also socializing the moral value of being a Chinese-American based on their specific life experiences.

*For parents.*

Parents need to be clear about their goals and the purpose of their children’s Chinese language learning. If they want their children to maintain Chinese language, they need to expose them to Chinese community, where they have more environmental needs to use Chinese. In terms of Chinese literacy, they can make use of multimedia and online resources. The literature reported a lack of literacy environment at home (Jia, 2008). However, in my study, media may turn out to be a good opportunity for children to learn
writing. For example, Jenna loves watching *Han Zi Gong* (Chinese Character Palace), an educational series teaching young children the origin of Chinese characters with stories. Evan Lang’s mom mentioned the only Chinese character he can write or recognize is 羊 (yang, lamb) in *Xi Yang Yang and Hui Tai Lang* (Happy Lamb and Grey Wolf), a popular cartoon among Chinese children in Mainland China. And Evan Wang’s father read him stories from electronic pad; he has opportunities to learn writing both in English and Chinese. It’s just that the parents view them more as play instead of learning. Research shows a lack of materials, but we may look at it differently in the digital age these days. Most of the parents use English for academic writing on the computer, or email communication, which models a way of writing in this modern world.

In addition, given the lack of Chinese language environment in the U.S. and the limited time the children spend at Chinese school, parents usually play a key role in helping the children successfully maintain Chinese language and literacy, acting as the modeler, the provider, and the teacher, especially when it comes to reading and writing.

*For community.*

In the community where this study is carried out, there is a need for building a closer Chinese community, where families interact with each other and create community environment for natural language socialization for the children. Chinese Sunday school in this study can be a good model, where children know each other and participate in social events together. In a similar way, non-religious institutions can be organized to meet the needs of children and family in the local Chinese community.
6.4 Limitations and Future Directions

The findings may not be generalized given the specific context and the small sample of this study. In addition, the data from the Chinese Sunday School are not as rich as those from the preschool given the limited time of data collection. That is why the researcher observed hybrid practices on the Chinese teacher’s part, but was unable to confirm them as a major theme.

The findings as well as the limitations of this study point to potential future research directions. One is to study the continuity and change of literacy socialization practices in different types of Chinese schools in the U.S., including Sunday school, Chinese school, and Chinese bilingual school. It would be beneficial to explore in what ways teachers in Chinese schools show continuity and change in teaching early Chinese literacy in the U.S. and why. Understanding of such issues would promote Chinese language maintenance and literacy development among younger generation of immigrant Chinese families. Another research direction is: how the exposure to different literacy practices and learning styles influences preschool children’s transition to public school in terms of language and literacy development. For example, in the 2012 version of the State Department of Education Early Learning Content Standards, the domain of approaches towards learning has been added to the early developmental goals. It covers children’s initiative, engagement, and creativity in learning. Among them, a child’s focused learning or engagement is emphasized in preschool, just the same as in Chinese Sunday School. In this respect, children’s focus in learning encouraged in Chinese school will probably benefit them as learners in preschool. Research in this field will help find ways in which the dual schooling experiences could complement each other.
6.5 Closing Remarks

By connecting writing practices with beliefs about early writing and learning, the research highlights the culturally specific process of early writing socialization in English and Chinese languages. In preschool, the children are encouraged to become writers who develop a strong sense of authorship and ownership of their writing, produce both nonconventional and conventional writing, and use them to achieve a number of communicative purposes. Children’s individuality is valued and the desirable learner characteristics are imaginative, creative and expressive of their ideas, initiating interaction with the teacher and peers, and active in exploring the material environment. In Chinese Sunday school, the children are encouraged to develop mastery of the character sound and meanings, and become skillful producers of character forms. Early writing in the class is not so much for communicative purposes, but more for moral, aesthetic and cultural purposes. In the learning activities, the children’s collectivity is emphasized and the main desirable learner characteristics are paying attention to and following teacher’s explanation.

By comparing writing practices across schools and home settings, the research demonstrates the bidirectional nature of language socialization in bilingual environment and yields understandings of changes and hybrid socialization practices in contact situations. Bilingual resources are valued in preschool, Sunday school and home alike. There are signs that parents have begun to adopt school practices. In addition, the Chinese teacher has modified the traditional way of Chinese teaching to accommodate the class goal of helping the children identify with Chinese culture and their Chinese part of being.
In this study, the home environment turns out to be an important place connecting with two schools, and parents play important roles in their children’s early biliteracy experiences. I have a feeling that these highly educated parents have the potential to be the pioneers of connecting school and home, west and east. But they have their own challenges: language, culture and power differences are still the greatest barriers. A lot of work needs to be done with joint effort from the home, school and community settings before the two forces no longer compete with each other but complement each other.
Bibliography


Appendix A: Learning through Play
### Appendix B: Possibility Plan

**Preschool POSSIBILITIES PLAN**  
**ROOM: BV 135**  
**DATE: May, 2011**

#### POSSIBILITIES TOPICS:
- Singing/performing with microphones; Swimming/ocean/beach play;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Creating “group art”</td>
<td>• More flannel board stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Greeting songs at group</td>
<td>• Sharing our ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create a chart for using at clean up time for everyone to chart our classroom progress and how we collectively feel about it.</td>
<td>• Continue to write words in various languages around the room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Perform songs and stories for each other in groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSICAL HEALTH/SELF-HELP SKILLS</th>
<th>COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Stress Hygiene/hand washing</td>
<td>• Acting out stories in the proper sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dressing/undressing self: shoes &amp; socks: changing from shoes to boots and back again</td>
<td>• Math concepts as we measure results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using our utensils at meal time</td>
<td>• Exploring maps of oceans and continents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cleaning up after meals and snacks</td>
<td>• Reading books about different cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exploring pictures/books about oceans and beaches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### POSSIBILITIES SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBSERVATION/ASSESSMENT/DOCUMENTATION</th>
<th>ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• ASQ’s and Brigance work</td>
<td>• Create our own ocean area in our classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Documentation panels of our projects</td>
<td>• Chopsticks for lunchtime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAILY SCHEDULE/Routines</th>
<th>FAMILY PARTICIPATION/COMMUNICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Split group times occasionally</td>
<td>• Invite Parents to attend a family breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allow more time for developing interests</td>
<td>• Email more about current activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have a beach party day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*20/05/2011*
Appendix C: Play and Developmental Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: 07/29/11</th>
<th>Room 135</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Art/Sensory</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fine Motor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Group art - ring pins on yellow paper</td>
<td>- Cars + trucks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Flour in sensory table</td>
<td>- Playdough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gross Motor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Listening Center</td>
<td>- Outdoor Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Reading Dinner</td>
<td>- Water Exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science/Math</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dramatic Play</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Plants / water - life science</td>
<td>- Driving / riding in RV!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Counting children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Comments/Reminders</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohamed's last day. We will miss you! Thank you for playing with us!</td>
<td>Blankets/Pillows go home today!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Preschool Daily Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (Eastern)</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 – 8:30</td>
<td>Children arrive, free play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 9:30</td>
<td>Free play, small groups, breakfast is available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 9:45</td>
<td>Potty, application of sunscreen if applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 – 10:00</td>
<td>Clean-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:20</td>
<td>Circle time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:20 – 11:00</td>
<td>Outdoor play, weather permitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:30</td>
<td>Indoor play; table top choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 – 11:45</td>
<td>Clean-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:00</td>
<td>Circle time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Lunch is served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 – 1:00</td>
<td>Brush teeth, potty, quiet choices in book area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 – 2:30</td>
<td>Nap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30 – 3:30</td>
<td>Quiet choices, potty, application of sunscreen if applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 – 4:00</td>
<td>Snack is served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 – 5:00</td>
<td>Outdoor play, weather permitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 – 6:00</td>
<td>Potty, indoor free play, children depart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a typical day in our classroom, however, times and activities vary based on children’s interests.

(A picture schedule with all languages spoken in our community of learners is displayed along the kitchen counter wall.)
Appendix E: Pseudonyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Focal children</th>
<th>Non-focal children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA-Pam-Lead teacher</td>
<td>EL-Evan Lang-Chinese boy</td>
<td>AE-Anne-American girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN-Anna-Teacher</td>
<td>EW-Evan Wang-Chinese boy</td>
<td>VI-Victor-American boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR-Britney-Teaching assistant</td>
<td>JE-Jenna Li-Chinese girl</td>
<td>LN-Linda-American girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JI-Jia Chai-Chinese boy</td>
<td>IH-Ish-Indian boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Transcription Conventions

:: lengthening preceding sound

(.) short pause less than 0.1 second

(0.1) timed pause

dinosaur emphasis

DINOSAUR high volume

°it’s ° low volume

= latching of two turns

[ overlapping

.hh laughing sound

>knock, knock< speed up

(bear) unintelligible

((unhappy voice)) comment

- sudden cut-off of current sound

. Falling intonation contour

, Falling-rising intonation contour
Appendix G: Interview Questions with Preschool Teachers

1. Teaching experiences
   a. How do you become a preschool teacher?
   b. How long have you been working here?
   c. How does the number of Chinese children influence classroom activities?

2. Chinese children’s language profiles
   a. What’s your general impression of each child’s language profile since they entered preschool?
   b. How do you communicate with the parents with their language development?
   c. What are the things you hope parents do to better children’s experience at school?

3. Circle time
   a. What is purpose of circle time?
   b. What is your impression of the Chinese children’s participation in this activity?

4. Artifacts explanation
   a. What is the purpose of the picture wall?
   b. Why do you think it is important to write child’s name on his or her painting?

5. Chinese children’s language use in class
   a. What’s your opinion about children’s use of Chinese in the class?
   b. Why do you use Chinese words with some of the children?
   c. In what ways do you think English is important for them?
Appendix H: Interview Questions with Parents

1. Background information
   a. How many years have you been in the U.S.?
   b. How long have you lived in the community?
   c. When was *** (the child’s name) born?

2. Language use
   a. Do you speak Mandarin or another Chinese dialect at home?
   b. Do you speak English with your Child at home?
   c. Does your language use at home change after your child goes to preschool? If so, how?

3. Language learning
   a. What are the values of Chinese language for your child?
   b. What are your expectations for your child’s Chinese language proficiency?
   c. Do you teach your child Chinese at home? If so, how?
   d. Will you let your child go to Chinese school in the future?
   e. Do you teach your child English at home? If so, how?
   f. What’s your opinion about bilingual education for your child?

4. Family and school education
   a. Do you feel if there are changes in your child after he or she goes to preschool? If so, what are they?
   b. Do you feel there are differences between early education in China and that in America? If so, what are they?
   c. What do you think of the educational philosophy in the preschool?
   d. How do you usually communicate with the preschool teachers?