

DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BELIEFS AND PRACTICES:  
HOW CHINESE FAMILIES SUPPORT  
THEIR CHILDREN'S BILITERACY ACQUISITION

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By

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DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BELIEFS AND PRACTICES: HOW CHINESE FAMILIES SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN'S BILITERACY ACQUISITION (312 pp.)

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The purpose of this study was to understand and to describe how Chinese families' home literacy practices support their children's bilingualism as well as maintain their heritage language in U.S. mainstream society. This qualitative research took the form of a multiple case study in which five purposefully selected Chinese families' home literacy practices were investigated in one Midwest community in the US. The study sheds light on the Chinese families' sociocultural literacy practices and strategies they adopted to interact socially with their children to promote the achievement of biliteracy (Chinese–English listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Data collection and data analysis were based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory.

The results of the study show that Chinese parents who live in the US play important roles in the maintenance of their children's heritage language (Mandarin Chinese) and in their learning of the English language. Several major findings revealed that first, parenting styles among Chinese immigrant parents explain their strategies. Second, parents have unique perspectives on the value of Mandarin Chinese or English or both. Third, Chinese families living in the US practice home-based involvement to promote children's learning in school. Fourth, parents' languages experiences impact efforts to enhance children's acquisition of biliteracy. Fifth, social environment has more impact on the development of children's biliteracy than physical environment. Sixth,

diverse strategies implemented in informal and formal literacy practices are useful in predicting children's oral ability in Mandarin. Seventh, dynamic relationship between beliefs and practices shapes the different roles parents play in Mandarin Chinese and English informal and formal literacy practices.

The findings of this study provide suggestions and strategies for other families who face the challenge of biliteracy acquisition. The results of this study have direct implications for school personnel critically reflecting upon their practices to cooperate with parents in assisting bilingual children at home and at school. This study calls for generous support for educators, teachers, parents, and children who are working hard to face the challenges of biliteracy, heritage-language preservation, and bilingualism.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As a result of technological advances, air travel is faster and Internet communication is instant, face-to-face, and inexpensive, simplifying migration throughout the global village. Various pull–push factors cause people to migrate from their countries of origin to new ones for reasons including economics, education, marriage, politics, and safety. For example, the researcher is one of thousands of graduate students who have moved from their own countries to the United States to pursue advanced study (King, 2010; Ma & Hom, 2004), but in the researcher’s home country of Taiwan, one of major reasons for migration is transnational marriage, which has rapidly increased in the past decade (Y. Chen, 2008; Davin, 2007; H. Z. Wang & Bélanger, 2008).

Although people migrate for various reasons, they all face similar challenges, such as adopting new social lives, new cultures, new languages, and new environments in new countries. The language barrier poses immediate challenges for immigrants upon arrival. For example, whether needing to speak English in the United States or Mandarin in Taiwan, immigrants must speak the language of their new land to ask people for assistance in helping their families settle in new residences or secure healthcare (Hearst, Ramirez, & Gany, 2010), establish bank accounts, find jobs, or enroll children in schools.

The United States is one of the popular countries to which people immigrate, especially those from Asia, including the Philippines, India, China, Taiwan, and Hong

Kong. Batalova and Lee (2012) indicated that America's top four largest immigrant nationalities originate in Mexico, China, India, and the Philippines. Chinese families often immigrate for the sake of their children's education (Chew, 2009; Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006; Waters, 2003). The United States has become increasingly multilingual and multicultural as a result of immigration from the rest of world.

Consequently, Mandarin has become the third most widely spoken mother tongue in the United States after English and Spanish (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

B. Wang (2003) asserted that in the world, many countries and regions have long histories of bilingual education, for example, Canada, the United States, India, Singapore, Malaysia, Luxembourg, South Africa, Finland, Switzerland, Taiwan, Germany, Hong Kong, and Macao. Among these, Switzerland, Singapore, Taiwan, Luxembourg, and Macao have implemented trilingual and in some instances even quadrilingual education. Brisk (1998) explained that bilingual education encourages learners to master at least two languages, thereby ensuring that all bilingual students have opportunities to participate in comprehensive and quality curricula that educate them to their highest potential.

Wu and Ha (2007) observed that English is the most important global language; consequently, the study of English has undergone significant growth. Specifically, 60% of elementary students in China (nearly 100 million students) study English. In Asia, the population speaking English (over 350 million mostly in India) nearly equals the combined populations of America, Canada, and England. According to an estimate by the British Council (Graddol, 2006), by 2010 one third of the global population would

engage in learning English. In *English Next* Graddol (2006) asserted that to the learner English is not merely a foreign language but also a necessary basic skill or ability.

Crystal (2003) stated that through globalization, the English language has spread for political and economic reasons; furthermore, the Internet has been instrumental in bolstering the importance of English because people need to know it in order to benefit fully from Internet knowledge in general or in academic research in various topics.

According to Wu (2007) because of China's economic rise, Chinese has the potential to become a global language. In Asia some international schools provide English, Mandarin Chinese, and local language lessons. Officials in Indonesia and Thailand have considered including Chinese in formal primary courses (Wu & Ha, 2007). Global languages exist without conflict, promoting a new way of thinking about living in a multilingual environment.

### **Problem Statement**

In the United States, the result of years of immigration from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China, Mandarin has become the third largest mother tongue after English and Spanish. In light of the recent demographic changes in the United States, understanding Chinese–English biliteracy development for immigrant Chinese families, especially for their children, is urgent; yet the development of Chinese–English biliteracy has garnered little attention in educational research compared to English–Spanish bilingual programs in the USA (G. Li, 2006a).

A number of studies on Chinese–English biliteracy have focused on language instruction (Proctor, August, Carlo, & Barr, 2010), writing systems (Kenner, 2004; Ruan, 2003; M. Wang, Perfetti, & Liu, 2005), language policy (Dixon, 2005; Gáandara & Hopkins, 2010), multilingual classrooms (Creese, Wu, & Blackledge, 2009), emergent biliteracy (Buckwalter & Lo, 2002; Hu & Commeyras, 2008), and parents’ perspectives (Riches & Curdt-Christiansen, 2010); nevertheless, at the time of this writing, research studies on Chinese–English home literacy practices were few. Exploring the way Chinese parents perform home literacy practices to foster their children’s biliteracy is, therefore, important. Parents are their children’s first teachers, and the home environment plays a critical role (G. Li, 2006a) in affecting their children’s academic competence. Many countries have implemented bilingual education based on multiculturalism because maintenance of children’s native-language ability preserves their ethnic culture (Bayley, Schechter, & Torres-Ayala, 1996; Cho, 2000; Guardado, 2002; G.-Q. Liu & Bianco, 2007; L. L. Liu, Benner, Lau, & Kim, 2009; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Yang, 2007) and also benefits second-language learning (Cummins 1991, 1992; Liang & Mohan, 2003; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Learning languages entails more than simply learning grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation; it also involves deep learning of ethnic culture passed on over generations (X. Li, 1999); therefore, many Chinese immigrant parents expect and support their children as the latter become biliterate (Y. Lee, 2009; G. Li, 2006a, 2006b; Luo & Wiseman, 2000).

Researchers of young children's bilingual development have explored maintaining a balance in abilities and interest in two languages because children learn to read and write in the mainstream school language (English) with steadily increasing proficiency, and proficiency in heritage languages (Mandarin Chinese) may steadily decline or gradually undergo replacement by English (Fishman, 1991, 2001; MacNamara, 1966; Oller & Eilers, 2002; Wong-Fillmore, 2000). To better understand Chinese parents' beliefs and how they support their children as the latter become biliterate in a language environment different from their home-language, this study focused on the nature of some Chinese parents' beliefs about biliteracy development and how they perform home literacy practices to promote their children's acquisition of Chinese-English biliteracy.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Overall, the purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth description designed to understand and to gain knowledge about some Chinese families living in the United States, what Chinese parents believe and how they support their bilingual children's Chinese-English acquisition through the use of home literacy practices. Specifically, the purpose was threefold: (a) to clarify and record the nature of some Chinese parents' beliefs in support of their children's acquisition of biliteracy, (b) to investigate how the home literacy practices of some Chinese families promote their children's achievement of biliteracy, and (c) to provide suggestions and literacy strategies for other families who face the challenges of biliteracy acquisition as well as to help school personnel cooperate

with parents to assist in the development of bilingual children's biliteracy at home and at school to gain the best outcomes for the children.

### **Research Questions**

At the core of this study were five focal Chinese families, who lived in the United States at the time of this writing, what the Chinese parents' believed, and how they acted to assist their bilingual children's acquire biliteracy (Chinese–English listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Parents with primary school-age children were the target of the current study. The study opens with an analysis of the Chinese parents' own language learning experiences in English or in Mandarin Chinese. The following questions served as a guide: What are Chinese families' literacy beliefs and their language experiences? Do they value Chinese–English biliteracy? Will participants' Chinese parents who have high expectations also support their children as the latter become biliterate? What are their home literacy practices and how do they perform those practices? A multiple case study design was used to investigate five purposefully selected Chinese families' home literacy practices in one Midwest community in the US. To facilitate the line of inquiry, the study derived from one main question with two subquestions:

1. What do Chinese parents living in the United States believe and practice to help their children acquire biliteracy?
  - A. What are the parents' beliefs and language experiences in support of their children's acquisition of biliteracy?

- B. With what home literacy practices do parents promote their children's achievement of biliteracy?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was intended to provide a comprehensive review of how Chinese families support their children's Chinese–English biliteracy through home literacy practices. Creswell (2009) described three audiences for whom such a research study may be significant: (a) future researchers, (b) educational policy makers, and (c) practitioners, such as other families, Chinese teachers, ESL teachers, and school personnel. Because few research studies have been conducted on Chinese families' home literacy practices, this study adds information and knowledge to the literature on home literacy practices, deepens the understanding of a wide audiences with regard to Chinese families' home literacy practices in mainstream society. This study may also remind parents and educators to pay more attention to children in the process of learning different languages and cultures. In addition, it calls for generous support for teachers, parents, and children who are working hard to face the challenges of biliteracy, heritage-language preservation, and bilingualism.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

*Bilingual education* refers to programs intended to preserve the learner's first language (L1) and simultaneously enhance the second language (L2). In this study, the first language (L1) is Mandarin Chinese. The second language (L2) is English, the

language acquired in natural or instructional settings by immigrants in a country where the language is the national language, in this case the US.

*Biliteracy* is the ability to read and write two languages well. The Chinese language includes both spoken and written forms. The term *Mandarin Chinese* is generally used to refer to the official language of Taiwan and China. Mandarin, a dialect originating in Beijing, is the common official oral form of the Chinese language in Taiwan and China. Among the diverse dialects in Taiwan and China, only one serves as the dominant written language—the one written in Chinese characters. In this study, the term *Mandarin Chinese* is used when reading and writing are involved, whereas *Mandarin* is used to refer to oral communication. Biliteracy research studies that focus on listening, speaking, reading, and writing use the term *Chinese–English* (Hu & Commeyras, 2008; G. Li, 2006b; Ruan, 2003, 2004; M. Wang, Yang, & Cheng, 2009; M. Wang et al., 2005; Yau, 2009) instead of *Mandarin–English*; therefore, I used *Chinese–English* when referring to biliteracy throughout the dissertation.

In this study the term *Chinese families* refers to families who have at least one child enrolled in kindergarten through Grade 5 because this is the starting point of formal education to learn literacy and the beginning of the shift from relying on close family relationships to relying on peer relationships. Chinese parent–child interactions were the primary source in my study, and the degree of social interaction in family relationships influenced the home literacy strategies practiced by the parents and children. Parents



whose children experienced second-language sequential acquisition were the focus of this study.

In this study *heritage language* refers to native language or mother tongue, which is the Mandarin Chinese known by the children of participating Chinese families.

*Home literacy practices* include the oral and written literacy materials and activities in which parents and children engage at home or in other settings offering literacy practices, such as those provided by the Chinese community or public library. In this study the focus was on how literacy is used in the home environment and how parents and children interact socially, scaffolding the practice of literacy activities in their daily lives. For example, whether or not the space and atmosphere promoted literacy, whether or not literacy materials were accessible and used, whether or not a reward system encouraged and required routine reading and play activities that inspired literacy, such as parent–children book reading, rewriting stories, I-spy for word find, Scrabble™ for vocabulary practice, and e-learning media; LeapFrog® or LeapPad™ learning system, Vtech®, literacy-related computer software, and educational websites.

*Kindergarten* in China and Taiwan is compulsory beginning with elementary school (Grades 1 to 6), middle school (Grades 7 to 9), and then high school (Grades 10 to 12). Early education (age up to six) is not mandated by government. Children aged three to six usually enroll in kindergarten at a preschool, a prekindergarten, or a kindergarten. In this dissertation the word *kindergarten* was used to refer to preschool education in China or Taiwan.

*PinYin* (拼音) is the official transliteration system of mainland China, which is built on the English alphabet. Pinyin is an alphabetic script that provides the pronunciation of Chinese characters.

*ZhuYin fuhao* (注音符號), the official system in Taiwan, employs symbols closer to Chinese characters. Zhuyin fuhao is a symbols script that provides the pronunciation of Chinese characters.

### **Summary**

This chapter described the background, purposes, need, and significance of improved understanding of the development of Chinese–English biliteracy in Chinese families in the United States. The researcher’s roles as a Chinese mother, educator, and researcher as well as her life experiences motivated her pursuit of understanding how Chinese families’ home literacy practices promote their children’s bilingualism while maintaining their heritage language in mainstream society. This study, which focused on five purposefully selected Chinese families’ home literacy practices, has the potential to make significant contributions to other families facing similar challenges, researchers, educators, and policy makers.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This research study involved five Chinese families who supported their children's acquisition of Chinese–English biliteracy through home literacy practices in one Midwest community in the US. Knowing beliefs of parents and how they support their children's becoming biliterate through home literacy practices was important to this study.

Specifically, the researcher asked:

1. What do Chinese parents living in the United States believe and practice to help their children acquire biliteracy?
  - A. What are the parents' beliefs and language experiences in support of their children's acquisition of biliteracy?
  - B. With what home literacy practices do parents promote their children's achievement of biliteracy?

This review opens with the conceptual framework based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Then the literature on three main topics is reviewed: (a) the development of bilingual children's literacy, specifically theory and research on children's first- and second-language acquisition; (b) home literacy practices, including parental involvement, parental beliefs about literacy, and the home literacy environment; and (c) the Chinese family in the United States.

#### **Conceptual Framework**

Vygotsky's sociocultural view of language and learning can help educators understand Chinese families' home literacy practices that focus on the process of

becoming culturally competent people through language use in social activities.

Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that sociocultural dimensions of learning and development affect individuals' cognitive processes, including speech, language, thinking, and other higher level functioning because they are continuously embedded in a social and cultural context. Vygotsky (1962) asserted that cognitive abilities usually originate from internalizing social exchange, such as language. Thought development is determined by language and by the sociocultural experience of the child (Vygotsky, 1962). The primary function of speech is to have social contact and to communicate. Children are able to learn through verbal interaction with adults; in fact, learning begins on the very first day of child's life, long before the child enrolls in school (Vygotsky, 1978). The child learns through personal experience, reflection, the social environment, and interaction. When children interact with their social environment, they internalize the meaning of the signs and symbols of people's language and behavior within the social context, resulting in their own ways of using cultural means as tools to function and plan their own actions. Children's language, speech, and the development of other higher cognitive functions advance with further interaction and scaffolding with more experienced language users, such as adults, siblings, or peers.

Central to Vygotsky's (1978) perspective on the interaction between learning and development is that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the zone of proximal development (ZPD), defined as "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” (p. 86). The level of ZPD indicates that the child has not yet matured but is in the process of maturation. In Vygotsky’s theory, teaching means development takes place; that is, the extensive content of human knowledge and cognitive strategies are necessary for children’s internalization according to their “actual” developmental level. The gap between actual and expected performance levels represents the learning taking place. The role of adults is to determine where they can provide appropriate challenges to meet or to raise children’s current level. Adults should supplement appropriately to make the best use of ZPD to build the strengths the children already have and increase development while staying within the ZPD. The assistance or support is called scaffolding (Charlesworth, 2004), which involves the process of providing a child or adolescent with a good deal of support during the time she or he is learning new material. Full development of the ZPD depends upon full social interaction. The range of skill that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone.

Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory supports the relationship between language learning and the environment as well as the way environment affects language acquisition and development. From the sociocultural perspective, the practices of literacy involve not only an ability to read and write a designated language but also the reading, writing, and talking that are embedded in the social practices and cultural context; in other words literacy is a set of social practices and a cultural tool (G. Li, 2002; H. Li & Rao, 2000). Through language learning and literacy development, children learn how to express their feelings, communicate, and associate with others, building up their social relationship

(Vygotsky, 1978); furthermore, humans constitute a social group, and through language children's social needs are fulfilled. Literacy is a transaction between learners and their social environment as well as a way of living and thinking in which people make meaning for themselves and the world in which they live their lives. Literacy is also regarded as situated practices constructed within a particular sociocultural locale.

### **Development of Literacy in Bilingual Children**

This section of the review contains an exploration of the theory of the development of children's language learning and literacy and the various challenges accompanying it in reference to bilingual children in achieving biliteracy. Research studies have indicated that bilingual education is a prerequisite to vocational and social success. Specifically, Brisk (1998) explained that bilingual educators try to help learners to master at least two languages; thus, all bilingual students have opportunities to participate in comprehensive and quality curricula that educate them to their highest potential. Many countries have implemented bilingual education based on multiculturalism because maintenance of children's native-language ability helps to preserve their ethnic culture (Bayley et al., 1996; Cho, 2000; Guardado, 2002; G.-Q. Liu & Bianco, 2007; L. L. Liu et al., 2009; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Yang, 2007) and also benefits second-language learning (Cummins 1991, 1992; Liang & Mohan, 2003; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Learning languages entails more than simply learning grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation; it also involves deep learning of ethnic culture passed on over time (X. Li, 1999). Many Chinese immigrant parents, therefore, expect

and support their children as the latter become biliterate (Y. Lee, 2009; G. Li, 2006a, 2006b; Luo & Wiseman, 2000).

Research studies have shown the benefit of bilingualism: cognitive advantages, development of children's divergent thinking and cultural thinking, enhancement of the possibility of future success (Cummins & Gulutsan, 1974; García, 1997; Lao, 2004; Peal & Lambert, 1962). García (1997) stated that bilingual and biliterate students have been shown increased cognitive advantages, including more divergent and creative thinking, greater metalinguistic awareness and cognitive control of linguistic process, and increased communicative sensitivity; in addition, bilingualism and biliteracy can bring about greater understanding among groups and increased knowledge of one another.

Tabors (1997) identified two types of second-language acquisition modes determined by the sequence of learning time: simultaneous and sequential acquisition. Simultaneous acquisition of two languages occurs when children explore them while very young. For example, each parent may speak a different language with the children, or both parents may speak one language while a caregiver speaks another language with the children. Sequential acquisition occurs when children learn a second language after they have built up their first-language ability, for example, when a Chinese family whose children in the United States learn English in a mainstream school. Parents whose children experience this type of second-language sequential acquisition are the focus of this study.

### **First-Language Acquisition**

In the theory of first-language acquisition, Noam Chomsky (1965) argued human language not simply in terms of observable stimuli and responses to amounts of raw data gathered by field linguists; instead he created the “language acquisition device (LAD)” theory in which human language learning is regarded as an inner design of the mind (1965). The LAD functions as the ears and eyes of children’s minds; they can hear human language from the mother’s womb. The LAD is a universal rule and works for any kind of language structure; it generalizes and revises language patterns when children interact with their surroundings in a language-learning environment. Chomsky, therefore, suggested that children are born with a certain language competence and their languages are acquired naturally.

Krashen’s (1995) innatist model consists of five hypotheses, one of which is the acquisition-learning distinction, which involves two ways to build target-language competence. The first is language acquisition, similar to the way children develop their first language in a natural and subconscious process; for example, children acquire language through interaction with family members in daily life in a natural home locale. The second is language learning through a conscious “learning” process; for example, children learn language in the classroom context, in which teachers purposely organize and design the curriculum and systematically instruct their students about the rules of second-language learning. Thus, children learn and understand a language through socialization with others in daily real-life or natural situations; this tends to be more efficient than learning in a classroom (Krashen, 1995; Shen, 1997). Shen (1997)



observed two language learning situations: one at home, another in the ESL classroom. First, he observed a father scaffolding his young daughter acquiring Mandarin in the home milieu. Second, he observed one ESL classroom teacher present an English lesson to 20 teenagers who were second-language learners. He found linguistic scaffolding, conceptual scaffolding, and structural scaffolding were important processes; the father–daughter interaction provided the first-language learner with strong support in meaningful ongoing interaction and in learning new linguistic forms and concepts. In the ESL classroom, the teacher also tried to modify the language input and conceptual level for the students, but because of the disparate teacher–student ratio, linguistic and conceptual scaffolding became difficult processes when considering various students’ needs and levels; furthermore, little or no structural scaffolding occurred to help students understand the ongoing activity. Shen found the quality of the language socialization process in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom to be inferior to first-language acquisition.

Based on Vygotsky’s theory on the zone of proximal development, Messerschmidt, Ramabenyane, Venter, and Vorster (2008) found adults scaffolding their children through parent–child intervention during their first-language development to be very effective. The researchers found that when adults take a facilitative role in their children’s language development in the home milieu, adults and home environment have considerable influence on the children’s speaking skills, vocabulary, and general understanding. They advised educators and caretakers to be aware of cultural differences

and to modify their interaction style to incorporate appropriate scaffolding to maximize children's cognitive development.

### **Second-Language Acquisition**

The term *second language* (L2) characterizes language acquired in natural or instructional settings by immigrants in the country where that language is the national language (Kramsch, 2000). Several second-language acquisition theories have been applied in the contemporary educational field. Krashen's (1995) innatist model of second-language acquisition includes five interrelated hypotheses about second-language acquisition (SLA): the acquisition–learning distinction, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis.

The acquisition–learning distinction posits that second-language learners have two distinct means to develop competence in the target language. The first is language acquisition, a process similar to the way children develop their first language.

Acquisition occurs through subconscious processes; language acquirers are unaware they are acquiring language, but they are aware when they use the language to communicate with others. The second is language learning, a way to develop competence in a second language, that is, through a conscious “learning” process in which learners understand the language rules, attend to form, and are aware of their own learning process.

In the natural order hypothesis SLA proceeds in a predetermined order. Krashen (1985) stated that people acquire the rules of language in a predictable order, some rules early and others later, independent of the order taught in language classes.

Krashen (1988, 1995) proposed that acquisition and learning are used in various ways in second-language performance in his monitor hypothesis, which involves learning, not acquisition. Acquisition initiates learners' utterance in a second language and their fluency. Learning refers to conscious knowledge as a monitor of L2 output for learners. Optimal monitoring should be used by the learner only when acquisition is established (Krashen, 1981). Second-language learners can apply conscious rules only when the following three conditions are met: (a) Second-language learners need sufficient time to be able to think and use rules effectively; (b) the performers must focus on form or think about correctness, that is, what is said as well as how it is said; and (c) knowing the rules is a very formidable requirement because the structure of language is extremely complex and only a fragment of the best-known languages that students have been taught (Krashen, 1995).

The input hypothesis includes four main ideas. First, the input hypothesis relates to acquisition instead of learning. Second, language acquisition occurs when the acquirer receives or understands comprehensible input, referred to as  $i+1$ ; for example,  $i$  is the acquirer's current level of L2 competence, and  $+1$  represents the acquirer's next level of competence in the natural order of development. Therefore, the input he or she receives or understands should be  $i+1$ , which is far enough beyond the competence that he or she needs to understand most of it and still makes progress sufficiently challenging. The meaning of *understand* focuses on language meaning first and then language structure (Krashen, 1995). Third, if the acquirer understands, the input and enough of  $i+1$  will be provided automatically. Fourth, speaking cannot be taught too early or directly because

speech production will merge over time when the acquirer has built up enough comprehensive input.

Krashen described the affective filter as an invisible wall between the SLA learner and the content of input. The strength of the affective relates to learners' motivation, self-confidence, or anxiety; for example, the filters are low in learners with high motivation and self-confidence and with low anxiety, meaning that learners will acquire considerable input and achieve better learning. By contrast, the filters become high when learners feel anxiety, pressure, or fatigue; they will screen the learning content and thus acquire little input and learn less. Thus, second-language learners whose attitudes are not optimal for SLA will not seek or obtain more input, so the input will not reach the language acquisition device (LAD) in the brain.

To conclude Krashen's five interrelated hypotheses for second-language acquisition, he asserted that language acquisition in a natural situation is better than language learning in a deliberate situation. Language learners acquire language rules in a similar order; overemphasis on the monitor function may influence the speaker's fluency because the speaker has to think the correct sentence before he or she speaks. The language acquirer must receive sufficient comprehensive  $i+1$  input in order to reach the  $i+1$  level; the affective filter hypothesis relates to motivation during the SLA process with positive attitudes increasing input and decreasing filter thickness that will promote better language acquisition.

Cummins (1991) offered an interdependency hypothesis to describe the relationship between second-language learners' linguistic repertoires in both the first and

second language. He stated that bilinguals' L1 competence directly influences the development of their L2 competence (1991). In 1978, he introduced a framework known as the threshold hypothesis to predict students' academic achievement in various forms of bilingualism or language proficiency. In 1984, he described two thresholds: basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). BICS, a precursor to CALP, is the language level used in regular conversation, for example, when shopping or ordering a meal; such conversations do not require a high level of cognitive ability. CALP comes into play, however, when students of English as a Second Language (ESL) perform school tasks, which require a higher level of cognitive language ability in order to finish them through oral or written performance. For example, ESL students may be required to discuss how to do a mathematics or language arts project with their peers. Cummins pointed out that ESL students need two years or more of English practice to build up the BICS and four to 10 years of in-depth practice to acquire CALP in order to reach age- or grade-appropriate academic proficiency in English.

Lambert (1974) proposed the concepts of additive and subtractive bilingualism, which involve changes in the language learners' language proficiency and cultural identity. Additive bilingualism emphasizes the value of the languages and cultures of families and communities; in this process children learn a second language while maintaining all abilities in the native language. Additive bilingualism is the aim of Chinese parents who promote their children's bilingualism and biliteracy. By contrast subtractive bilingualism occurs when two languages compete or a second language

eventually replaces the native language. In reality, subtractive bilingualism occurs because many factors can result in the failure to maintain two languages in balance; these include language policies, teachers' awareness of bilingual students' language development, parents' attitudes toward heritage language use at home, and children's preference in using a second language or their first language in the mainstream society. For many years, bilingual programs applied subtractive bilingualism under public policy, which encouraged the supplanting of the first language by English.

### **Home Literacy Practices**

#### **Parental Involvement**

Researchers have found that parental involvement in children's education positively affects educational outcomes (Barnard, 2004; Epstein, 1995, 2001; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Ho, 2003; Jeynes, 2005; X. Li, 1999; Park, 2006; Ordoñez-Jasis & Ortiz, 2006; Quan & Dolmage, 2006). Broadly defined, parent involvement includes parental expectations and involvement: (a) parent involvement as parents' engagement in home and school activities to promote children's education and development and (b) parent expectations as parental views about a child's ability to achieve academically (Fan, 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001). Epstein (1995) developed a parent involvement model with six components:

1. Parenting: Parents fulfill children's basic needs, also supervise, discipline, and support children as students in the home environment.
2. Communicating: Parents communicate with teachers and schools regarding school affairs and children's progress.

3. Volunteering: Parents assist and support teachers, students, and staff members in classrooms or support school activities.
4. Learning at home: Parents help children with schoolwork at home.
5. Decision making: Parents are involved in groups, committees, or organizations making school decisions.
6. Collaborating with community: Parents participate in community service that strengthens school programs and students learning.

Barnard (2004) studied parent involvement in elementary school and the children's educational attainment; the components of parent involvement include parents' educational aspirations for their children, parent-child communication, the amount of home structure provided by parents, and parent participation in school activities. In interviews Barnard asked parents about the frequency of parental home involvement, specifically how often parents read to or cooked with their children and discussed their school progress as well as how often parents took their children on outings. This study suggested that educational success in high school is related to elementary school achievement. This parent involvement is not only consistent to some extent with Epstein's model but also promotes long-term effects.

Researchers have characterized two dimensions of parental involvement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001): school- and home-based involvement. The former comprises participation in school activities, attendance at parent-teacher organization (PTO) meetings or school events, and interaction among parents, teachers, and school officials. The latter comprises parent-child discussion on the child's schooling, parents

helping children with their homework, parenting style, and parents monitoring or setting rules that affect the child's academic achievement and behavior (Park, 2006).

One of the major topics in current education reform around the world has been the contribution of parental involvement and investment in children's education. Ho (2003) surveyed 2,100 sixth through ninth graders and their parents in Hong Kong. Parental investment included family resources, reading materials, study areas, magazines, and study aides. Parental involvement was both school and home based. The former included school communication, volunteering, donation, and school activities; the latter featured learning support, home enrichment, homework supervision, and home limitation.

Park (2006) found that recent research on parental involvement has centered on home-based involvement (Green et al., 2007; Ho, 2003; McKay, Atkins, Hawkins, Brown & Lynn, 2003; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Research evidence has shown the positive association between parental involvement, especially home-based involvement, and children's school performance (Park, 2006); it has also revealed that social support from the parent community is significantly related to at-home involvement only (McKay et al., 2003). Green et al. (2007) studied parent motivation for involvement in children's education and in parental home-based involvement that focuses on the individual child's learning-related activities, such as helping with homework, reviewing for a test, and monitoring the child's progress. Results show that parents' motivation for home-based involvement was higher than school-based involvement and parents' motivation for the degree of involvement decreases as children's grade level (Grades 1–6) increases. In other words when children are young, parents feel more needed or more capable of



involvement (Jeynes, 2007). Cross-national comparative studies on the influences of parental home-based involvement on children's schooling typically focus on children in primary schools or in kindergarten (Park, 2006). Parents with primary school age children are the target of the current study.

The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) (2004) identified limited English ability, limited literacy, economic disadvantage, and racial and ethnic minority background as the barriers for parental involvement in their children's schooling. Some research studies revealed students' low academic outcomes somewhat related to parents' low involvement in their children's schooling; results indicate that parents did not value or support their children's educational success (Compton-Lilly, 2000; Purcell-Gates, 1996) or that they believed teachers were more responsible than parents for teaching children (Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006a). Parental involvement is a dynamic process that may vary in different sociocultural contexts. Ho (2003) found home-based involvement more popular than school-based involvement in the Asian context. Research in home-school studies conducted in China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan revealed that instead of participating and intervening in school teaching, Asian parents prefer to work with their children at home, investing additional resources and time to assure their children's academic achievement. From an Asian cultural perspective, school and home have different functions: The school is responsible for developing children's academic and social skills, and parents are responsible for supporting the school's role and providing a healthy emotional environment. Asian teachers view parents as primary educators who enhance their children's schooling at

home, and parents respect school as the teachers' domain (Ho, 2003). Because of the language barrier and different cultural perceptions, Chinese families living in the US may practice parental involvement in ways different from those of Western parents.

### **Parental Literacy Beliefs**

Culturally and linguistically diverse parents value literacy (Hsin, 2011) as the most powerful hope for their children's future (Lao, 2004; Ordoñez-Jasis & Ortiz, 2006); furthermore, these parents play an essential role in their children's education (Baker & Scher, 2002; S.-Y. Chen, 2008; G. H.-C. Huang & Mason, 2008), especially in their children's biliteracy learning (G. Li, 2006b). G. H.-C. Huang and Mason (2008) studied urban African American parents' motivation for involvement in their children's literacy learning. They found that participants' parents believed (a) education is the path for their children to achieve success, (b) parents play a key role in influencing their children's learning, and (c) they need to find sources to develop relationships, such as learn about literacy practices from family literacy educators and associate with like-minded parents to build a network to share experiences and assist one another in facing challenges.

S.-Y. Chen (2008) examined the role of gender, family, and teacher influence in children's reading habits. The study indicated that family factors play an important role in the development of children's love of reading. Baker and Scher (2002) examined parents' beliefs associated with their first-graders' motivation for reading, finding that the children of parents who viewed reading as a source of entertainment would likely value and enjoy and feel competent in their reading activities. Their results indicated that the pleasure parents found in reading influenced the pleasure their children took from reading.

Directly through their words or indirectly through the literacy experiences, those parents impacted their children's reading.

Lao (2004) surveyed 86 parents (Chinese-dominant parents and English-dominant parents) whose children enrolled in a Chinese–English bilingual school in San Francisco. She sought to discover parents' attitudes toward Chinese–English bilingual education, the reasons they sent their children to a Chinese–English bilingual school, their expectations for their children, their use of Chinese and English, and the language environment at home. The results indicated that parents strongly supported Chinese–English bilingual education. Three major reasons for enrolling their children in Chinese–English bilingual school included the following: (a) practical advantages of bilingualism, such as better career opportunities, (b) positive effects on self-image, and (c) communication with the whole family, such as grandparents, and with the Chinese-speaking community. The majority of parents in the study intended to encourage their children to speak Chinese at home. The language environment at home was determined by the number of Chinese and English books, the frequency of parents reading Chinese storybooks to their children, and parents' reading for pleasure. Lao (2004) found a gap between parents' expectations and actual literacy practices: parents' expectations of their children's level of Chinese competency varied depending on the parents' own Chinese proficiency and the number of accessible Chinese resources at home.

Parents' own literacy experiences and their literacy beliefs greatly affect the way parents shape the literacy environment and literacy practices in their homes (Heath, 1983; Hsin, 2011; G. Li, 2006a; X. Li, 1999; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; C. Zhang, Ollila,

& Harvey, 1998). The classic work on parents' literacy beliefs and practices is Heath's (1983) *Ways with Words*, a longitudinal study from 1969 to 1978, focused on how parents are actually involved and on how family values and home literacy practices influence their children's school literacy practices and education. She studied three different sociocultural groups: mainstream townspeople, the White working-class community, and the Black working-class community. Her findings revealed the significance of sociocultural factors in children's literacy and language development, such as the ways parents talk to their children affect how they acquire language and literacy. The children who grew up in working-class communities were more likely to fail at school because they were socialized in a community of shifting roles and informal talk and faced the most mismatches as they began formal schooling. The children who grew up among mainstream townspeople were more likely to succeed at school because parents spoke to children as teachers talked to their students in class. Parent-child social language experiences in which children analyzed, described, and integrated with words prepared them for the structured and academic environment in school. Heath found context and culture were crucial in the study.

Parents play a significant role in children's literacy learning and development. They have a deep influence on children's literacy learning, not only in the emergent stage but also in the literacy developing phase. Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, and Hemphill (1991) suggested the "family as educator" plays a most effective role in influencing children's literacy and language achievement. Central to this notion are the following five factors:

1. Opportunities to learn, in which parents create opportunities to enhance children's interests or to connect to other people and develop activities to facilitate children's literacy development as well as time management by exercising control over their leisure time;
2. Parental direct teaching, in which the frequency and impact of parent-child interaction facilitates school-related tasks, such as homework.
3. Literacy environment at home, conducive to children's literacy acquisition influenced by parents' own literacy behaviors and preferences;
4. Parental education, or the level of parents' educational attainment;
5. Parental expectations, or parental aspirations for their children, transmitted through demands, support, or encouragement.

The profile of the “family as educator” compiled by Snow et al. (1991) is important to the current study on the home literacy practices of the five Chinese families. This profile provided a thematic framework as a guideline for focus during the next phase of this project—data collection—and expanded understanding of the unique and divergent ways literacy was promoted in these participant families.

### **Home Literacy Environment**

Murshad (2002) stated that the research tide has shifted from investigating the benefits of bilingualism to developing an understanding of the differences between language and literacy practices in bilingual homes and at school. Researchers such as Heath (1983) have documented how home literacy experiences benefit young children's literacy development. G. Li (2006a) indicated that the home is a crucial environment for

success or failure in achieving biliteracy, asserting that parents need to promote heritage language use by employing a variety of strategies to ensure their bilingual children's continued development in reading and writing their first language at home. Parents' use of their first language is important in providing their children a rich linguistic environment (Snow, 1990). Recent studies on the development of children's language and literacy have focused on their home literacy environment, especially those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Y.-C. Lee, 2010; G. Li, 2006a; Riches & Curdt-Christiansen, 2010).

Hess and Holloway (1984) noted five areas of home environment associated with children's literacy development as follows:

1. Value placed on literacy. Parents can stimulate children's reading by reading themselves or engaging children in reading at home.
2. Press for achievement. Parents can express their expectations for achievement by scaffolding their children's reading, learning process, and initiatives toward achievement.
3. Availability and instrumental use of reading materials. Parents can provide a rich literacy environment with accessible materials to stimulate children's reading habits.
4. Reading with children. Parents can spend time with their children, reading to them or listening to the children read to promote their literacy skills and build close parent-child relationships.

5. Opportunities for verbal interaction. Parent–child conversation and literacy activities contribute to children’s later literacy achievement. (pp.189–191)

Asian parents usually support their children’s efforts by providing a home environment conducive to studying (Ho, 2003; G. Li, 2002; Okagaki, 2001; C. Zhang et al., 1998). In a five-year longitudinal study Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) researched early home literacy experiences that classified two kinds of parental involvement at home (H. Li, Corrie, & Wong, 2008): (a) informal literacy practices, including shared book reading to promote children’s vocabulary growth; (b) formal literacy practices, including teaching children the sounds and names associated with letters, relating to their later literacy development.

### **Chinese Families in the United States**

Among other Asian Americans, Chinese Americans are the earliest immigrants to the United States (Wong, 2010). According to the 2006 American Community Survey (ACS), at the time of this writing, Chinese Americans constituted 1.2% of the entire U.S. population and were the largest ethnic group among Asian Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). In addition, unlike Asian immigrants who came to the United States in the 1980s, recent years have seen an increase in middle-class Chinese immigrants who came with resources—financial capital, training, and education (G. Li, 2006b). Chinese families have high expectations and aspiration for their children’s education because of (a) the strong influence of Confucianism on Chinese family values passed from generation to generation and (b) Chinese families’ desire for a better life in a foreign country.

Overcoming the obstacles of a new language and culture, parents hope their children will not fall behind in the mainstream education system; they usually invest heavily and become involved in the education of their children to help them overcome barriers and to give them a head start by providing extra tutoring (Louie, 2001).

Their children's first teachers, parents have a crucial effect on their children's lives and education (Bingham, 2007; X. Li, 1999). Ogbu (1981) indicated that most parents raise their children based on their cultural experience and personal beliefs. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the influence of culture in how individuals learn and think. Confucianism, with its long history and broad influence on many people, originated among Chinese people. From mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, its influence spread to surrounding Asian countries, such as Japan and South Korea. Years of strong influence by Confucianism on Chinese family values have resulted in a high kinship network and close relationships among family members, respect for elders and kindness to the young; family obligations are respected, especially the core value of becoming a person useful to society through education. In other words, to be well educated is to become a good person who has virtue and honor; these bring real accomplishment to the individual and to her or his family, more important than economic rewards (Hieshima & Schneider, 1994). Who can be well educated? The notion that everyone is educable is rooted in Confucianism, and educational success is derived from effort more than innate ability. Success is ensured to those who try their best in their education with diligence and perseverance (Curdt-Christiansen, 2008; Ho, 2003; Louie, 2004; Peng, 1993; Riches & Curdt-Christiansen, 2010). Every family member has the responsibility to combine



efforts to practice family core values; thus, Chinese parents in the US value education, not only holding high educational expectations and aspiration for their children but also involving themselves to support and encourage their children to try their best to obtain at least an undergraduate degree (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Okagaki, 2001; Okagaki & Frensch, 1998; Suizzo & Stapleton, 2007); the higher, the better. Higher professional degrees are seen as leading to self-sufficiency for the family, contributing to others and to society, and also opening doors to professional careers (C. Zhang et al., 1998). Riches and Curdt-Christiansen (2010) noted Chinese parents' high expectations and aspirations for their children's education as well as their willingness to apply social capital to translate these aspirations into reality. Likewise, Taiwanese parents are willing to make sacrifices and do whatever is needed to give their children a good education (Chao, 1994; Law, 2002; Peng, 1993).

### **Summary**

The purpose of Chapter 2 was to provide the conceptual framework for this study. This review began with the conceptual framework based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and divided into three related sections. The first section reviewed children's bilingual education and biliteracy development, conveying information relevant for understanding the theory and research on children's first- and second-language acquisition. It provided information on the language acquisition process and the relation between first- and second-language acquisition. The second section focused on home literacy practices, including parental involvement, parental literacy beliefs, and the home literacy environment. Parents' literacy beliefs and perspectives affect parental

involvement, which in turn shapes the home literacy environment and home literacy practices, involving parent–child interaction in literacy activities to promote the acquisition of biliteracy in the home milieu. The third section addressed Chinese families in the United States, especially the manner in which Chinese culture influences parents' perspectives on their children's education and encourages family members to work for the good of the whole by putting full effort into children's learning.

**CHAPTER III**  
**METHODOLOGY**

**Introduction**

This chapter describes the qualitative research procedures used to conduct the investigation of Chinese families; especially Chinese parents, who were studied in terms of the support they give their children as the latter acquire biliteracy and face biliteracy issues. To facilitate the line of inquiry, the study derived from a main question with two subquestions:

1. What do Chinese parents living in the United States believe and practice to help their children acquire biliteracy?
  - A. What are the parents' beliefs and language experiences in support of their children's acquisition of biliteracy?
  - B. With what home literacy practices do parents promote their children's achievement of biliteracy?

A multiple case study design was used to investigate five purposefully selected Chinese families' home literacy practices in one Midwest community in the US. For a better understanding of how Chinese parents interact socially with their children as well as the literacy environment provided at home, data collection took place over a 12-week period (See Appendix A) during which I conducted interviews, home visits, and informal observations; maintained reflective field notes; gathered documents and artifacts dealing with the development of the children's literacy; and reviewed weekly schedule checklists and any recordings made of or by the participants. Collectively, multiple data sets

provided valuable evidence to answer my research questions; and diverse sources of data collection were instrumental in triangulating the data to gain understanding through participants' perspectives. Cross checks of emerging themes resulted in the credibility and trustworthiness of this qualitative analysis. In this chapter the following sections appear: qualitative case study research method, the participants, research ethics and protection of human subjects, the role of the researcher, data collection and analysis, and the trustworthiness of the data.

### **Research Design**

Research as systematic investigation aims to uncover information and develop new ideas that contribute to the advancement of knowledge and wisdom with outcomes accessible for others to discuss and use (Bassey, 1999; Swann & Pratt, 2003). Eisner (1993) explained that the aim of educational research is to understand educational practice in order to improve it. Yin (2003b) asserted that the purpose of study and research questions determines research methodology. Stake (1995) addressed qualitative methods with emphasis on ethnographic, naturalistic, phenomenological, hermeneutic, or holistic study. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) pointed out factors that help researchers to determine the methodology of qualitative research to use: find an issue that is little known, focus on understanding the participants' perspectives, spend time in the participants' environment to collect diverse data sources, and present research findings. A case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003a, p. 13). The development of biliteracy in

Chinese families' home literacy practice and Chinese parents' perspectives on literacy practice intended to promote their children's biliteracy in the home setting lie at the core of this study, and multiple data sources resulting in rich descriptions of their home literacy practices have been made available through this multiple case study to facilitate understanding of a complex and little researched issue. Thus, a qualitative multiple case study was my choice of research methodology.

The focus of this research study was a descriptive and interpretive study examining Chinese parent-child real-life daily literacy activities, and its goal was to describe, compare, and contrast each family's home literacy practices. This type of multiple case study research methodology derived from Merriam's (1998) description of case study research, which was intended to produce a rich description of the phenomenon under consideration, and Yin's four-step case study process (2003a). Merriam (1988) understood qualitative case study research design in terms of the way the researcher selects a sample, collects and analyzes data, and approaches issues of validity, reliability, and ethics. Yin (2003a) recommended four steps necessary in a case study: (a) design the case study, (b) conduct the case study, (c) analyze the evidence, and (d) develop conclusions, recommendations, and implications.

### **Participant Selection**

The participants for this study were parents whose child or children were enrolled in elementary school in the Midwest US, specifically in Grades K-5. The purpose of this study was to investigate Chinese parents and the way they supported their children's acquisition of biliteracy, especially parent-child social interaction in the home

environment. Stake (1995) asserted that if possible, researchers should select cases that are easily accessible and amenable to the inquiry. I purposely selected five Chinese families to participate in my multiple case study. In selecting participants I looked for the following: (a) Chinese parents were first-generation Chinese; (b) the family had at least one child, preferably in elementary school; (c) the child or children used English in elementary school; (d) the parents spoke Chinese with him or her or them at home. To protect the identity of participants, I substituted their real names with pseudonyms, choosing a Chinese pseudonym if the parents called the child by his or her Chinese name or an American pseudonym if the parents had Americanized their child's name. The participants were recruited through an informal network of members of the Chinese community, including the Tzu Chi Foundation and a church serving bilingual Chinese families. The five families came from Taiwan or Mainland China and lived in one Midwest community in the US. The following two tables provide a brief description of the participant families, parents' educational background, and occupations in the United States. All names, parents' as well as children's, are pseudonyms (see Tables 1 and 2).

### **Gaining Entry and Participation**

When I discussed the human subject consent form and answered questions, I built rapport with the participants by assuring them that all research policies would be followed. I was deemed a trustworthy researcher as a doctoral student and scholar and as a bilingual Chinese parent living in the US. Thus, I shared many commonalities with the participants although I did not know any of them personally until conducting this study. Interviews were to be conducted in the language the participants chose.

Table 1

*Participants' Family Information*

Mother's name*	Ting	Ying	Gui	Mei	Yu
Country	Mainland China	Taiwan	Taiwan	Mainland China	Mainland China
Mother's Age	37	42	44	38	40–50
Father's Country	Mainland China	Myanmar-Chinese	Taiwan	Mainland China	Mainland China
Father's Age	39	48	47	39	40–50
Adults in the Family	Mother, Father	Mother, Father	Mother, Father	Mother, Father, Grandmother, Grandfathers	Mother, Father
Number of Children	One Girl	Girl, Boy	Boy, Girl	Boy, Girl, Boy	Two boys
Age	8	12, 9	16, 10	11, 2, 1	17, 7
Focal Child's Name*	Li	Bob	Debbie	Hua	Chris
Birth Country	Mainland China	US	US	US	US
Grade completed	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 1
Native Language	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin	English
Other Spoken Language	English	English	English, Spanish	English	Mandarin
Languages Spoken With Adults at Home	Mandarin	Mandarin	Some Mandarin and some English	Mandarin	Mostly English and some Mandarin
Frequency of Mandarin vs. English Spoken at Home	M : E=> 90:10	M : E=> 90:10	M : E=> 60:40	M : E=> 80:20	M : E=> 30:70
Language Spoken Prefer by Child	Mandarin, English	English	English	English	English

\*All names are pseudonyms.

Table 2

*Parents' Educational Background and Occupations in the United States*

Mother's Name*	Ting	Ying	Gui	Mei	Yu
Education Level	Master's degree in Mainland China	High school diploma in Taiwan	3 Master's degrees in the US	Master's degree in the US	Bachelor's degree in Mainland China
Occupation in US	Visiting Scholar	Sushi Chef	Chinese Teacher	Housewife	Chemist
Native Language	Shandong Mandarin	Taiwanese Mandarin	Taiwanese Mandarin	Cantonese Mandarin	Fuzhou Mandarin
Other Spoken Language	English	English	English	English	English
Language Proficiency	Literate in Mandarin/English	Literate in Mandarin/ Limited English communicative skills	Literate in Mandarin/English	Literate in Mandarin/English	Literate in Mandarin/English
Reason for Migrating to USA	Visiting scholar	Family	Work Education	Work Education	Work Education
Years in US	1	10	20	13	11
Father's Name*	Han Wu	Mr. Wang	Mr. Yang	Mr. Lee	Mr. Chen
Father's Education Level	Ph.D. in Mainland China	High School diploma in Taiwan	Ph.D. in the US	Ph.D. in the US	Ph.D. in the US
Occupation in US	Visiting Scholar in English	Sushi Chef	Physical Scientist	Chemistry Professor	Material Scientist
Socioeconomic Status	Middle class	Working class	Middle class	Middle class	Middle class
Native Language	Shandong Mandarin	Myanmar Mandarin	Taiwanese Mandarin	Ningbo Mandarin	Fuzhou Mandarin
Other Spoken Language	English	English	English	English	English
Language Proficiency	Literate in Mandarin, English	Literate in Mandarin, English	Literate in Mandarin, English	Literate in Mandarin, English	Literate in Mandarin, English
Reasons for Migrating to US	Visiting Scholar	Family	Work Education	Work Education	Work Education
Years in US	1	12	21	14	11

\*All names are pseudonyms.



### **Research Ethics and Protection of Human Subjects**

This study was reviewed and approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board in accordance with university policy and federal regulations prior to the study. The participating parents in this study were signed human subject consent forms (See Appendix B and Appendix C). The human subject consent forms with a letter briefly explained the purpose of this study, the data collection strategies, and participants' rights. The identities of participants were protected with the use of pseudonyms in any writing or presentations associated with this project, and all digital voice recorder files were stored in a locked office. Participation was voluntary.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Strauss and Corbin (1998) described the qualitative researcher as an instrument to observe, record, and interpret human beings' behaviors, thoughts, and interactions. The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument (Merriam, 1998) or the key instrument (Creswell, 2007) because the researcher is the one who actually gathers and analyzes the information. I was the main research instrument: I visited and observed, interviewed and conversed, coded and analyzed, described and interpreted Chinese parents' beliefs, language experiences, perspectives and behaviors in supporting their children's acquisition of Chinese–English biliteracy. As the qualitative researcher in this study, three of my experiences specifically helped me become the major instrument for the inquiry. First, my trilingual learning experiences and bicultural background gave me advantages in establishing the connection with Chinese families. In Taiwan, people often learn three languages: Taiwanese or the local dialect as the home language, Mandarin as

the academic or official language, and English as a popular foreign language choice. Second, I could understand the participants (Chinese parents) as an emic interpreter because I am a Chinese immigrant mother of three bilingual children residing in the US. I shared similar experiences with participants along with differences, which benefited the study and provided sensitizing concepts that guided my research. Third, the knowledge of qualitative research and bilingualism that I have gained from my education enhanced my competency as a researcher, help to sharpen my perceptivity.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The most formal version of a case study database contains numerous citations, indicating the specific source of the data, such as a particular document, interview, archive, or date and place of a field observation (Yin, 2003a). For a better understanding of the way Chinese parents socially interacted with their children as well as the literacy environment provided at home, my data collection strategies included the following: interviews, home visits and informal observations, reflective field notes, collection of children's relevant literacy documents and artifacts along with weekly schedule checklist or parent audio or video recordings. Table 3 contains an overview of the data collection process.

### **Interviews**

Merriam (1998) stated that in conducting case study research, interviews are primary sources of data. Duke and Mallette (2004) held that the interview is an important data collection method aimed at gaining an insider's point of view. The best method of inquiry to study people's experiences is through interviews (Auerbach & Silverstein,

Table 3

*Data Collection Approaches and Purposes*

Data Collection	Timeline: Weeks 1–12	Purpose of Data collection
Interviews	Up to four interviews at Weeks 1, 3, 5, and 11	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Family background information, parents' beliefs and language learning perceptions</li> <li>2. Parent–child Mandarin Chinese literacy practices</li> <li>3. Parent–child English literacy practices</li> <li>4. Clarifying answers and wrap up the study</li> </ol>
Home Visits and Informal Observations	Four home visits and informal observations at Weeks 1, 3, 6, and 9	Primarily to investigate literacy environment, including space, time, atmosphere, and resources, among others
Weekly Schedule Checklist	Every week for 12 weeks	To acquire data on the daily lives of the parents and children at home
Parents' Audio Recordings	12 weeks, flexible according to parents' needs	To acquire data to develop a holistic picture of parent–child social interactive during home literacy practices
Documents & Artifacts	Every week for 12 weeks	All relevant literacy documents serve as supplemental data
Field Notes	Every week for 12 weeks	Descriptive notes and analytical notes

2003). According to Merriam (1998), the person-to-person encounter is the most common form of interview; it helps one person elicit information from another.

Following the recommended methodologies, I used open-ended, semistructured interviews to analyze parents' perspectives and their interaction with their children as they attempted to support their children's biliteracy learning. The interview protocol design consisted of three interviews with each family. Major interview guideline questions were determined in advance and allowed for other questions to emerge and

serve as probing questions during the process of the interviews. The interview with parents was conducted in their preferred language, primarily Mandarin. All interviews were recorded on two digital recorders and were transcribed in Mandarin Chinese before the next interview with that family occurred; therefore, I had transcribed text ready for interviewees to check and confirm the meaning of their answers to the questions at our next meeting. I read through the transcribed information repeatedly to prepare other questions for clarifying or extending inquiry for further investigation at subsequent meetings. The first interview covered family background information (see Appendix D) and proceeded from the participant's beliefs and language learning perceptions (see Appendix E). The second interview focused on parent-child Mandarin Chinese literacy practices (see Appendix F). The emphasis of the third interview was parent-child English literacy practices (see Appendix G). I conducted a fourth interview to help clarify answers and wrap up the study. These four interviews allowed me to understand parents' beliefs about biliteracy and to elicit their opinions on promoting their children's biliteracy development through home literacy practice.

### **Home Visits and Informal Observations**

Data collection occurred primarily in the homes of participating families; after determining schedules acceptable to parents, I visited them five times for approximately 90 minutes to two hours each, maintaining flexibility. I informally observed social interaction between parents and children and the manner in which that interaction influenced the development of the children's biliteracy. In addition, I watched and photographed the literacy environment, including space, time, resources, and atmosphere;

I noted whether or not children had their own space or desk to study, whether the space was near the living room causing distraction when others watch TV, and whether rich literacy resources were accessible, age appropriate, or not.

### **Weekly Schedule Checklist**

To acquire data on the daily lives of the parents and children at home, I designed a weekly schedule checklist for parents to record their children's daily routines, including a column for parents to jot down key words about social interaction between them and their children during home literacy practice (Appendix H). As an alternative I provided parents with digital recorder to record the process of literacy activities in detail if they preferred to use audio recorder instead of jotting notes on home literacy practice, such as literacy activities or family games, parents' assisting with children's homework as well as children's engagement and interactions with parents or siblings. It provided rich data of each family's unique home literacy practices and when and how the process operates.

### **Parent Audio Recordings**

When I designed my data collection strategies and searched for potential participants, I informally piloted my project to determine what strategies I planned to use and what the process would be like with a few friends as if they were my participants. I hoped to receive important feedback from my friends with regard to two aspects of the home observations. First, two friends said they would have difficulty ignoring someone who sat quietly in the room and watched what they did, even video recording their work with their children. Second, they both responded that they did not always have regular literacy time. In fact, they caught any teachable moment when the opportunity arose, for

example, on the way to after-school activities, in waiting rooms, or before children went to bed; therefore, I modified my study plan to anticipate similar concerns from my participants. These two strategies furthered my data collection: First, I offered them the weekly schedule checklist; and second, if parents felt uneasy about my sitting and observing them, I discussed other acceptable possibilities to them to make them feel comfortable. I suggested that they set up a camcorder or audio recorder to record their work with their children's biliteracy for at least 30 minutes or longer each week. The weekly schedule checklist and parent audio recordings helped me develop a picture of parent-child social interaction during home literacy practices.

### **Documents and Artifacts**

All relevant literacy documents, including reading materials and written artifacts were borrowed and photocopied or photographed. These documents and artifacts served as supplemental data and included, for example, Mandarin and English assignments, worksheets, and journals, writing samples, and checklists of literacy practices.

### **Field Notes**

I took two types of notes: descriptive and analytical notes (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Spradley, 1980). With descriptive notes I recorded details of settings, activities, or events during each home visit and informal observation. In my analytical notes I reflected on feelings, problems, questions, or issues that I needed to investigate further during the research process. Duke and Mallette (2004) suggested that each page of field notes should include date, time, setting, observer, what is observed, and the researcher's comments; I implemented these suggestions and found them useful. I also used a digital

voice recorder to help me capture complex and fast-paced events in my field notes during home visits and informal observations (see Appendix I).

## **Method of Data Analysis**

### **Data Management**

Merriam (1988) suggested that during the qualitative research process, data collection and analysis are simultaneous activities; yet data analysis and collection do not have to be finished simultaneously. Instead data analysis may become more intensive after all data have been gathered because it is an ongoing activity. She stated that collecting data without analyzing it would result in the researcher's not knowing whom to interview, what questions to ask, or where to look next; therefore, I synchronized collection, organization, and analysis of data. According to Miles and Huberman (1984) the purposes of doing parallel data collection and analysis are two-fold: (a) They can increase the possibility for the researcher to collect new data or to explore unanticipated issues during the study and (b) they can help the researcher prevent overload of data by the end of the study.

Yin (2003b) recommended that the researcher organize the data collected by creating an individual case database. I prepared six collection boxes for the raw data of five families and one for my own use, labeling each box with the appropriate name. Each box contained a few files to organize the following data and information: participants' background information, site description with graphics, relevant literacy documents and artifacts, weekly schedule checklist or parents video recordings, home visits and informal observations field notes, interview questions and transcribed responses, and the

researcher's reflective notes. Miles and Huberman (1984) suggested that the researcher use a data storage and retrieval system that is easy, flexible, and reliable.

### **Data Analysis**

Researchers described data analysis as the process of studying one's data and trying to make sense of it (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1988). I conducted data collection and analysis simultaneously. I started to collect data during the first interview, and the data analysis process began with the initiation of data collected. The initial analysis helped to shape the ongoing data collection and analysis. The data analysis process continued throughout and after the data collection period. Case study research focuses on a detailed description of the setting or individuals, followed by analysis of the data for themes or issues (Stake, 1995). The purposes of the analysis process were to gain an in-depth description of understanding and to identify the themes or perspectives related to how Chinese parents promote the acquisition of their children's biliteracy through home literacy practices. This qualitative case study included six analytical steps proposed by Creswell (2007, 2009) as follows:

**Step 1: Data managing.** I organized and prepared the data for analysis. All collected data was saved in two formats: electronic file and paper file. All electronic data files were saved in at least two places: computer and portable hard drive. Each family had one main folder containing a few subfolders that distinguished different types of data collection methods and was saved under the matching method's folder. The convention for the electronic file name was the first letter of each layer of folder + time of data collection + in what language [Mandarin Chinese (C) or in English (E)], for example, Lin



family → Home Visits Field Notes → LHVFN3-25-2011C. All electronic files were also printed out on paper and placed in the file for the matching collection method, indexed in the family storage box in chronological order. The data from home visits and informal observations field notes and weekly schedule checklist were typed and saved in electronic files with printouts placed in the matching folders in the family storage box. The interview protocol and interview digital record data was transcribed in Mandarin, saved and printed out. Literacy documents and artifacts were scanned and saved as electronic files, printouts, or photocopies. Parent video recordings were saved, and I used software to edit and save them for later coding.

**Step 2: Reading, memoing.** I used Excel to build a data analytic thematic framework sheet. I carefully and repeatedly read all the data. During the reading I started sorting the data into the data analytic thematic sheet, one by one. For example, I sorted the answers for “What are your expectations for your child’s academic achievement?” into a category called academic achievement, which fell under parental expectations and related to the research question regarding parents’ beliefs in supporting their children’s acquisition of biliteracy. I also tried to obtain general ideas and write notes in the margin or record general thoughts about the data.

**Step 3: Describing.** I began my detailed analysis with a coding process. I carefully and repeatedly read and sorted data from home visits and informal observations, interviews, field notes, relevant literacy documents and artifacts, and weekly schedule checklists or parent audio recordings into the Excel worksheet. I paid attention to the actual language of the participants when I merged and labeled subcategories. I tried

to acquire a sense of the broad picture and to think more deeply about the underlying meanings of the words. I summarized all answers. I used Table 4 and Figure 1 as a coding guideline to code data into several subcategories connected with each theme and relevant to my research questions. The purpose of relevant subcategories was to highlight the similarities and differences among each set of unique family home literacy practices. Thus, Table 4 was carefully planned. Figure 1 included the protocol questions, forming key ideas emerging from the domain as shown in Table 4, information gleaned from the literature review in Chapter 2 that was organized and reorganized, and finally, indicators of when the chart needed to be modified as shown through the simultaneously collected and analyzed data (Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1984). This dynamic process evolved into a useful, informative guide that would serve as the outline for sharing the findings in Chapter 4.

**Step 4: Classifying.** I used Table 4 and Figure 1 to generate a description of the setting or people as well as subcategories or themes for analysis and the format for sharing findings. The analysis of biliteracy practices began with the initiation of data collection, and the functions and contexts of biliteracy events were identified. I analyzed data from home visits and informal observation field notes, transcribed notes from interviews with parents, relevant literacy documents and artifacts, weekly schedule checklist or parent audio recordings, and analyzed them for subcategories and emerging themes. Data analysis continued by reviewing codes, recoding and summarizing (Guba & Lincoln, 1984). I described in detail each family, including background information, ordinary week living experiences, environment, or activities in a setting, and the context.

Table 4

*Data Analytic Thematic Framework*

Research Questions	Q: What are the parents' beliefs and language experiences in support of their children's acquisition of biliteracy?		Q: With what home literacy practices do parents promote their children's achievement of biliteracy?		
Domains	Parents' experiences	Parents' beliefs	Home literacy environment	Informal literacy practices	Formal literacy practices
Key ideas	Parenting; Parents' language experiences: home country, global (US)	Expectation for academic achievement; Values and reasons; Parents' roles	Time management; Space design; Atmosphere created; Availability and instrumental use of literacy resources: Multimedia; books and published materials	Features: listening; speaking; reading; writing; Interaction: child independently; peers interact; parent-child (adult-child) interact; Frequency duration	Homework; Subjects and concepts;
Interview Questions	QE5: What are your expectations for your child's or children's academic achievement? QE9: Please describe how your language learning experiences shape	QE1: Please try to recall and describe your learning Mandarin experiences at home, at school, or work in your home country. QE2: Please try to recall and describe	QF2G2: Please describe your home environment in detail, such as time management, space design, and atmosphere created in your home to stimulate your child's or children's	QE6: Please describe your involvement and investment in your child's or children's academic learning. QF1G1: How many years of formal education in Mandarin and English have your child or children	QE7: Are you directly teaching your child or children at home, please describe this as it relates to his or her academic performance? QF6G6: Are you

	<p>your role as parents.</p> <p>QE11: What are your beliefs and expectations with regard to the value of Mandarin or English or both for your children's language learning and why?</p>	<p>where you learned English. Please describe your English learning experiences at home, in school, or work in your home country.</p> <p>QE3: Please evaluate your language fluency in English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).</p> <p>QE4: Please try to recall and describe your learning English experiences at home, in school or at work, or living in the US.</p> <p>QE10: Do you read in Mandarin or English daily? Do you write in Mandarin or English daily?</p> <p>QE8: Please describe what kind of parenting styles</p>	<p>Mandarin and English literacy learning.</p> <p>QF3G3: Please describe your home literacy resources (multimedia; books and published materials) in detail. Will these resources promote your child or children's Mandarin and English literacy learning? Please tell me about it.</p>	<p>received?</p> <p>QF1G1: Please evaluate your child or children's language fluency in Mandarin and English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Which area is his or her strength and which area needs assistance? Why?</p> <p>QE10: Do you read bedtime stories to your child or children daily? Do you have parent-child reading interaction regularly at home? When and who does/do your child or children speak to in Mandarin or English?</p> <p>QF4G4: Please describe what kind of Mandarin-related and English-related activities or practices your child or children usually do independently at home.</p> <p>QF5G5: Please describe what kind of Mandarin-related and English-</p>	<p>directly teaching your child or children Mandarin or English literacy? Please tell me about it.</p>
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		<p>you are using in raising your child or children (authoritarian, permissive, or authoritative)?</p> <p>QG10: During the process of promoting your child's or children's literacy, do you find the support or information from the external environment you need and from where or whom?</p>		<p>related activities or practices you usually do with your child or children at home.</p> <p>QF7G7: Please describe how you promote your child's or children's Mandarin and English literacy (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) through the use of home literacy practices.</p> <p>QF8G8: What are the challenges that you face in supporting your child's or children's Mandarin and English learning? How are you dealing with these challenges?</p> <p>QG9: Please describe the process of promoting your child's or children's Chinese-English biliteracy, and how this involvement influences your child's or children's multi-cultural awareness.</p>	
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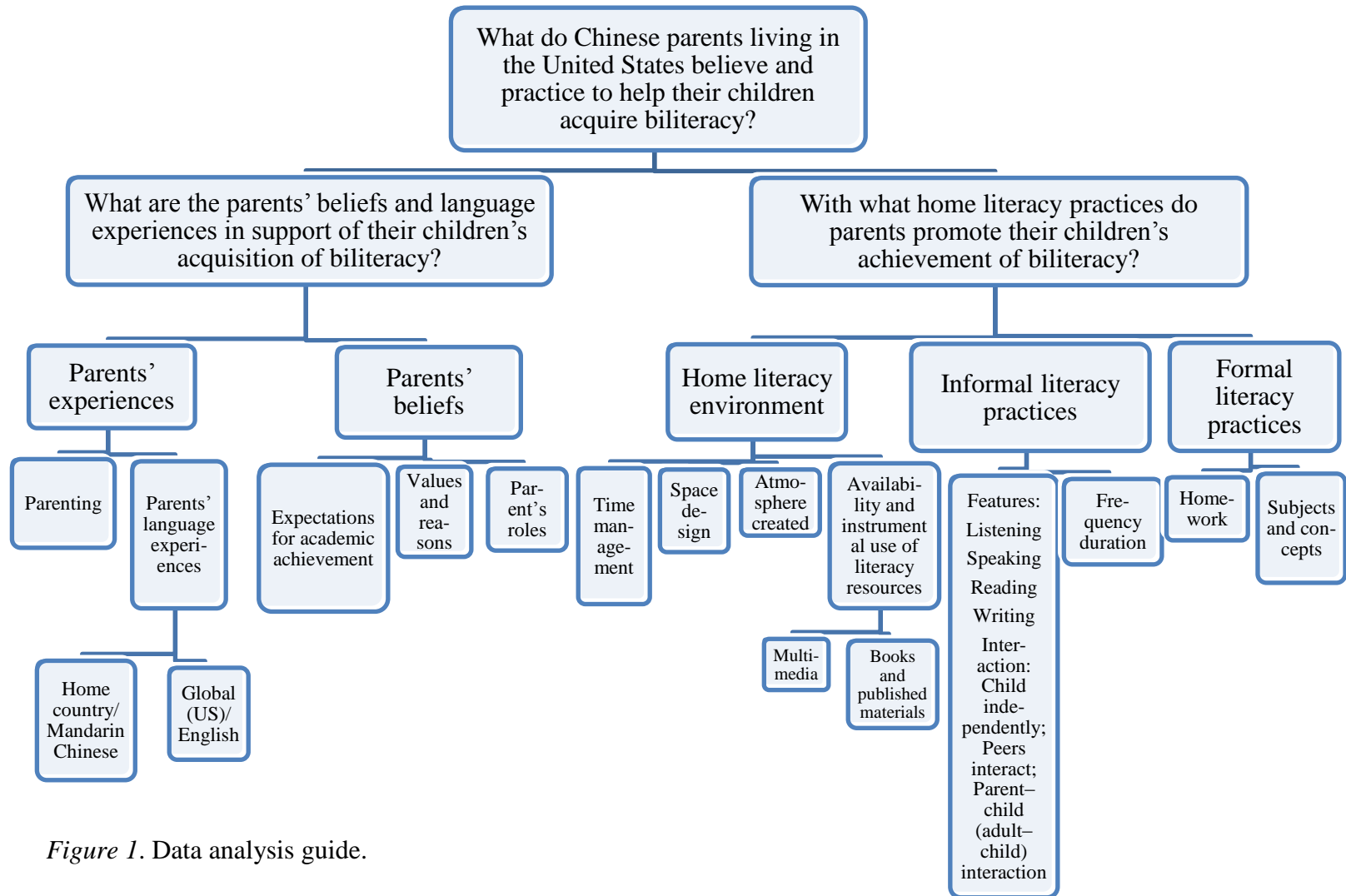


Figure 1. Data analysis guide.

**Step 5: Representing, visualizing.** I figured out in advance how the description and themes would be represented in the qualitative narrative as described in Step 3 of the data analysis section, in which the representation coemerged along with the data analysis. I conveyed descriptive information about each participant in a table.

**Step 6: Interpreting.** A final step in data analysis involved interpreting the data. When I interpreted, I also found the answers to my research questions, keeping in mind what lessons I learned or would learn. The last step of data analysis was to describe and interpret data by connecting the subcategories and themes to the theoretical framework of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Data, analysis, findings, and implications have been presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

### **Trustworthiness of the Data**

Many scholars have advised that triangulation of data sources, collection, and analysis help the researcher to confirm findings (Duff, 2007; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 1988, 1998). Hancock and Algozzine (2006) made suggestions for investigators to confirm the case study findings by (a) sharing the results with participants, (b) inviting fellow case study researchers or colleagues to review the findings or the report, (c) soliciting scrutiny of the report from experts on the topic under investigation, (d) examining the researcher's articulation of personal biases and how the effect of those biases are mitigated, and (e) adopting triangulation to confirm the results. Merriam (1998) suggested six basic strategies for the researchers to use to enhance internal validity. They include (a) triangulation to help investigators using multiple methods or multiple sources of data to verify the emerging findings; (b) member checks

to share data and tentative interpretations with participants and to ask them whether the findings are plausible; (c) peer examination to obtain feedback from colleagues on the finding as they emerge; (d) examining researcher's biases to clarify the researcher's assumptions, worldview, and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study; (e) long-term observation to increase the validity of the findings; and (f) participatory or collaborative modes of research to involve participants in all phases of research from conceptualizing to findings.

As planned, I followed Merriam's first four suggestions above. I checked the consistency of findings through the triangulation of interviews; home visits and informal observation— data sources, home visits and informal observations—field notes, interview transcriptions, weekly schedule checklist, literacy documents and artifacts or parent audio recordings. I reduced systematic bias and distortion by continually and carefully reflecting upon how my role and experiences shaped perceptions during data analysis.

### **Summary**

I chose case study methodology to conduct my research. It is the appropriate approach for this study because it provided a means to gain a deeper understanding of the manner in which Chinese families support their children's acquisition of biliteracy through experiences involving language and culture in their homes. The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth description of the social interaction between parents and their children during home literacy practice and activities. Data collection strategies included home visits and informal observations, interviews, weekly schedule checklist or



parent audio or video recordings, relevant literacy documents and artifacts, and field notes. Data management skills followed Yin's (2003b) suggestion to create an individual case database for data organization with easy, flexible, and reliable access recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984). The data analysis involved six analytical steps proposed by Creswell (2007, 2009). The strategies of triangulation included the following: (a) using various data collection methods to verify the consistency of emerging findings, (b) involving the experts' opinions in data analysis, and (c) coconstructing meaning from participants' voices. My trilingual background and my proficiency in Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese, and English, helped me conduct a study focused on the language beliefs of parents and their social interaction with their children in the home milieu. Finally, my personal and professional experiences helped me capture an authentic picture of Chinese families' home literacy practice in this study.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS**

**Introduction**

This chapter contains research findings illustrating five focal Chinese families' parental involvement and investment, beliefs, and support of children's acquisition of Chinese–English biliteracy through home literacy practices. Data analysis was conducted and analyzed in terms of the primary research question and two subquestions that guided the study:

What do Chinese parents living in the United States believe and practice to help their children acquire biliteracy?

1. What are the parents' beliefs and language experiences in support of their children's acquisition of biliteracy?
2. With what home literacy practices do parents promote their children's achievement of biliteracy?

First, detailed information about the five focal Chinese families appears below. It includes their backgrounds, reasons for immigrating to the US, length of residence in the US, languages spoken at home, other languages spoken, parents' levels of education and current occupations, and their Chinese and English social interaction environments in the United States.

Second, findings on Chinese parents' own language experiences and their beliefs about their children's acquisition of Chinese–English biliteracy were then divided into two categories, each with different factors. Parents' experiences, the first category,

comprised two factors: parenting and parents' experiences with acquiring Mandarin Chinese and English language and literacy in their home country and elsewhere with a focus on the US. Parents' beliefs, the second category, entailed three factors: parental expectations for their children's academic achievement, parents' values with regard to Mandarin Chinese, English, or both, and why, and the roles parents played in the development of their children's Mandarin Chinese and English language and literacy.

Third, I examined individual and contextual factors surrounding home literacy practices that parents promote with regard to their children's acquisition of Chinese–English biliteracy. I partitioned parents' home literacy practices into three categories, each with different factors. The first category was the home literacy environment, which fosters children's acquisition of biliteracy. Its four factors were time management, design of space, home atmosphere created to stimulate children's study, and availability and use of literacy resources, including multimedia, books, and other published materials. The second category was informal literacy practices that parents created and nourished by way of informal literacy activities through parent–child interaction. Three factors were associated with this category: features, which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing; literacy acquisition interaction, which refers to whether a child worked independently, interacted with peers, or interacted with a parent or other adults; and the frequency and duration of Chinese–English language use. The third category was direct teaching by parents with formal literacy practice to assist children with homework, subject matter, and concepts.

To highlight the backgrounds of the Chinese families and to compare and contrast their home literacy practices in Mandarin Chinese and in English, the following data deal with the five focal parents' immigration: (a) the family of one Chinese visiting scholar, who resided in the US for a short time, expecting to return to their home country, Mainland China; and (b) four immigrant Chinese families who permanently immigrated to the US. Of these four immigrant families, the socioeconomic status of one was entrepreneurial working class; the other three were middle-class.

To protect the identities of the participants and their families, pseudonyms were assigned to parents and their focal child only. In the family of the Chinese visiting scholar, both father and mother were participants; but in the remaining four Chinese immigrant families, the mothers and their elementary school children were participants. I substituted pseudonyms in Mandarin Chinese or English for their real names. The Mandarin Chinese or English pseudonyms were assigned to participants in this dissertation, paralleling the names used by their families or friends, either a Mandarin Chinese name or an English name according to my observation in their social community. Pseudonyms for their focal child in Chinese or English name were based on what their parents called them most often during my observation and visit. For the rest of family members, the participant's husband was called Mister; the other children were called older or younger son or daughter; and grandparents were called simply grandparents.

### **Case 1: Han, Ting and Li's Visiting Scholar Chinese Family**

The Wu family included Han (father), Ting (mother), and Li (daughter); they came from Shanghai, a global city, China's largest by population, and the commercial and economic center of mainland China. Shanghai has one of the best education systems in China. According to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), in 2011 Shanghai students, including local and migrant children, scored highest in math, reading, and science in the world (Fong & Altbach, 2011; Mervis, 2010; Reeves, 2011). In Shanghai, Han was an associate professor of English at a university; Ting was a university lecturer in English, and their daughter Li had completed first grade and the first semester of second grade. Mainland China has enforced the one-child policy for decades (Fong & Altbach, 2011) because China ranks first in the world in population; consequently, according to a popular saying, a boy will become the family's prince, and a girl will become the family's princess. Including the Chinese parents and both sets of grandparents, six adults raise one child. With all the attention the child, nearly spoiled, is seen as an investment in the family's future and status; therefore, the pressure for both parents and the child to succeed is intense. In such a competitive atmosphere, even a child who was not competitive elsewhere is competitive in Shanghai, China.

In Shanghai, top-level schools require entrance examinations because many parents want their children to attend them. To give children an advantage from the outset, parents want their children to attend top-level schools. For example, every year, the elementary school Li attended administered an entrance examination to children who wished to enter the first grade because it was one of the top schools in Shanghai.

In the United States, both Han and Ting were visiting scholars at a university in Ohio. Han, who came to America with daughter Li one semester earlier than his wife Ting, was a visiting scholar from January 2011 to January 2012. Ting was a visiting scholar from July 2011 to July 2012. Li stayed with her father and mother for a total of 1.5 years, and she entered the second semester of second grade in an Ohio elementary school. Table 5 summarizes background on the Wu family:

Table 5

*The Wu Family*

Family member	Reason in USA	Years in USA	Language spoken at home	Other spoken languages	Education level	Current Occupation
Han (Father)	Visiting scholar	1	Mandarin	Shandong, English	Ph.D. (China)	Visiting scholar
Ting (Mother)	Visiting scholar	1	Mandarin	Shandong, English	Master's (China)	Visiting scholar
Li (Daughter age 8)	Came with family	1.5	Mandarin	English	Elementary school (US)	Student

The Wu family made their first trip to the US, specifically Ohio, in spring 2011. They lived in a two-bedroom apartment in the international housing complex located on campus. Ting arrived with her family to help her husband and daughter settle into the new environment and stayed for a few weeks before returning to Shanghai to teach and to complete the process necessary to become a visiting scholar at the same university. Beside personal items, Ting brought Chinese second-semester second-grade materials for Li to learn and study. These included Chinese textbooks with matching exercise books on language arts and mathematics and grade-appropriate Chinese chapter books for

reading. In summer 2011 Ting became a visiting scholar and reunited with her family in Ohio for one year. At that time, she brought Chinese third-grade materials for her daughter to continue to learn and study because eventually Li would return to China with her parents and resume her education at a Chinese elementary school.

Shortly after their arrival in spring 2011, Han and his daughter Li adjusted to the new environment, new school, new culture, and new friends; they had to speak English in order to communicate with others in daily life and in school. Han was solely responsible for housework, his scholarly research, and his daughter's physical and psychological needs and schoolwork in English as well as the maintenance of her Mandarin Chinese. Han not only became a tutor to assist Li in adapting to her new elementary school and learning English as a second language, but he was also a home teacher, who needed to find time to teach Li language arts, mathematics, and reading in Chinese in order for his daughter to maintain knowledge and language abilities in Mandarin Chinese equal to her classmates in Shanghai, China.

Han made his daughter's schedule a priority over his scholarly research. When Li returned home from school each day, his attention focused exclusively on her study and extracurricular activities. Tables 6 and 7 show Han and Ting's involvement and investment in Li's upbringing. Table 6 demonstrates Han and Ting's out-of-school parental involvement and investment in Li's academic learning, the development of her Chinese-English biliteracy, extracurricular activities, entertainment, and enrichment in American culture and environment. Table 7 shows overall parental involvement and

investment in Li's personal development. It displays Ting's endless efforts on behalf of Li's growth and development from birth to the time of this writing.

In summer 2011, Ting came to America and reunited with her family. She took over the work her husband had done while she remained in Shanghai: preparing daily meals, studying with Li, assisting with her English homework and Chinese exercise books, teaching her Chinese subjects (Mandarin Chinese, mathematics, and reading) and taking her to extracurricular activities (See Table 6). Thus, Han had more time for the scholarly research he needed to finish by the end of his visit.

Li finished third grade in Ohio with an advantage over her Chinese classmates in English class. After they returned to China, her original elementary school in Shanghai gave her a formal test to determine the level of her knowledge and Mandarin Chinese language abilities. Because she finished third grade in the US, the test results helped the elementary school administrators to decide whether to place her in fourth grade or keep her in third grade if they showed that she did not meet the standard set for her Chinese classmates. The examination strongly motivated Han to teach his daughter Chinese while they were in America. Doing so presented a challenge because despite doing their best, they remained anxious about how well they did until the day the results were released. Clearly, they were under pressure. The Wu family case provided a lens through which the larger picture of the highly competitive Chinese education system came into view in this study. Their story showed that many Chinese parents immigrated to Western nations for the sake of their children's education. The significant difference between the Chinese



Table 6

*Out-of-School Parental Involvement and Investment: Li's Typical Week*

Date/Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday		Saturday	Sunday	
School bus arrives home 3:45 p.m.  Classes/free time vary from 30–60 minutes, except Art class for 90 minutes  Bedtime around 9:30 p.m.	Snack					8:00 a.m.           9:30 p.m.	Free time/ outdoor play	Occasionally they attended church, and almost every weekend, spring break, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, they planned short or long family field trip around Ohio and the country.	
	Art enrichment	English homework and reading					Meal time		
	Tap, American folk, and ballet lessons	Free time or outdoor play					Piano practice		
	Meal time						Swimming practice		
	English Homework and reading	Piano practice			Piano lesson		Meal time		
	Chinese literacy lesson	Swimming lesson	Free time/ outdoor play	Swimming lesson	Swimming practice		Chinese literacy lesson and practice		
		Chinese literacy practice							
		Chinese Math lesson	Chinese Math practice						Chinese math lesson and practice

Table 7

*Parental Involvement and Investment in Li's Personal Development*

Mother	Child	Lesson	Age
Ting	Li	Ting's effort on behalf of Li's physical growth and extracurricular activities for learning and development	
		Ting read materials on early childhood development and listened to music	Prenatal
		Ting emphasis on Li's physical health development	Birth to 3 years old
		Ting read a Mandarin Chinese picture book as a bedtime story to Li regularly	2 -5 years old
		Li attended music lessons	3-7 years old
		Li attended piano lessons	4 years old to present
		Li attended Chinese folk dance lessons	3-6 years old
		Li attended English lessons	5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> -7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> years old
		Li attended Latin dance lessons	6-6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> years old
		Li attended calligraphy lessons	7 years old
		Li attended ice skating lessons	8-9 years old
		Li attended tap, American folk, and ballet lessons	8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> years old to present
		Li attended swimming lessons	8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> years old to present
Li attended art lessons	3-5, 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> years old to present		

and American education system is that in China the system focuses primarily on high levels of academic achievement, but in the US, schools focus on both academic success and extended involvement in extracurricular activities, such as sports or volunteer service.

### **Chinese and English Social Environment in the United States**

Three types of social communities in America allowed Han and Li to connect with Chinese life similar to the way they did in Shanghai while exploring American culture with American friends and a social network beyond the classroom and school. Their social communities were (a) the neighborhood, campus life, and host family, (b) a Bible study group, and (c) churches. International student housing was a good place for diverse ethnic families with children to start their new lives in America and at the university because most of them came from their own countries to Ohio and English was their second language. Because they shared similar experiences, they provided helpful information or assistance to the inexperienced. The setting allowed them to make friends easily, and the location facilitated movement around the campus and school. Han could reach his campus research office by walking or taking the campus bus. Li with her ethnically diverse agemates and their parents waited in front of the complex to take the school bus to the local elementary school. Every weekday while waiting for the bus, the children spoke English with one another and played together until the bus arrived; meanwhile, their parents socialized. After school, Han and Li regularly met with neighborhood families with children from Taiwan, China, America, and other countries so Li could speak Mandarin Chinese and play with or listen to English-speaking children.

For socializing and networking, Han met colleagues and professors from both the English and Education Departments and members of the Chinese students' organization.

In the vicinity of the university, church personnel and missionaries were especially helpful to international students, scholars, and their families, providing opportunities to interact socially with Americans to increase their opportunities to learn English, understand American culture, and take in the sights of Ohio and the United States. Sometimes Han and Li attended Friday Bible study, hosted by a transnational family: The wife was from Taiwan, and the husband was an America missionary. Bible study always opened with a Chinese dinner prepared by the wife, followed by singing hymns in English and a discussion of a Bible story in English by Chinese students, scholars, and their families. Occasionally, they also attended another American church, where international students were invited to socials every Friday evening.

Sometime, Han and Li participated with a Chinese congregation that met in an American church on Sundays. Han socialized with Chinese church members, and Li attended Sunday school with American children. Later, Ting and Li regularly attended another America church on Sundays. All the networking helped them adapt to American life smoothly, and Americans offered friendship and varied opportunities for the Wu family to engage in meaningful social interactions for the improvement of their English proficiency.

### **Parents' Experiences**

This section on parents' experiences encompasses parenting and parents' language-learning experiences. Parenting in Chinese is *Jiaoyang* (教養) (*Jiao* means

educating and teaching; *Yang* implies educating and rearing). In Chinese culture, parents' responsibility entails not only rearing but also educating children with emphasis on both, but educating takes precedence over rearing. Parents' Mandarin Chinese and English language-learning experiences were important to reveal how parents scaffolded their children's acquisition of biliteracy.

**Parenting.** Ting and Han had common expectations for their only daughter Li, so their parenting styles were also similar. Based on interviews and informal conversations, I found that both felt their parenting styles and practices in raising their child tended to fall into the category of "authoritative parenting" that focused on parental control, emotional closeness, and child autonomy. Han and Ting had rigorous plans for Li. Her freedom was limited, and she could not do whatever she wanted. Li seemed to feel pressured, and she acted out against her parents when her ideas differed from theirs. When these differences manifested themselves, Han and Ting reflected and changed their approach to better accommodate Li, yet they still adhered to their own discipline and values. Ting gave examples: They believed that "Early to bed, early to rise" was healthy for Li. Ting believed that as a young child, Li should develop a good lifestyle, good study habits, and a good personality; and learn to be polite, tolerant, and generous toward others. Expecting herself and her daughter to become a good people, Ting was aware that these qualities are difficult to learn and to maintain; but she expected Li to become that kind person instead of the child she herself wanted to become. Ting emphasized the importance of the whole person as well as academics.

Some parent–child conflicts arose during Li’s education because Li had her own ideas and her own personality. For example, they went to the Cleveland Zoo and played the whole day, and when they returned home that night, Li saw neighborhood children going to the University Recreation Center to swim, so she wanted to go, too.

Her father told her, "No, we are so tired because we played the whole day at the Cleveland Zoo."

Li replied unhappily to her father, "Why can she go and I cannot?"

That night, Ting and Han reflected on this incident. They thought maybe they should have let her go swimming because it was her own body, and she might better know how tired she was. Ting and Han’s overall intention was to prevent Li from suffering and keep her from developing unacceptable behaviors. After a few similar incidents, Ting and Han started to think from Li’s perspective, and they reminded each other gradually to let her have more control. Ting and Han tried hard to persuade Li to continue certain routines even if she resisted, such as regular piano practice and routinely memorizing Chinese classics; but Ting indicated the primary goal was for Li to become a good and healthy person as well as achieve academically.

**Parents’ language experiences.** Ting and Han lived in villages in Shandong. Their first language was the Shandong dialect; they were trilingual, speaking Shandong, Mandarin Chinese, and English. They grew up in similar environments and had comparable living experiences, yet they maintained their own ideas or the purposes of learning languages and literacy in school. Ultimately, they both chose English language teaching as their careers.

Ting shared her experiences with acquiring the Mandarin Chinese language and literacy in China. She began with her home experiences and school experiences, especially her learning style and practice strategies. In addition, she spoke of the way she built up her Mandarin Chinese reading and writing abilities. Her family lived in a village in Shandong. Her parents' generation did not have an opportunity for any education at all. Her parents' expectations and their involvement and investment in their children's educational success were far less than Ting's were for Li. At home, they spoke the Shandong dialect with one another, with neighbors, and even in the local elementary school, where the teacher mixed Shandong dialect and Mandarin Chinese; therefore, code-switched between Shandong dialect and Mandarin Chinese in school and daily life was common until Ting went to the university, where she primarily spoke Mandarin Chinese. Ting described how she learned Mandarin Chinese in the schools in China. She said:

With my learning style, I am a person who loves studying and reading. I read a lot, and I am an active and independent learner. When I learned Mandarin Chinese as a language art in the schools, I was serious about attending lectures, followed the teacher's instruction carefully, and finished homework on time.

After I arrived at home, the first thing I did was finish my homework; I seldom watched TV, and besides playing with friends outdoors, the rest of the time I read.

When she was young, she developed the habit of reading, which affected her academic success later in life.

Ting brought her previous learning experiences to the classroom and also followed her teacher's instruction for writing. Her teacher's method involved rewriting the new vocabulary list in each chapter as homework. Ting wrote each vocabulary words several times in the vocabulary exercise book until she knew how to write from memory, recognized the meaning, and was able to use the vocabulary in a sentence. In China or Taiwan, young children typically attend calligraphy class because calligraphy makes people concentrate and promotes good handwriting; furthermore, an understanding of calligraphy demonstrates the beauty of Chinese characters that might extend children's interests to traditional Chinese painting. Ting also attended calligraphy class during elementary school, but later she did not insist on the calligraphy class. In school, Ting followed the teacher's assignments in composition, but she did not develop a strong interest in becoming a writer. During her teaching work, because she taught English, she hardly had time to write Chinese in a formal setting.

With regard to reading strategies from her learning experiences, Ting loved to read. When she was young, she read numerous comic books, which friends exchanged with one another. When one had a new comic book, others went to her or his home to read the new book. Starting in fourth or fifth grade, Ting built up a vocabulary sufficient to enable her to borrow and read many novels and then classic literature from the library. At the time of this writing, Ting read only a few interesting Chinese books about subjects such as parenting, Li's novels during parent-child reading, and Chinese news on the Internet.



Han discussed his experiences with acquiring Mandarin Chinese language and literacy, describing episodes from his home background, his school, peer interaction, and the challenge of the workplace. His family lived in a village in Shandong, where most of his parents' contemporaries were farmers with little education and lacking the skills needed to help children learn. Before children received elementary school education and started to learn Mandarin Chinese as a subject, the primary language in which people communicated daily with one another was the Shandong dialect. In school, students first learned Pinyin and through intensive practice, they learned how to speak and read Mandarin Chinese naturally. Outside school, students still spoke the Shandong dialect. For example, Han said,

We spoke Mandarin Chinese when reading textbooks aloud, but when my brother or I wanted to share with my family what we learned or what happened in school, we code-switched to the Shandong dialect to explain and reflect on our learning. For homework in Mandarin Chinese-language learning and literacy and preparation for examinations, students typically practiced writing, copying, and memorizing dictated vocabulary words and passages until they were familiar with the textbook content. At Han's school, examinations involved writing dictated passages. Teachers did not test students' oral ability because, Han recalled, some elder teachers may not have had good pronunciation in speaking Mandarin Chinese.

Through peer interaction and extracurricular reading activities, Han and his classmates enriched their learning of vocabulary with picture books, comic books, magazines, and classic literature. His favorite was a series of fictionalized versions of

Chinese history, 西遊記 [*Journey to the West*]. He and his classmates and friends discussed content and exchanged books with one another. He bought one book and exchanged it with his classmates who had others. At the time, the library had limited resources, and meeting student demand was impossible. Han concluded that overall, he was satisfied with his Mandarin Chinese language and literacy learning because he scored well on tests at school.

After teaching English for more than a decade, the greatest challenge for Han in the Mandarin Chinese language and literacy experience was writing. Specifically, he found writing a professional paper in Mandarin Chinese for publication somewhat difficult. He discussed his writing with an expert or asked for a second opinion in order to be concise.

Ting reflected on her English language and literacy learning experiences as a pleasant process, culminating in a career in English. She had a good beginning in learning English and always did well, receiving positive feedback from her teacher and classmates; these elements stimulated her to follow her own way to learn English. In China, students learn English language and literacy as a language art at secondary school. When Ting began learning English, her hometown had no accessible English resources; so Ting's parents asked a relative who lived in an urban area to purchase a set of English tapes for her to supplement her English learning. Ting repeatedly listened to the tapes and repeated what she heard. She found this learning process enhanced her pronunciation, which resulted in her developing her own strategy of memorizing vocabulary. Similar to the way phonics is taught in American schools, Ting memorized vocabulary using

phonics. Her first English teacher taught English so well that Ting knew each letter and its sound after much practice; in addition she memorized rules for exceptions that could cover most of the necessary vocabulary. She always earned 100% on her dictation and test scores; thus, her English teacher asked her to become a classroom assistant. In addition, her teacher excused her homework assigned as preparation for examinations.

Ting enjoyed learning English, and she did not feel she had to overexert herself to do so; she did well in this subject. Based on her English proficiency, originating in middle school, she continued to do well in high school, precipitating her decision to choose English language teaching as her major at the university. When Ting taught English at the university, she combined reading and listening strategies from her learning experiences and her 10 years of teaching experience, telling her students that her own successful learning process included intensive and extensive listening as well as intensive and extensive reading.

Ting said:

In intensive listening, you choose classic literature and listen carefully three times. You find each time you listen, you gain something different. Or choose your favorite American movie, block the subtitles when you listen and watch the movie, or if possible, change the Mandarin Chinese subtitles to English subtitles. After listening and watching three times, test yourself, and see how much you understand without any subtitles. The more you listen, the more dialogue you learn and you can extend it into daily conversation with others. The more that goes into your brain, the more will be yours to communicate and use.

Ting explained extensive listening:

There are lots of extensive listening materials and media. An Internet full of widespread good materials can be downloaded to listen as well as radio, CD, DVD, and TV programs. You just want to open your ears to listen and familiarize yourself with the way they speak English. The degree to which you familiarize yourself will improve your listening ability over time.

Intensive reading is initiated by the teacher, an expert, or a good handbook on sentence structure; the process resembles that of intensive listening and extensive listening. In intensive reading students had to learn well when the teacher explained the meaning of vocabulary, the grammatical structures, and all aspects of good writing. In extensive reading students independently read considerable amounts of material, including novels; they memorize and pay attention to good vocabulary and good sentences. The more one reads and memorizes, the more one understands. The more a student understands, the more she or he can gradually think in English instead of Chinese when reading English. Some students tried Ting's strategies and methods and had good results, telling her that they worked for them.

Han reflected on his experiences learning the English language and literacy. Similar to Ting, in middle school Han found out he loved to learn new things when his family brought home a radio. While he watched sheep grazing in the field after school, he listened to the radio and found one English-teaching channel, which broadcast programs similar to classroom teaching with a Chinese teacher using bilingual instruction to teach English. Initially, he understood only parts of the lesson.

Han's middle school was a top school in the area, and his English teachers all had bachelor's degrees; by contrast English teachers at some suburban middle schools had only high school diplomas. The learning strategies used by Han's English teachers included practicing reading English texts until students could recite them, memorizing vocabulary in order to spell correctly and understand the meaning, and learning a few grammar rules gradually from easy to somewhat complex in order to answer test questions. Han learned to write English by copying sentences, then filling in blanks (vocabulary, meaning). Until high school, he was assigned short writing tasks, for example, write a paragraph based on provided pictures or write a simple letter to the teacher, classmates, or relatives.

About using English and Mandarin Chinese to express himself, Han said:

Comparing English and Mandarin Chinese, I liked learning Mandarin Chinese more than English because I felt Chinese was easier than English. I think I studied and read a lot. Mandarin Chinese seems more handy to me for examinations and writing tasks. My Mandarin Chinese ability enables me easily to fulfill such tasks. For English, I study for the purpose of doing well on tests and for writing composition tasks. English was hard to write and to express what I intended to describe.

Realistically speaking, during middle and high school before he chose to major in English at the university, Han felt neutral about English. He recalled that in his adolescence he admired teachers who were university graduates and who were a few years older than he. The English of these young English teachers was good, so Han

hoped his English ability could eventually match theirs. This motivated Han as he grew more eager to learn English well. During his studies at the university, China gradually opened its doors to foreigners, thus Chinese–English bilingual abilities were in demand, making it easy to find decent jobs. Han timed his decision to major in English well, enabling him to have better career opportunities and to fulfill his curiosity about learning new things. He was able to use English to communicate with foreign people in China, satisfying and extending his global view and knowledge.

### **Parents' Beliefs**

**Parental expectations for Li's academic achievement.** With regard to Han and Ting's parental expectations for Li's academic achievement, Ting had high expectations for Li as shown by her investment and involvement in Li's education. As the main caregiver for Li, who was the center of their lives, Ting tried her best to support Li's learning in and out of school. If Li did not reach her parents' expectations, Ting felt frustrated. Having lived in Ohio for a while, even with many challenges, they tried to reflect upon and adjust their goals for Li. Han thought that because they were both highly educated people—a university instructor and an associate professor—Li would in the long run follow in their footsteps and pursue higher education, at least a bachelor's degree, the major depending on her interests. In the short run, they hoped Li would earn straight As, based on her effort and her ability. They tried to help her as much as they could. Han said, “In China, the students are under lots of pressure, so we will not place any more pressure on Li. We expect to help her as much as she needs and we can.” Han

also pointed out some extreme cases of parental investment and involvement of which they disapproved. He said:

In China, some full-time mothers push their children to achieve at a level one year beyond their age. For example, before entering first grade, the child has already finished first-grade study; therefore, the child's examination scores always rank in the top three of the class.

Han and Ting believed this practice wasted the child's time.

Han and Ting expected Li to manage learning wisely by providing advice on time management in studying; besides attending extracurricular classes, after Li completed her homework, she worked on reading, piano, and memorizing classic Chinese stories and poems (See Figure 2) if she had time. Han and Ting's strategy was for Li to spend about 15 minutes every day memorizing a few sentences. If she wanted to memorize more, she could; if she refused, they encouraged her to recite aloud a passage she had already memorized. Ting said, "If young children memorize these classics early, they will not easily forget." Furthermore, when students study Mandarin Chinese as a language art in high school, they are required to study and memorize classic Chinese stories and poems. If they memorize these classics when they are young, in high school they can recall them quickly. They can then use their time for other subjects; therefore, they can reduce the time they need to study long hours outside the classroom during high school. Li's parents wanted her to explore a wide range of subjects and acquire learning skills during her childhood so that in high school she would find the work less difficult and keep up easily.

Thus, they expected that Li would learn to manage her time and learning strategies in the subjects she would need most to have a better high school experience.



*Figure 2.* (Left to right): 弟子規 "Rules for Children"; 學庸論語 "Selected Passages from Confucius"; 老子莊子選 "Taoist Theory."

**The value parents placed on Mandarin Chinese or English or both.** Ting viewed Chinese culture as extensive and profound. In fact for Li, acquiring the quintessence of Mandarin and Chinese culture was somewhat difficult; however, it was a valuable asset for her to do so in order to understand her ancestry and identity. Ting continued to emphasize learning Chinese culture and Mandarin Chinese with Li. English is a global language; furthermore, English is necessary for scholarly and professional knowledge and writing. In addition, Li might return to America for higher education; therefore, she needed a good foundation for her future study and career. Ting placed value on both languages, and she hoped Li would gain balance in Mandarin Chinese and English competencies; but after they returned to China, Li's Mandarin would doubtless be better than her English.



Han valued both languages and hoped Li would achieve balanced bilingualism in Mandarin Chinese and in English. He said, “The environment and input are two important factors that impact language learning.” He, too, recognized that after they returned to China, Li’s Mandarin Chinese would certainly improve more rapidly than her English. They both tried to assist Li in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English so that her language abilities remained above her peers in China. For Han and Ting, having balanced competence in Mandarin Chinese and in English was essential for them and for Li.

Experiences and beliefs shape the role parents play in supporting their children’s biliteracy acquisition. For example, Ting’s and Han’s literacy beliefs were related to their own language learning experiences at home and school. If they had positive learning experiences, they were likely to transmit their positive experiences in scaffolding their child’s language learning.

**Parents’ roles in scaffolding Li’s language-learning experiences.** Ting believed that intensive listening and reading and extensive listening and reading were good strategies for language learners to build up a solid foundation for mastering the target language. Han said, “The environment and input are two important factors that impact learning language”; therefore, they both focused on literacy environment and language input as Li went about language learning. Ting applied positive learning strategies when scaffolding Li’s language learning.

When asked about scaffolding Li’s language-learning experiences, Ting stated that listening and reading were most fundamental and important to build. Ting adopted

English language and literacy learning strategies in word recognition and a teaching approach that included intensive and extensive listening and reading to foster Li's acquisition of English. When Ting scaffolded Li's language and literacy development, she always focused on determining how to promote reading habits and reading competence. With these competencies, Li chose books and enjoyed reading them on her own freely and enjoyed listening: She liked to listen to Ting's bedtime stories, stories from Chinese history, and stories to help her learn Chinese idioms.

When asked about scaffolding Li's language-learning experiences, Han stated that his English professional knowledge facilitated his approach to scaffolding Li's English language learning and literacy, for example, prefixes and suffixes in vocabulary study. When Han read with Li, she did not know the word *unhappy*. He explained *unhappy* as a combination of *un* and *happy* and linked the concept to a review of words she learned before. From this word, he helped her to extend the group of words, and then they worked together to make a simple sentence. Han recalled when he learned English in China, his teacher required him to memorize vocabulary and sentences. Such an approach can mislead students who are learning a language, so Han took a different approach with Li. When they shared reading in her favorite series of books and saw a good sentence or one that Li found interesting or one that made her laugh, he helped her to imitate the pattern to make her own sentence. The more she learned, the better she could create good sentences as Americans did.

Home literacy practices contains three themes which emerged from data collection with regard to the Wus' involvement and investment in promoting Li's

Mandarin Chinese and English language and literacy development through home literacy practices: home literacy environment, informal literacy practice, and formal literacy practice.

### **Home Literacy Environment**

Factors in the Wu family's home literacy environment that fostered Li's acquisition Chinese-English biliteracy were time management, space design, home atmosphere created to stimulate Li's study, and the availability and use of literacy resources accessible to Li, including multimedia, books, and other published materials.

**Time management.** As shown in Table 6, Li had a busy schedule on weekdays, and some relaxation time during the weekend. Ting had to manage time carefully for Li every day. Priorities were ranked as follows: first, the fixed schedule of extracurricular activities; second, Ting's mentoring of Li to finish her English homework from the ESL teacher, Title I teacher, and classroom teacher; and third, Chinese literacy practice and mathematics practice. The Wus had a piano in their home in Shanghai, so Li practiced almost every day; but in the US, if time allowed, Ting and Li went to the piano room located in the University Music Hall for piano practice as often as they could. In addition, Ting encouraged Li to read daily in her favorite books in Mandarin Chinese or English.

**Space design.** The family stayed in the United States only a short time. Han acquired some furniture from friends for their home, where everyone had a desk, and the two big bookshelves were filled mostly with Li's books (See Figure 3). Li had her own bedroom with a desk, chair, and a big bookshelf, where she placed her books and homework or her own personal items, such as art supplies, a box of beads, or a couple

rolls of yarn. Near the kitchen was another small table, where Li also liked to do homework, and a big bookshelf beside it with some books and returned homework papers. Thus, when Ting cooked, she could assist Li when she had questions to ask about her homework. Their home was small yet filled with furniture necessary for reading and studying.



*Figure 3.* Floor plan for Wu apartment.

**Home atmosphere.** The Wus were a scholarly family, so the home atmosphere created for Li related to education activities and books. My informal observation confirmed data from Ting's interview, in which she stated that Li was not interested in watching TV in Mandarin Chinese or in English or playing computer games. When I visited the Wu family, I seldom saw Li watch TV. Ting said that since Li was young,

Ting played Mandarin Chinese or English CDs and later audio stories about Chinese history for Li to listen to during meal time, play time at home, or in the car during transit and local commutes; therefore, Li experienced a routine of listening and other educational activities that allowed her little time to watch TV. She rarely turned on the TV to watch for hours as did some children who love TV. Occasionally, she watched a movie from the Disney Princess Series. Similarly, Li's parents each had a laptop to work with, but Li was not exposed to the computer at all during her early years; so to her computers were merely her parents' work equipment. This scholarly family had not experienced the biggest problems many parents have faced: TV and computer games.

After they arrived in the United States, Li's parents wanted to integrate her into an English school, so they went to the city library to borrow 15–30 books and a few Disney DVDs once every week or two. In America, Ting turned on TV for Li to listen to while she prepared to leave for school in the morning, during meals, or playing or working on an art project. Sometime, Ting offered a Disney Princess movie for Li to watch because she seldom actively focused on TV. Because both Han and Ting were teachers and visiting scholars, they naturally served as good models for Li, who was accustomed to books and reading activities in their home.

**Literacy resources.** In China, Ting's colleagues, who also had children, were linguistics professors with their own information and resources for educating their children. When they gathered to socialize, their children played together, and they discussed their sources, including popular, good books appropriate for their children to read. They also shared their knowledge about good after-school programs for children

and qualified piano teachers. In addition, the older children passed on their books and toys to the younger children. Ting bought books from an online bookstore (book.dangdang.com) that advertised the largest volume of Mandarin Chinese books in the world, and she liked to borrow children's books for Li from the Soong Ching-Ling Children's Library in Shanghai. They selected books together: Ting chose books from the list recommended by the librarians for children of Li's age and ability, and Li chose books she liked. Li's school provided age-appropriate magazines for students to read, and Ting also ordered children's magazines for Li to read at home. Ting estimated that the family had around 500 books at home in China. Ting typically bought good books and put them on the bookshelf in Li's bedroom, so they were accessible for the child to choose and read. Ting said 60% of the books at home in Shanghai were in Mandarin Chinese, and 40% were in English. They had no multimedia materials, such as eBooks.

Once at Ting's home in the US, we discussed the kinds of English books she borrowed for Li to read. She already knew many of the authors that I mentioned to her, such as Dr. Seuss, Eric Carle, and Mercer Mayer. She bought these authors' books when they were in China. In the United States, Ting borrowed English books from the public library instead of buying them. Ting brought Mandarin Chinese workbooks and Chinese books from China for Li to read. Overall, their literacy sources comprised various books, stories in audio books, or Chinese dynasty stories downloaded from the Internet, and a few DVDs. Ting bought an Apple iPad2 before they returned to China. Clearly, Li lived in a linguistically rich setting in China and in the US.

### **Informal Literacy Practices**

The opportunities that parents created and supported to facilitate their child's language acquisition through informal literacy practices can be categorized in terms of three factors as follows: (a) features, which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing; (b) literacy acquisition interaction, which refers to whether a child works independently, interacts with peers, or interacts with a parent or other adults; and (c) frequency and duration of Chinese–English language use. Features and literacy acquisition interaction are mutually intertwined when parents scaffold the child's acquisition of biliteracy in listening, speaking, reading, and writing through interaction in their literacy milieu; therefore, I have described features and interaction in the same section.

**Features and interaction.** As in the learning of one's native language, listening and speaking usually occur first, and reading and writing later. The Wus spoke Mandarin Chinese with Li at home both in China and in the US. Before Li's second birthday, Ting focused on Li's physical growth more than her literacy. After age 2, Ting engaged regularly and continually in parent–child reading for many years. Ting read Mandarin Chinese children's books to Li as long as she focused on and enjoyed the story. These kinds of interactive activities involving parent–child reading in Mandarin Chinese, later in English, have continued as Li grew older: They involved sharing time reading to and with Li. While Ting was busy when Li was young, she played CDs for Li and later, audio versions of well-known Chinese dynasty stories. Ting always played stories for Li during her free time, and the family discussed them during meal time. The process of

listening fostered the development of Li's Mandarin Chinese language and literacy, and the stories enriched her knowledge of Chinese dynasties and familiarity with Chinese historical figures and their deeds, which she might learn later in the schools.

In China and Taiwan, preschool education is for children up to age 6 and includes kindergarten (unlike in the US). Elementary school includes Grades 1 through 6; middle school, Grades 7 through 9; and high school, Grades 10 through 12. Li attended kindergarten for three years from ages 3 through 6. Kindertgartens are bilingual Chinese-English schools, which focus on child care and both Mandarin Chinese and English literacy activities. Ting remembered by the time Li finished kindergarten, she could recognize a few hundred words. After school, Li usually shared with her parents what happened and what she had learned in kindergarten. The teacher started with daily living experiences related to basic vocabulary, such as dates and numbers, and read aloud a story or a poem for students to repeat. After daily repetition, Li could correctly recite an entire story or poem to her parents. She also recognized the meaning of the words and phrases from the story or poem, indicating that she had built up good oral literacy in kindergarten. Later, Li brought picture books home as reading assignments. The kindergarten teacher did not teach Pinyin, a type of phonics in which an alphabetic script indicates the pronunciation of Chinese characters, to help students learn to read Mandarin Chinese because she wanted to avoid conflict in case the first grade teacher did not use Pinyin.

While Ting waited to take Li home from kindergarten, she talked to her teacher about Li's kindergarten experience. At home, mother and daughter conversed daily about



school, usually when Ting prepared dinner, and Han joined in during dinner. Han and Ting listened to Li sharing her day, talking about her friends and whatever she was excited or upset about at school. During daily family communication time, after Li's sharing Ting and Han praised her when she had done a good job at school. Sometime, they also discussed to issues Li raised. They guided Li toward "good person" thinking when she had problems with peers; they made suggestions for her to think about as she dealt with difficulties or issues when they happened.

When Li learned vocabulary in kindergarten, Ting made vocabulary flashcards related to the story or poetry that the teacher taught to scaffold Li's learning the vocabulary and let her recite it. For home reading assignments, Ting assisted Li in reading the book several times until she was able to read the book thoroughly. In addition, Ting sustained home reading practice activities with Li regularly to enhance both her oral and written literacy to build up her recognition of the vocabulary for advanced reading.

During her last year of kindergarten, Li attended one semester of after-school Pinyin lessons, taught by an elementary school teacher. Ting hoped these Pinyin lessons would help Li prepare to enter first grade. When Li entered first grade, Ting discovered that Li's teacher taught Pinyin at a rapid pace and that students needed much practice outside the classroom in order to master it. Beside classroom lessons and practice, most practice required that Ting assist Li until she was familiar with each letter and its sound. In the classroom, the teacher taught students some Pinyin and assigned recitation for homework. At home Li wrote her homework first and then worked independently to

write and speak the Pinyin with the help of additional exercise books that Ting bought for practice; while Li worked, Ting paid attention to her speaking. Then, Ting and Li interacted to work on correct pronunciation and make sure Li's writing was accurate. Before quiz day, Ting added pretests at home to help Li prepare for the next day's quiz. Later, Li learned the Chinese characters matching the corresponding Pinyin. Through daily classroom and home practice, the more Chinese characters Li remembered, not only the sounds but also the writing strokes of the Chinese characters. Ting provided similar practice activities for math and other subjects, too.

When I asked Ting and Han what they thought of Li's language abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, Han stated that after 1.5 years of Chinese in elementary school, her listening, speaking, and reading were good. They came to the US when Li had finished her first semester of second grade, so she her formal opportunities to learn writing and composition in Mandarin Chinese came to an end; therefore, she needed to put more effort in her Chinese writing practice at home. Han explained that in China, a typical second grader could write around 50 words or 10 sentences; if given a picture as motivation, second graders could produce a 100-word piece of creative writing.

In addition, Ting noted that listening was Li's strong suit and worried that the child's reading progress might be hindered because she favored listening over reading independently. Li enjoyed listening and speaking, especially listening to audio stories. She listened to stories about Chinese history so many times that she could tell her parents what would happen next during most of the story. Ting hoped that by age eight Li would love to read, not only love to listen to stories.

**Frequency and types of Chinese–English language use.** The Weekly Schedule Checklist (Appendix H) was designed to help answer my research question on participant families’ home literacy practices. The checklists elicited self-reported information by participant parents recording once per week over a period of 12 weeks. The weekly schedule checklists contained two parts: activities and lessons. Li attended piano, art, dance, and swimming lessons. The following results from the checklists concern the activity section. The activity findings (see Table 8) provide an overall picture of Chinese families’ home literacy practice in terms of frequency and types of literacy activities and other activities as well as parents’ and child’s Chinese or English language use at home or in the social community. The 12 weeks at the top of Table 8 indicate Chinese use in the activities listed in the columns, and the 12 weeks at the bottom indicate English use in the same activities. The number 7 in listening during the first week listed in the top half indicates that Ting marked her chart with a ✓ on Monday through Sunday for a total seven times for Week 1; they engaged in listening activities related to Chinese use every day. The number 7 in listening during the first week listed in the bottom half indicates that Ting marked her chart with a ✓ on Monday through Sunday for a total seven times for Week 1; they engaged in listening activities related to English use every day. Listening activities in Chinese for the Wu family involved, for example, Li listening to an audio story; listening and speaking with her parents, family, and Chinese friends; or listening and reading with her parents. Ting marked her chart with a ✓ once per day when at least one kind of listening activity occurred. I counted the ✓s for each day and entered the result on the table. Speaking activities in Chinese could involve, for example,

Li conversing with her Chinese friends or her family in China, sharing her day with her parents, or reading aloud with her parents. Reading activities in Chinese, writing activities in Chinese, and homework activities in Chinese are self-explanatory. Free-time activities in Chinese involved, for example, Li is doing following activities with her Chinese-speaking friends: riding a bike outside, playing with neighbor children in the yard, or making her own beaded jewelry. The same principles applied to English use in activities with English-speaking friends.

Findings from Table 8 revealed that the Wu family provided opportunities for Li to engage in listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities in both Mandarin Chinese and English almost on a daily basis except for writing activities in Chinese. The total of 12 weeks of writing in Chinese was far less than writing in English, and the total of writing was less than the total for reading in both languages. Reading and writing also occurred less than listening and speaking. This implied that parents could provide opportunities for listening and speaking more easily than for reading and writing. The tendency toward more reading and less writing activities could mean that writing activities were harder than reading activities for early language learners. To the Wu family the frequency of focusing on academic literacy activities, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and homework was 10 times greater than nonacademic activities, such as TV time, computer game time, free time, and others. During family time, they used Mandarin Chinese more frequency than English. For Li, free time occurred more frequently than TV time; PC game time, the least. Table 8 shows that the Wu family put most effort into academic literacy activities; they also valued family time.

Table 8

*Frequency of Chinese–English Language Use (7 days a week, count "✓" as 1, a blank as zero, and sum up for total per week)*

Chinese	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Homework	Library	Family time	TV time	PC game	Free time	Others	Frequency of use of Mandarin Chinese during 12-week period was 423.	
8/8-8/14	7	7	5	0	4	1	5	0	0	6	0		423
8/15-8/21	7	7	6	0	5	1	6	0	0	4	0		
8/22-8/28	7	7	7	1	6	0	0	0	0	7	0		
8/29-9/4	7	7	5	1	5	0	5	0	0	6	0		
9/5-9/11	6	6	6	4	4	0	1	0	0	0	0		
9/12-9/18	7	7	7	7	7	1	0	0	0	0	0		
9/19-9/25	7	7	7	5	6	0	4	0	0	2	0		
9/26-10/2	7	7	6	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10/3-10/9	7	7	7	5	5	0	6	0	0	0	0		
10/10-10/16	7	7	5	4	5	0	7	0	0	0	0		
10/17-10/23	5	5	5	5	5	0	7	0	0	4	0		
10/24-10/30	7	7	7	6	7	0	6	0	0	0	0		
Total	81	81	73	44	65	3	47	0	0	29	0		
English	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Homework	Library	Family time	TV time	PC game	Free time	Others	Frequency of use of English during 12-week period was 408.	
8/8-8/14	7	7	5	1	4	1	3	1	1	5	0		408
8/15-8/21	7	7	5	1	3	1	6	0	0	6	0		
8/22-8/28	7	7	7	6	6	0	0	2	0	7	0		
8/29-9/4	5	6	5	5	5	0	4	1	0	4	0		
9/5-9/11	6	6	6	4	4	0	1	0	0	0	0		
9/12-9/18	7	7	7	7	7	0	0	1	1	0	0		
9/19-9/25	7	7	7	6	5	0	2	2	0	2	0		
9/26-10/2	7	6	5	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10/3-10/9	7	7	7	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10/10-10/16	7	7	4	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10/17-10/23	5	5	5	5	5	0	3	0	0	4	0		
10/24-10/30	7	7	7	6	6	1	4	0	0	0	0		
Total	79	79	70	57	60	3	23	7	2	28	0		

In addition, they believed free-time activities were more socially active than sitting down to watch TV or playing computer games.

### **Formal Literacy Practices**

Formal literacy practices that imply direct teaching by parents to scaffold children's language learning and literacy development also extend to parents assisting children's academic learning. In Li's case, Han's and Ping's direct teaching was extremely important because Li was engaged in her first English learning experience in an American school; she was also under pressure to keep her grade-appropriate knowledge in Mandarin Chinese for her eventual return to China. In limited time with extensive English and Mandarin Chinese study materials, Han's and Ping's concise and comprehensible teaching would impact Li's learning; therefore, Han and Ping focused on Li's homework from school and emphasized English, Mandarin Chinese, and mathematics.

**Parental direct teaching in English.** Han commenced daily direct teaching after Li finished her homework from her ESL teacher and classroom teacher. Han looked over the materials sent home from school and then checked Li's homework for errors; if she had left any blanks, Han helped her make corrections and explained any concepts she did not understand. For spelling tests, Li memorized words, and Han tested her until she could spell all the words accurately. Han and Li also borrowed books from public library regularly to read in addition to books from Li's school library. Han borrowed books that were somewhat challenging for his daughter to read; once she built up her confidence, he selected still more challenging books. The books he chose ranged from

those with long sentences to simple chapter books. They shared reading together to facilitate Li's reading ability in English. Encouraging Li to read books she liked from the school library or public library, Han let Li read the book aloud. If she asked for help, he sounded out the word or answered her question. Han observed Li's reading process until the end and praised her if she did a good job. Then, he taught her the vocabulary and discussed the meaning of the story with her. If Li was still interested, Han used the teachable moment to teach Li word structure or basic grammar but not too much in case she resisted. The following day, Han encouraged Li to read the book again independently.

A few weeks into the first semester, Li told Han that she did not understand at all what teacher taught in class. Han asked his American friend, who is a professor, for suggestions and decided to talk to the teacher for help. The teacher showed Han the story she taught in the classroom; after communication with teacher, Han realized that Li was not ready for this challenging story. Han and the teacher decided that Li need more time to study the story in order to understand it; therefore, the teacher sent home the class story one week in advance for Li to study. Han divided the new story into few paragraph each time to study with Li, who read aloud one paragraph with Han's help. Han highlighted new vocabulary and explained the meaning sentence by sentence for one paragraph until Li understood and could move on to the next paragraph. When teacher taught the story, Li understood more than before because she already had some ideas about the story. Han continued this preview teaching process with Li for a while until she could understand the teacher's teaching.

**Parental direct teaching in Mandarin Chinese.** Han with Li lived together during their first half-year in the US. Han primarily attended to Li's English instead of Mandarin Chinese during the first semester. On weekends, Han taught Li Mandarin Chinese literacy and mathematics lessons. The third-grade Mandarin Chinese textbook's table of contents (see Figure 4) contained 40 stories, five in each of eight chapters.



Figure 4. Table of contents.

Han taught Li one or two stories following the order in the textbook. The first story was called "The Letter" (see Figure 5). The first page read as follows:

I learn how to write a letter. Use pen and paper, use heart and hand. I like to write very much. I write many letters. Help Baby Bird write a letter to Mother Bird.

Ask Mother Bird to come home soon because the sky is almost dusk. Help

Flower write a letter to Bee. Please come to gather nectar.

Han encouraged Li to read the whole story aloud, assisting Li with unfamiliar words. He used the 5W question strategy to ask Li what she thought about this story. If she missed



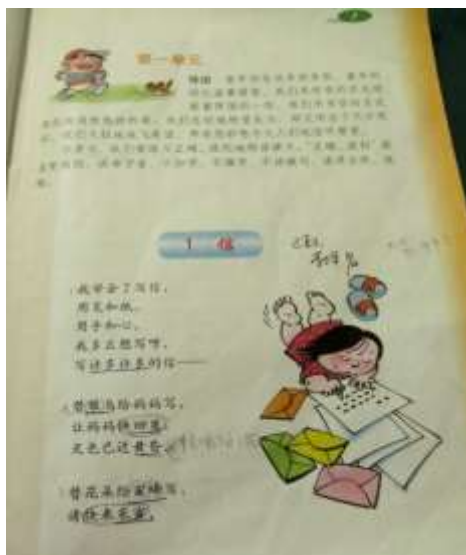


Figure 5. "The Letter."

any key points, he used other prompts to guide her to think more deeply. They continued to discuss the story until Li could retell it and demonstrate full understanding. Then Han asked Li to do follow-up practice that accompanied the story: creating compound words, completing fill-in-the-blank exercises, writing definitions of vocabulary words.

The first section practice used vocabulary to create compound words. For example, given "nest" (巢), Li made "back to the nest" (回巢) (see Figure 6). At the end of the lesson, Han checked Li's answers and provided assistance as Li finished the practice questions if she needed help.

The third-grade mathematics textbook contained six units that included multiplication (such as one digit times three digits), division (such as three digits divided by one digit), time, triangles, triangle area, rectangle, square meters, and so on. Han also followed the textbook for mathematics teaching. He had Li do questions from her

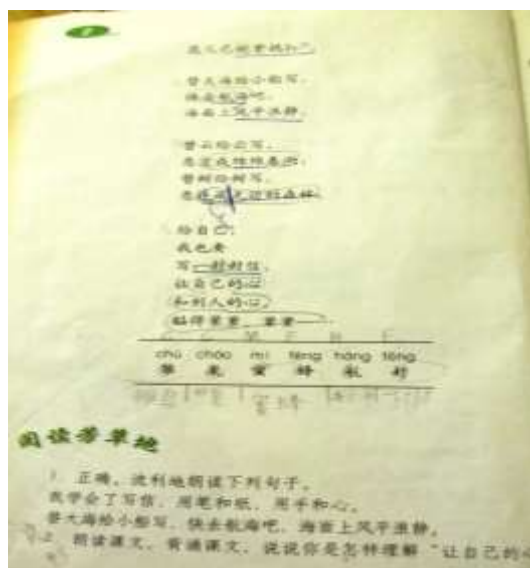


Figure 6. First section practice questions.

mathematics exercise book as review first to determine whether she understood the previous concept or needed to work with her more in a particular area. If Li understood the concept, Han taught the next concept step by step and concluded with the formula or method from the mathematic concept; he then worked with Li to solve partial follow-up mathematics questions to make sure she understood the concept he just taught, noting the way she solved the problems. Encouraging her to finish the rest of the follow-up mathematics questions by herself, Han checked her answers; and if they were all correct, he complimented her.

When Ting reunited with her family in July 2011, she resumed teaching Li after discussing with her husband what she had learned and where her weaknesses lay. Ting adopted teaching strategies similar to Han's and used the same teaching materials according to her own short- and long-term plans. Ting knew summer was a good time to

conduct intensive Mandarin Chinese lessons for catch up and English lessons for a better start for Li's second semester in the US. The textbooks and exercise books that Ting brought to the US were the current level used by students in Li's elementary school in Shanghai. Li had to master many learning materials in a limited time and do her best to prepare for the school examination; working with the same textbooks her classmates used helped her to focus her learning on the target. Ting decided to follow the textbooks chapter by chapter to teach Li both Mandarin Chinese and mathematics. For her Mandarin Chinese lessons, Ting taught Li at least one story per day, practiced the follow-up questions in the textbook, and engaged her in additional practice from the exercise book (see Figure 7). For her mathematics lessons, Ting and Li followed the textbook



*Figure 7.* Mandarin Chinese textbook and exercise book.

along with exercise book practice (see Figure 8). As long as Li practiced enough questions from each unit after the lesson, Ting could tell how well she understood by observing Li's problem-solving process and concepts that posed difficulty. Ting used easy methods, such as simple visual graphics, examples or stories, to teach and to explain the word problems or mathematics concepts until Li understood. With additional practice



Figure 8. Mathematics textbook and exercise book.

and clear explanations, she would gain computing capability and understand concepts; she would develop the ability to draw inferences about other cases from one instance. Li's mathematic abilities would enhance her mathematics performance in school. Ting said that as long as Li performed well on mathematics at home, she would do well at school because Chinese mathematics materials covered more and in greater depth than US schools at the same grade level. Ting needed only to assist Li when she confronted word problems; if she understood what question asked, she knew how to solve most of the problems. By the end of the summer, Ting hoped that through this kind of enhanced teaching in both subjects, Li would not only catch up but also advance because they would slow down the process after the new semester began.

Through English lessons, Ting wanted Li to expand her vocabulary and her reading skills because vocabulary size correlated with reading ability. Ting said, "Through lots of reading to increase one's vocabulary size and knowing lots of vocabulary, reading ability improves." To increase Li's vocabulary, Ting borrowed a children's picture dictionary.

Ting encouraged Li to browse the picture dictionary first, and then in the lesson, Ting let Li recognize vocabulary through pictures and taught her the definition of the vocabulary words. She did not require Li to know how to spell the words at this point; she merely wanted Li to recognize the words and what they meant when she saw them. After they finished studying one dictionary, Ting looked for a children's dictionary more challenging than this one for further study. Ting encouraged Li to read every day for at least 15 minutes or as long as she wanted to read.

Motivating Li to read was challenging. She loved to listen to stories but did not enjoy reading them by herself. If the book had too many words new to Li, she did not want to read. When Li did extensive reading, Ting needed to accompany her when she read. Ting sat next to Li and read her own book while Li sat at her desk to read. Whenever Li needed help, Ting responded quickly, so she could continue to read without interrupting her reading mode. For intensive reading, Ting chose a book that offered Li an age- and ability-appropriate challenge. First, Li read aloud a paragraph with Ting's assistance. Ting explained the vocabulary and translated the meaning sentence by sentence in Mandarin Chinese to Li. If after Ting's explanation of the vocabulary Li understood the sentence, Ting let Li explain what it meant to her. With Ting's scaffolding, they finished reading the story with Ting encouraging Li to retell the story in her own words. Ting hoped that doing this kind of reading activity every day would gradually enhance Li's comprehension.

At times Ting needed to use different strategies to support Li's learning. When Li practiced or read too slowly, Ting reminded her that after she completed her work, she

could go out to play; with that encouragement, she finished her work more quickly in order to play with her friends outside. Sometime, Li refused to do read, so Ting promised to reward her daughter with things she liked to motivate her to finish the reading or task. Ting gave an example of how she used simple material rewards to motivate Li in her reading or practice:

Li likes to do beadwork during her free time. When we were at the craft store, she really liked three different bead sets and could not decide which one to buy because she loved them all. I offered to buy two boxes for her and keep the third box as a reward when she did a good job, and she agreed. One time, Li did not want to read, so I offered the beads as a reward after she finished reading. Li finished the reading and asked to have the box of beads, but I told her that the whole box was too much because she already had two boxes to play with and that she should pick one bead she likes the most, and she picked one. During the lesson if Li did not concentrate, I shortened the lesson or changed activities to keep her attention.

At the beginning of the second semester, Han and Ting wanted Li to practice writing. When Li had a writing assignment, Han or Ting helped her understand the requirements and brainstormed with her. For one of her assignments, Li had to write a comparison of the story of Cinderella and a fairy tale she knew. As in the previous semester Han had the storybook the teacher used. After he read through the Cinderella story, Han said, “This book is too difficult for Li. It has many vocabulary words describing in detail the characters, setting, and plot.” Ting and Li read the story together

until Li understood the meaning of the Cinderella story in Mandarin Chinese. Then, Han and Li read through the story again. Han said:

I think Li studied the story of Cinderella with her mother once. She also knew the story in Mandarin Chinese. Li and I read through the whole story in detail again. I explained to her all the vocabulary and the key concepts of characters, setting, and plot. Li was able to start her own story, including characters, setting, and plot. I encouraged her to use her own words to tell her Cinderella story. Li responded to me that she could not write it. She did not know how to write. I compromised with her: She dictated her story to me, I wrote it down, and then she copied the story and submitted it in her own handwriting.

Ting read the weekly school newsletter that was sent home and discovered that the children were to do a writing assignment involving a poem entitled "If I Were in Charge of the World." She downloaded the original poem and taught Li the meaning of the poem: If you were the master of the world, what would you do? Ting asked Li to think about the poem and to use a similar pattern to write down what she thought for the classroom writing assignment. At the end of the week, when Ting asked what Li wrote for the assignment, she said she had written what her classmates wrote: She was not sure what to write, so she asked her classmates what they planned to write and agreed with their ideas. She asked their permission to use their ideas because she wanted to write these ideas, too. Her classmates agreed that she could.

For a writing challenge, Han and Ting tried to motivate Li to write in a diary about what happened at school for daily writing practice: as little as one or two sentences

or one paragraph or whatever she wanted to write. Because Li shared what happened at school every night with her parents, she could use the same words to write down what she had said; and Han and Ting would do their best to support her in any way they could.

Han and Ting believed that one main reason among many reasons explained the challenge Li faced in English. In their home in Shanghai, they spoke mainly Mandarin Chinese to one another; the use of English was relegated to English reading or English homework. Han indicated after five or six months, they heard Li speak a few English words at home:

It is now August, and after two or three months, Li has started to work a few English words or short English phrases into Mandarin Chinese conversations with us. Especially when she shared what happened to her in the school, she tried to say exactly the English words or phrases that her classmates said to her at school. Before she wouldn't let us speak English to her, and she did not speak English to us, either. But she sang English songs she learned at school. The school always has winter concert, so students practiced a couple of songs every week. She sings well and likes to sing at home. We guess the reasons she did not like to read or seemed not to enjoy reading like some other children were that not only does she enjoy listening but the school material are also still difficult for her. So is writing.

Han and Ting continued to scaffold Li's acquisition of Chinese–English biliteracy, waiting until Li took the initiative to do so or was comfortable and enjoyed reading and writing.



### **Case 2: Ying and Bob's Immigrant Chinese Entrepreneurial Family**

The Wang family included Mr. Wang (father), Ying (mother), an older sister (daughter), and Bob (son); Mr. Wang's parents were Chinese immigrants living in Myanmar. As an adult Mr. Wang immigrated to Taiwan and met Ying, a Taiwanese girl. They married and had their first child, a daughter, in Taiwan. Later, Mr. Wang and his family, who had remained in Myanmar, submitted an application for the America Diversity Visa Lottery. Fortunately, both Mr. Wang and his father were selected and passed face-to-face interview assessments with an America immigration officer. Both families received immigrant visas to move to the US permanently, so Mr. Wang, his parents, and young siblings along with Ying and their young daughter all did so. Mr. Wang and his parents and his younger siblings entered America first, choosing to reside in San Francisco, California, where many Chinese Americans live and Chinese begin new lives in a new country. The family members lived in close proximity so they could help one another. They worked hard to integrate into America culture, learn English, and begin new lives. Mr. Wang worked in the restaurant to earn a living, and two years later Ying and her daughter came to the US from Taiwan to reunite with her husband in San Francisco. Soon, they had their second child, a son whom they called Bob, and Ying kept busy with two young children. When her husband accepted a new restaurant job in another state and moved there, Ying and her children felt comfortable remaining in a one-bedroom apartment near her parents-in-law in San Francisco, where the lifestyle was similar to that in Taiwan. When Mr. Wang, who worked long hours, accumulated a few days off, he returned home to visit his family.

Ying spoke only Mandarin Chinese to her daughter, teaching her Mandarin Chinese written literacy during play time. She placed educational posters on the walls and labeled their furniture and household goods so her daughter to observe and recognize the names of objects. Ying continued her life as a housewife who stayed home and cared for their young children. They met neighbors and friends in the park and made new friends from Taiwan in the Chinese community. During her fourth year in San Francisco, she visited and connected with people at the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation Service Center, where she made some good friends and became involved as a member. After six years in San Francisco, Mr. Wang and his family moved to Ohio for an opportunity to start their own business. Table 9 summarizes background information on the Wu family.

The Wang family rented a three-bedroom apartment in a suburban community in Ohio. It was located less than a 30-minute drive from Mr. Wang's work place, Ying's new Tzu Chi Center, the Chinese market, and both children's schools. Their apartment was simple but contained everything they needed. The living room, dining room, and kitchen occupied an open space. Both children had their own bedrooms with simple furnishings. The dining table was the main gathering place when I went to do the home visits, informal observations, and interview with Ying. Ying's children social interaction areas were mainly in the living room or their own bedrooms.

Mr. Wang owned a sushi station inside an America supermarket, where he was the head sushi chef. Ying, who assisted her husband in their sushi station during busy hours or the busy season, continued as the primary caregiver for their two children. Similar to many Chinese immigrant families, the children were the center of their parents'

Table 9

*The Wang Family*

Family member	Reason in USA	Years in USA	Language spoken at home	Other spoken languages	Education level	Current Occupation
Mr. Wang (Father)	Family	12	Mandarin	English Burmese	High school (Taiwan)	Sushi chef
Ying (Mother)	Family	10	Mandarin	English Taiwanese	High school (Taiwan)	Housewife
Older sister (Daughter, age 12)	Family	10	Mandarin	English	Middle school (USA)	Student
Bob (Son, age 9)	Family	9	Mandarin	English	Elementary school (USA)	Student

lives. Ying took them to extracurricular activities and assisted with her children's academic learning whenever she could. While the children were at school, in addition to helping her husband, she also did the housework, prepared meals, and worked on her projects for the Tzu Chi Foundation. Her busy time started when her children arrived home from school. Table 10 shows Bob's typical week and illustrates a focus on parent-child social interaction, academic learning, extracurricular activities, and social life.

### **Chinese and English Social Environment in the United States**

The Wang family practiced a simple lifestyle. Mr. Wang worked in an English environment; Ying's social community included primarily Chinese people. Bob attended an America public school and interacted socially in an English environment in school and outside school. He played with American neighborhood children, interacted with American coaches, teachers, or other children participating in soccer, tennis, swimming, chess, and piano lessons.

Bob's social interaction in the Mandarin Chinese environment primarily involved interaction with his mother Ying. During summer vacation, a good friend of hers with a son about Bob's age visited for a month or two so her son to learn English in America. Their visit provided Bob with a summer Mandarin Chinese conversation partner and playmate while they stayed in Ying's home. Ying sometime traveled with both her children to Taiwan to visit their grandparents and relatives for few weeks. On Wednesday evenings a Taiwanese married couple, who were doctoral students and also Tzu Chi members, came to dinner with Ying's family. The husband became Bob's buddy, and they conversed about the boy's favorite topics, related to academics or leisure or his daily life; the rest family members participated as well.

Ying took her two children to events at the Tzu Chi Foundation, and they attended children's classes there for five years following their move to Ohio. The mission statement of the Tzu Chi Foundation focused on charity, medicine, education, and humanity. Youth classes emphasized morality and uprightness with the hope that the children would become moral and upright adults in the future. Children were taught to love and care for the earth and one another; they also learned the importance of world peace. The following illustrates what children learned at Tzu Chi classes or events they attended.

Table 10

*Out-of-School Parental Involvement and Investment: Bob’s Typical Week*

Date/Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Time	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	Almost every morning watch favorite Chinese or English cartoon for 15 minutes before departure							
School bus arrived home by 3:45 p.m.	Soccer Practice	Snack, free time, or PC Game time/Outdoor play				9:00 a.m.       10:30 p.m.	Free or PC Game time	Free day for family get-together for a meal or watch a DVD borrowed from library. Occasionally, they visited family friends.  In the afternoon, Bob attended 2 hours of chess lessons and practiced with partner.  In the evening, Bob worked on Kumon reading homework and Chinese homework.
Lessons, free time, PC game time varied from 20-60 minutes, unless indicated	Snack, free or PC Game time/ Outdoor play	English homework	Kumon reading lesson	Chinese homework	Saturday Chinese lesson 10 a.m.–12 p.m. Chinese martial arts 12–1 p.m.			
	English homework	English homework			Meal time			
	Meal Time	Dinner social with Chinese students	Meal Time		Tzu Chi child class 2–4 p.m.			
	Piano practice	Swimming lesson and practice	Piano practice	Piano lesson	Tzu Chi staff meeting bimonthly 4–6 p.m.; children play outdoors			
Bedtime around 10:30 p.m.	Kumon reading homework				Family dinner time			
	English reading				Kumon reading homework			
					Chinese homework			

In teaching the children to Recycle, Reuse, and Reduce, the teacher said, “We all live on the earth, and we only have one earth.” She showed them a video in which humans threw away various bottles, cans, and foil packets. In the seconds immediately after people in the video finished drinking, bottles dropped from their hands, and trash became mountains of garbage. After a lively discussion about the problems humans created and how to solve them, the teacher took out one soft blanket and one long-sleeved shirt for students to hold and touch. She showed another film that explained how those two items had been made from recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles. Students were shocked at how fast the garbage stacked into a mountain, and they were surprised how soft clothes made from firm bottles could be. The teacher concluded the lesson with their solution to this problem: Students planned to start their families on the road to putting the Recycle, Reuse, and Reduce slogan into practice and then extend to others.

“Expend the respect of the aged in one’s family to that of other families; expend the love of the young ones in one’s family to that of other families [老吾老以及人之老，幼吾幼以及人之幼]”: This is a very important concept in moral practice for Chinese families. Students in Tzu Chi classes usually visited two nursing homes: During the Thanksgiving holiday they visited elders in an American nursing home; and near Chinese New Year, elders in a nursing home for Chinese immigrants. One month in advance, all students formed a chorus to practice one or two songs accompanied by sign language. The teacher also encouraged every student to showcase their talents during the visit. On the day of the visit, Tzu Chi volunteers prepared all the materials and equipment to set up

a space for the children's performance. Parents prepared their children by dressing them in their class uniforms and arrived on time at the nursing home. The program started at 2:30 p.m. after the host introduced the organization and stated that they appreciated the opportunity to share the Thanksgiving holiday with elders and others. All students sang the songs accompanied by sign language. Following the program, Debbie (see Case 3) sang a solo and played one song. Bob performed Kung Fu that he learned in his Chinese martial arts class. One of two sisters played music while her 4-year-old sister maneuvered a hula hoop. One girl manipulated a Rubik's Cube in one or two minutes, and she moved around elders and other audience members could see how her hands turned the cube. Some students play Chinese Diabolo. During the program elders lay in beds or sat in wheelchairs or chairs to watch students perform, so they needed movement, too. All students had a balloon in hand and politely asked an elder to be their partner. They gently pushed the balloon toward the elder, who pushed the pushed the balloon back to them. Every elder had a chance to play with students if they were able and wanted to do so. Everyone appeared to have fun, and the students served the elders snacks and drinks. At the end of the event, each student gave each elder a hug and a handmade Chinese tea pot-shaped Thanksgiving card containing a tea bag and a handwritten wish for happiness. The staff members took the elders back to their rooms one by one. Debbie and her classmates noted one elder who sat in a wheelchair, gesticulating with hands and feet, and they wondered why. They asked Teacher Gui, who explained:

The elder was still happy from our visit. Maybe she felt lonely here, but not today. You are the age of her grandchildren, and your social interaction may remind her of a time she had a good time with her family. So when you go home, you should tell your family, especially your grandparents how much you love them. OK, students, nod!

After packing up and returning the room to its original arrangement, everyone looked tired and went home to their families for the Thanksgiving holiday.

### **Parent's Experiences**

**Parenting.** Compared with some mothers at the Tzu Chi center, Ying assessed her parenting style as authoritative parenting, characterized by parental control, particularly when her children were young. She said,

When I got serious about something, my children were afraid, so they just did whatever I asked without argument. After they grew up, I insisted less maybe because I was getting old. Any situation always resulted in opposition between us, and it was painful for us.

Ying gave an example of the tug-of-war with her daughter that resulted over after-school tutoring in reading. From second through fifth grades, she was enrolled in Kumon, an after-school tutoring program offered across the US. Ying believed that tutoring in reading at Kumon could help her daughter catch up in reading class at school and compensate for Ying's inability to assist her daughter in English. Ying thought Kumon reading classes would help her child attain the reading level of her American classmates, but she grew weary of asking her daughter to complete her Kumon reading



homework every day. The child also grew tired of doing it and wanted to withdraw from Kumon, but Ying was concerned that reading at school would become more difficult as she progressed through the grades. Ying could not assist her daughter, and if she stopped the lessons, no one would be available to help her. Mother and daughter held their ground for a while, their relationship became tense, and eventually an argument erupted. Ying decided to take a step back and had a long talk with her daughter: If she could promise to keep up with her classmates by working harder or asking her teacher and classmates for help, she would be permitted to end the lessons at Kumon; and her daughter agreed. Later, Ying told her daughter to let her know whether she needed assistance at any time because she had found some friends who could help. Her daughter worked harder to keep her promise, and she did not return to Kumon for help in reading.

**Parent's language experiences.** Ying's experiences with acquiring Mandarin Chinese language and literacy were varied. She remembered only one incident from elementary school. Ying's hometown was located in a rural area in central Taiwan, where members of her family spoke Taiwanese to one another as did most of the neighborhood families; therefore, she could not speak Mandarin Chinese at all. Ying's family moved to Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, when she was six years old. She attended the first grade in a Taipei school, where she was unable to communicate with others in Mandarin Chinese. She felt the teacher was mean, and she had so much trouble that she did not want to go to school. The problem persisted until she finally quit school and stayed at home for a year. The summer before second grade began, her mother sent her to live with a relative whose family could speak only Mandarin Chinese. Ying learned

Mandarin Chinese from them and returned to the elementary school as second grader. She did what her classmates did, paid attention in class, completed homework, and eventually succeeded in school. Ying enjoyed writing the most among listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Mandarin Chinese in secondary school. She wrote in a diary in middle school and composed pieces for publication at her high school. Beside academic study, she liked to read extracurricular materials that she bought in a secondhand book store to enhance her writing and inspire her imagination. She kept reading books, writing essays, and submitting them. When she became a participant at Tzu Chi, she enjoyed writing down her feelings and sharing them with her friends there. When the San Francisco Center needed someone to write their activities or report events for the *Tzu Chi World USA*, her friends nominated her. She still wrote for *Tzu Chi World USA* at the time of this writing. She loved to buy and read various books, especially books about writing.

Ying shared her experiences with acquiring English language and literacy in Taiwan, where students typically began learning English during the first year of middle school. Ying described two major causes for her poor English. First, she had a negative learning experience at the outset of her first English course. Her family was poor, so she did not attend any English programs before middle school. On the first day of English class, the teacher asked how many students had not attended English classes and had not learned about the 26 letters in English and phonics. Only four or five of her 50 classmates raised their hands, and Ying was one of them. The teacher decided to skip the letters and phonics lessons and taught something new for the majority of students and let

those four or five students try to learn the alphabet and phonics on their own. Ying was very angry and fell behind her classmates; consequently, she intensely disliked her English teacher and English lessons and was able to achieve only barely passing scores. Another reason was lack of extrinsic motivation: She had to work part time during her high school years, and her family had no money to support her further study. She had to work immediately following high school graduation and did not plan to go to college; therefore, her English proficiency remained low.

After she worked for a while, one of Ying's coworkers asked her accompany her to sign up for English lessons at a well-known English center. Her friend did not show up, but Ying signed up for one term of English lessons. Two factors caused her to change her mind about learning English. First, she paid the tuition herself and wanted to maximize her experience. She and her classmates were similar in English ability, so they encouraged and helped one another. Ying liked her teacher, who did not pressure the students and made the lessons interesting. Second, after six months of learning English, a friend told her about an open position as a switchboard operator in a foreign trade company. She used what she had learned at the English center to interview in English and was hired for an office job. Ying saw the benefits of learning English and signed up for another six months of English lessons. When she ran out of money after one year, she ended her lessons.

When asked to evaluate her English ability at the time of this writing, Ying stated that her writing was the weakest overall, listening was poorer than speaking, and reading was better than writing. She explained:

Listening and speaking are important because you must communicate with others, especially for us: We need to communicate with our customers. Reading and writing are also important for students; for us as parents, we have to read and understand many written communications sent home from school in order to respond. If I have a chance to go to school in the future, I will attend ESL classes to improve my English ability, especially reading.

She remembered a period of time when she tried to study English by herself at home after she arrived in San Francisco. She had an old English conversation book; she memorized the dialogue and wrote down the definitions of the new words and memorized them.

After Ying had lived in the US for 11 years, she said:

In the United States, an English environment, I learned English naturally. You eventually learn certain things after coming in contact with them many times. For example, I read the children's school news, and if there were words I did not know, I checked the dictionary or asked my daughter. At work, when I talked to American colleagues, if they did not understand what I said, I tried to explain to them what I meant. Sometime to confirm that they understood what I meant, they rephrased what I had said and repeated it back to me. That way I learned from them about the right phrase an American would use. This way of learning English was totally different from the way we learned English in Taiwan.

### **Parent's Beliefs**

**Parental expectations for Bob's academic achievement.** When asked about her parental expectations for her children's academic achievement, Ying answered:

I hope they will do well in their studies and get at least OK grades. Neither my husband nor I have higher education, so the degree to which we can assist our children in their learning is limited. I told my children, if you have any problem in your studies, you have to tell me because I may not be aware of what problems you may have. When you come to me with a problem, if I do not know how to solve it, I will try to find help for you. I do not want to receive phone calls from school because of their poor grades or behavior. They must maintain at least B. If I see a C, I will talk to them and ask whether they are having trouble and whether they need help. If they can improve, that's great; but sometime they can't, so I will not push them too much!

During the time of the visit at which Ying stated the above, Bob received his report card; he earned all As.

**The value parent placed on Mandarin Chinese or English or both.** Ying believed that Mandarin Chinese and English were valuable to her children, yet English had greater importance than Mandarin Chinese in certain situations. Ying said:

With regard to Mandarin Chinese, first, Bob is Chinese. If you are Chinese, you must speak Mandarin Chinese. And your parents can only speak Mandarin Chinese. With regard to English, we live in America, where English is a dominant language. And you need English to keep up with schoolwork. If you are bilingual, you will have more and better job offers. I just want him to have a better life in the future.

In the long term or in reality, if balanced biliteracy could not be reached, English

would be priority because English is the dominant language in the US and widely spoken around the world. Mandarin Chinese was very natural for her children at home. Ying thought her children's Mandarin Chinese was better than that of some of their classmates in Chinese school because her family spoke only Mandarin Chinese and no English at home. She did not want her children to study Mandarin Chinese as a subject but instead to immerse themselves in the language environment and speak naturally. She gave an example: When her children talked to her, she would tell them to speak Mandarin Chinese to her because she could not understand their English. If they wanted her to understand what they meant, they had to speak Mandarin Chinese. Soon the children understood, and they naturally spoke Mandarin Chinese to their parents and English to their classmates.

**Parent's role in scaffolding Bob's language-learning experiences.** Ying's life and language experiences served as living examples that she shared with her children. Frequently, she used her inadequacy and her own lack of personal resources to illustrate the importance of academic achievement and a reason to push her children to ensure a better standard of living for themselves. Discussing her parental role in scaffolding her children's languages learning experiences, Ying said:

I have always shared my learning experiences with them. I was very honest with my children, telling them that I had awful grades, especially in English. I told my children I had to work to help my family and did not have the time to study hard in school. But I told them that at one point, I put effort into studying and went to the library to study and took notes until very late. My children know their mom

was not good at studying in school, so Mom's English is not good either. They also know I write reports for *Tzu Chi World USA* and that I like to read Chinese books. They know their mother and father's background. I told them I wanted them to study hard and grow up and really understand that how much they work determines how much they gain. No pain, no gain. I believe my children know what they should do now that they have heard what their parents have been through.

Ying's parental role in scaffolding her children's languages learning experiences was quite different in Mandarin Chinese and English. For Mandarin Chinese, she was active. Ying taught her daughter Mandarin Chinese for years when her children were young; later, she sent both children to weekend Chinese school to learn Mandarin Chinese. For English, she was passive. When her children came to her for assistance, she provided resources to guide them to solve the problem by themselves; if the problem remained, she asked her friends to assist her children. She also sent them to attend Kumon reading lessons to improve and enhance their English ability for years.

### **Home Literacy Environment**

**Time management.** Table 10 shows Bob's typical week with time managed effectively to provide him with a regular routine, accommodating homework, dinner, shower, Kumon reading practice, and piano practice. In the morning, Bob entertained himself by watching 15 minutes of his favorite Chinese or English cartoons. He arrived home around 3:45 p.m., had a snack, and enjoyed some free time or PC time until 4:30 p.m. Ying reminded him to do homework first or Kumon reading practice, which took

him about 45 minutes. Bob played soccer twice a week and attended a one-hour piano lesson once a week and practiced piano three times a week for a minimum of 20 minutes each time. He attended Kumon reading lessons once or twice a week and completed Kumon daily reading homework seven days per week. He swam once a week, read English books almost daily, studied for Chinese quizzes on Friday nights, and worked on Chinese homework Friday through Monday. Sometimes, Ying provided extra mathematics practice for her children two to three days per week.

Saturday was busy for the family. They attended Chinese class from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Bob was in Level 4; his older sister, in Level 5. Ying taught the young children's level. Then Bob attended Chinese martial arts from 12 to 1 p.m. They had lunch at the Tzu Chi Center, after which Bob attended the children's class, and his sister attended the youth class while Ying taught the young children's class from 2 to 4 p.m. Ying stayed for the bimonthly meeting from 4 to 6 p.m., and her children played with those of other families. Sunday was family day, and everyone stayed home to watch DVDs, visited friends, or went out for a meal. In the afternoon, Bob attended a chess lesson and practiced with partners for two hours. On Sunday evenings, they were at home to prepare for next school day.

**Space design.** At Ying's apartment, the living space was wide open and included a piano, sofa, and end tables; several bookshelves filled with various books for adults and children, a TV, and a fish tank lined the walls. In the dining area near the balcony sat a table for six, which also served as Ying's work space. The children's simple, spacious bedrooms included a closet, bed, desk with chair, and one big bookshelf with five shelves



full of books, materials for schoolwork, and personal items. When asked about Bob's favorite place to read, Ying answered he loved to read in the bathroom. They had two bathrooms. Sometime, if he stayed in the bathroom for a long time, she checked on him and asked how he was; and he would come out with a book in his hand. He liked to read, and he was allowed to read in any place at home.

**Home atmosphere.** Ying's home atmosphere seemed free, creative, and sometime relaxed. Ying spent time with her children, and they enjoyed a close relationship. She talked to them like a friend when they had issues and shared stories of her youth that her children found interesting. She liked to use handmade notes and posters with information to educate her children when they were young so that they could observe and absorb through parent-child interaction and the surrounding environment. She loved to read Chinese books and to write essays or reports. A good role model for her children to learn the importance of knowledge through oral and written means, she provided many opportunities for them to learn Mandarin Chinese as a native language at home. She enhanced their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities by providing many Chinese and English books for her children. She also expressed the importance of reading to her children to encourage their reading habits.

**Literacy resources.** For years Ying had brought Mandarin Chinese literacy resources from Taiwan when they visited their families and relatives. Suitable for elementary school children and younger, these materials included individual books and a few sets of books by 漢聲 [HanSheng], a famous children's book publisher in Taiwan (see Figures 9 & 10). In addition magazines, children's DVDs, traditional Chinese



*Figure 9.* Varied Chinese educational children books. *Figure 10.* HanSheng Chinese educational children books.

stories on CDs, and thousands of TV shows from Chinese Internet TV called PPS, free shows for people of all ages, were available in the home. A few cartoons series that Bob liked to watch were also available, such as 企鵝家族 [Pingu], 巧虎 [Tiger], Pocket Monsters, and Power Rangers (see Figure 11). Traditional Chinese stories on CDs included 唐詩三百首 [Three Hundred Tang Poems] and also 中國童話故事 [Chinese Fairy Tales], which was a set of 12 books with 12 CDs by HanSheng, including 365 stories (see Figure 12). Bob regularly watched his favorite 15-minute Chinese cartoon from PPS called 喜羊羊灰太狼 [Pleasant Goat and Big Wolf]; it was a popular cartoon, loved by many young children. They also owned some English books, but most of their English books were borrowed from the public library. They had an old TV without cable not because cable was expensive but like the rest of participant families, they did not

want their children to watch too much TV. For them, the TV was used to watch an occasional movie on DVD .



*Figure 11.* Pocket Monsters and Power Rangers. *Figure 12.* Chinese fairy tale–January.

### **Informal Literacy Practices**

**Features and interaction.** Informal literacy practices relate to opportunities that parents provided to promote their children’s acquisition of Mandarin Chinese and English through parent–child interaction. Parents are crucial players in scaffolding their children’s heritage language and literacy development as well as for the development of their second language and literacy or academic achievement. Bob spoke English with his older sister, but the Wang family primarily spoke Mandarin Chinese to one another, which provided many opportunities for their children to gain oral literacy practice in Mandarin Chinese. Bob was born in the United States, and when he was nearly three years old, the family moved to Ohio. At that time they started their own business, and Bob was placed in full-day care. Ying did not have time to facilitate Bob’s Mandarin Chinese written literacy as she had with her daughter. Later, she sent her children to

Saturday Chinese school to learn Mandarin Chinese; they attended Tzu Chi children's classes, too.

To develop Mandarin Chinese listening and speaking, Bob watched 15 minutes of Chinese cartoons every day. In the Wang family parents and children shared conversation and bedtime stories as their major oral literacy practices, but Ying explained that she rarely read bedtime stories to them. Instead she liked to use her imagination to make up stories with her children.

When Bob was around two years old, they initiated a story solitaire game, which they played at any time and in any place, at home or in the car. Ying gave an example.

She would say, “我說：從前從前有 Table 一個小朋友, 名字叫. . . [Once upon a time, there was a child called . . .].”

And Bob replied, “飛飛 [Fei Fei].”

She then asked, “飛飛飛啊飛, 飛飛飛到哪裡啊 [Fei Fei, fly and fly. Where does Fei Fei fly?],” and Bob continued the story. She used to play an active role and guide Bob to participate in the story solitaire game with her. The more Bob practiced, the longer and more complicated the words and sentences he added grew. They played story solitaire impromptu if he was not tired. The plot developed around their feelings, imagination, or fanciful ideas; and Ying could change the plot for Bob to embellish. They sustained the story solitaire game until third grade, when he started to read English books before he fell asleep. Ying summarized one of Bob's favorite plots:

Once upon a time, there was a child named, for example, Bob. I used his name to invite him join in. I most remember telling him, Bob was a very thin child. In

school were a teacher and many children. What were his classmates' names? Then my son would say his classmates' real names. Suddenly, there came a giant dinosaur, and it was extra humongous. Bob is a superhero, but no one knew. What kind of clothes did this superhero like to wear? A red cape or what? He answered what he wore. Bob rushed to grab its foot or something, and they fought. Finally, he saved his school, saved the whole school, the principal, and others. Everyone said, "Oh! Bob is a hero." Bob said he would blush because he had been integrated into the protagonist.

When Bob had unsolved issues, such as shyness or fear of the dark, Ying added them into the story to provide opportunities for positive thinking or creating possible solutions to help him overcome his problems. After years of free imagination and creative thinking, he became good at it. Once he came home and told Ying that he believed he was one of the best writers in class because he had more of an imagination than his classmates, but he still tried to avoid writing. For example, when his Chinese teacher asked him to read a text or write an essay that was challenging to him, he found excuses to avoid doing so. Ying explained that it was not that he did not know how to read or write, he was just unwilling to exert the effort. He told his Chinese teacher that he learned English in an America school, and his Chinese was not as good as his English, so he could not do the assignment. He gave a similar excuse to his American teacher, whom he told that at home, they spoke only Mandarin Chinese and English was not his native language, so he could not do the assignment. Ying used stories to encourage him to find a way to deal

with his problems, not run from them. At the time of this writing, Ying thought Bob was mature enough that she could reason with him directly without using stories.

Bob attended Saturday Chinese School when he was in preschool, but the Chinese teacher of this young children's class did not teach much Mandarin Chinese literacy; instead the focus was on promoting their interest in Mandarin Chinese through games and cultural events. The Level 1 Chinese teacher taught kindergarten and up; Level 1 students received formal instruction that focused on Zhuyin, or Chinese phonetics. Bob studied Level 1 twice with Ying as his teacher. Now as a fourth grader, Bob started Level 3 in Chinese school during his sixth year there. Ying credited her two years of teaching Bob Level 1 skills for his solid foundation in Zhuyin; he was able to sound out most of the Chinese characters he read with the assistance of Zhuyin even though he did not know many Chinese characters yet.

For the development of Bob's Mandarin Chinese reading and writing, Ying was not directly involved very much. Because she trusted that the Chinese school teachers would teach Bob well, she simply assisted Bob when he needed help to finish his homework, made sure he understood the content thoroughly, did well on tests, and was well prepared for contest events at the Chinese school. Ying also reminded her children to do their Chinese homework. Bob was able to copy Chinese vocabulary in the workbook independently (see Figure 13), but some of the homework was challenging for him. He went to Ying for help on topics, such as quantifiers, commonly used in the Chinese language to represent amounts. The beginning learner easily mismatched quantifiers. Learning them required considerable practice (see Figure 14). During



Figure 13. Vocabulary writing practice. Figure 14. Complicated quantifiers.

conversation, if Bob said an incorrect quantifier, Ying said the same sentence with emphasis on the correct quantifier so Bob could hear correct usage. Ying checked Bob's Chinese quantifier homework, pointing out incorrect answers and explaining how they should work. Then she asked Bob to provide more examples, or she gave him more examples to make sure he understood them. For test preparation, Ying divided the test content so Bob could study a little each day. The textbooks along with a website were provided by the Taiwan Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission to Chinese schools for free. The website contained e-textbooks with read-aloud features and many materials supplementing the textbooks related to Mandarin Chinese learning and Chinese culture. Ying encouraged Bob to study the textbooks through the read-aloud feature, to listen and speak to memorize the vocabulary and text, and then to practice vocabularies and text writing for the test. Sometime, Ying pretested Bob's knowledge of the content for next day's test.

With regard to the development of Bob's English language and literacy, Ying was incapable of giving help because of her limited English competence. Later, her children knew more English than she; therefore, Ying depended heavily on external support: America school teachers, Kumon reading classes, the assistance of others, and the English environment to promote Bob's English language and literacy. First, Ying and her husband did some research on school districts. Theirs was wealthy enough to provide many resources for students, and it was well known as a good school district. Their friends also verified the quality of the school system. One of her children's reading teachers mentioned to Ying once during parent-teacher conference meeting that if her children received a grade of 80 or above, it was equivalent to A+ at other schools. Gui was a substitute teacher in Ying's school district for one year. Her house was located in another well-known good school district with a majority of middle- and upper-class families. Gui told Ying that Ying's school had more and better resources and equipment for students than her neighborhood school.

Second, when they came to Ohio, one of Bob's classmate's mothers introduced them to a nonprofit organization, which offered free English assistance to new immigrant parents who could not speak English. They had adult English lessons and children's lessons, too. Because they spoke only Mandarin Chinese at home, when Bob went to preschool, he could not speak English at all. When he was in kindergarten, he took ESL lessons for one semester to improve his English ability in the school. Once a week for two hours, Ying and her husband attended adult English lessons, and her children attended English lessons for children. Ying also applied for extra home visits to help Bob



learn English. The English teacher visited their home to teach Bob English bimonthly for one hour; they conversed, and she read picture books to Bob, played games, and regularly evaluated his English progress. They continued to attend English lessons for over six months. Ying found that these English lessons and additional practice increased Bob's English ability before he entered first grade.

Third, knowing the importance of reading, Ying strongly believed that Kumon reading classes would benefit Bob. She said, "My daughter started Kumon reading classes in second grade, a little late"; so Ying enrolled Bob at Kumon during his second semester of kindergarten, and he continued for five years. Kumon reading classes provided systematic daily homework practice designed to enhance students' English written literacy, build vocabulary, improve reading comprehension, and enrich writing abilities. Kumon reading classes proceeded at the students' pace. After daily practice the teacher evaluated them, and if they understood materials thoroughly, they received a certificate indicating that they were ready for the next level. Ying stated that Bob's reading comprehension was one or two levels above grade level. Bob went to the Kumon center once or twice a week to consult with a teacher regarding his daily Kumon reading homework. At the end of session, the teacher gave Bob another entire week's worth of homework with an answer key for him to study at home.

Ying demonstrated her belief that Kumon reading classes benefited her children when she shared the following with me. Last semester, she received a letter from school stating that Bob's reading ability was good. School personnel planned to observe him for a month, after which he was to take an advanced reading assessment and a test. Results

showed he was short four points to enroll in the advanced reading class. Ying believed he would do better next time.

Ying said that she was unable to teach her children English; she could do very little to assist them in their acquisition of English oral and written literacy compared to the degree to which she could teach and assist her children in acquiring Mandarin Chinese oral and written literacy. In general, she provided suggestions or strategies for her children, initiating ideas or giving them tools to figure out how to solve problems regarding English language and literacy by themselves. To develop English listening and speaking skills at home, Bob watched cartoons, including *Tom and Jerry* and *Popeye the Sailor*, as well as some favorite movie DVDs; he also conversed with his sister to enhance his listening and speaking in English. To develop English reading and writing, after Bob completed his daily Kumon reading homework, Ying usually checked his answers. The only help she could offer was related to vocabulary definitions or spelling words. For example, if Bob did not know the meaning of a key term in a question necessary to find the answer, he asked his older sister or Ying. Ying translated the word into Mandarin Chinese and used it to explain the meaning in a way Bob could understand. If he still did not understand, he waited until he went to the Kumon center to ask the teacher for help. Bob's homework focused on writing practice. If he wanted to use words that he could not spell, Ying checked the Internet to translate the word into English to help Bob spell it correctly. Overall, Ying encouraged Bob to pay attention in class and maintain good relationships with his classmates. After years of learning English, Bob

became an active participant in the classroom because he was able to use English to express his own thoughts and participate in class discussion.

Teachers at Bob's school focused on writing, making regular assignments beginning in first grade. Last year, his third-grade teacher required students to practice writing when they arrived in the classroom every morning (see Figure 15). At home,

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
This weekend I had the most fun.	I will do...	Draw and describe your character from your story.	You are sitting with friends around a campfire telling scary stories. Suddenly you see the bushes move.	A character in the center of a story is always the most important. Draw a character. Write a story about him.
I'd like to visit the beach. First, draw it.	I'd like to visit the beach. Draw a picture about beach vacation.	Write as many things as you can about yourself - your likes, dislikes, hair, etc.	Remember a conversation you heard or took part in. Try to write it exactly as it was spoken.	Is the first one easier or harder? Write about it.
What devices are you allowed to make at home?	Give an example of how the idiom "heavy as lead" applies to you.	Did you spend any time last summer looking for "lost" items? Write about a mystery experience you've had.	Write as much as you know about your state.	Describe how you feel today. Be as specific as you can.
The year is going pretty well. You want me. Convince your parents you need a pet.	Comment on being the oldest, youngest, middle or only child.	Describe a friend - how you met, how you became friends, what you like about each other.	On the first day of school this year, I...	On the first day of school this year, I...

Figure 15: Monthly writing practice guideline.

students wrote in their diaries every day. Initially, Bob asked Ying for assistance in choosing topics. Ying assisted Bob in topics about sushi and trips they took to watch his older sister's orchestra play. He wrote about snails, and he was interested in writing fictional stories with his own illustrations. After he decided the topic, he finished the story independently. With much practice he could write a long story all by himself (see Figures 16 & 17).

**Frequency and types of Chinese–English language use.** The Weekly Schedule Checklist (Appendix H) shows the Wang family's schedule for 12 weeks of home literacy activities and extracurricular lessons for Bob. He attended piano lessons;

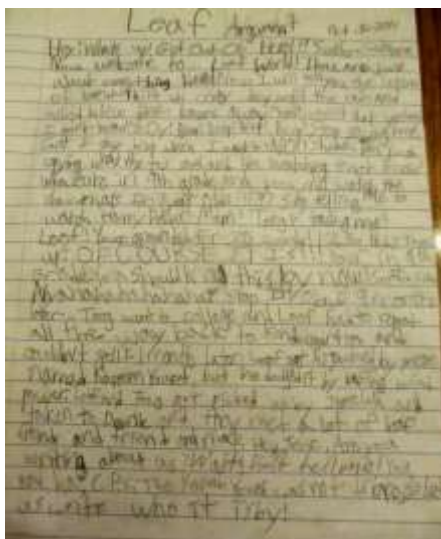


Figure 16: Samples of Bob's fiction



Figure 17: Samples of Bob's illustrations.

sports lessons, such as tennis, soccer, and swimming; and others lessons, such as Kumon reading class, Tzu Chi children lessons, Saturday Chinese lessons and chess lessons

Findings (see Table 11) provided an overall picture of this Chinese family's home literacy practices, including frequency and types of literacy activities and leisure activities as well as parent-child Chinese or English language use at home or in the community. Bob's listening activities included listening to 喜羊羊灰太狼 [Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf] or listening to and speaking with his family and Chinese friends. Ying marked ✓ once per day when they engaged in at least one kind of listening activity, and I counted the marks ✓ for that day. Speaking activities in Chinese included conversations with Bob's parents or his grandparents in Taiwan or his Chinese friends. Bob's reading activities in Chinese focused on his Mandarin Chinese textbook. Writing activities constituted writing words, phrases, and sentences in Mandarin Chinese. Homework

activities in Chinese were exemplified by Bob's engagement in his Chinese homework. Free-time activities in Chinese included Bob's interaction with Mandarin Chinese-speaking friends or playing with or visiting a Chinese friend. The same principles applied to English use. PC games indicated Bob played English games on the computer, Nintendo or Wii. TV time in Chinese indicated Bob watched Chinese DVD movies; TV time in English indicated Bob watched English cartoon series.

The findings from Table 11 show that the Wang family provided opportunities for Bob to engage in listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities in English almost on a daily basis in addition to his Chinese listening and speaking activities. Bob actually spent less time with his Chinese reading and writing than on English reading and writing activities because he attended Kumon reading class year round, but Saturday Chinese School was closed for the summer break. Its fall semester began in mid-September, so Bob did not have Chinese homework to read or write from August through mid-September. Ying did not provide extra Chinese reading and writing activities for Bob to work on when the school was closed because she wanted him to spend his time working on his English reading comprehension ability in order to meet the requirements for the advanced level at school. When the Chinese school was closed, Ying put no pressure on Bob to work on his Chinese language activities. English reading received the most attention, then writing. Overall, both Mandarin Chinese and English listening and speaking activities occurred more than reading and writing perhaps because the Wang family could provide more opportunities in listening and speaking than in reading and

writing at home or in an English environment. The total reading activities and writing activities in English compared to the same in Mandarin Chinese indicated that Bob had more opportunities for written practice in English than in Mandarin Chinese. The tendency toward more English homework than Chinese homework may indicate more opportunities and resources for Bob in the English environment than in the Chinese environment. In the Wang family the frequency of academic literacy activities, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and homework, was 2.63 times greater than nonacademic-related activities, such as TV time, PC game time, and free time. During family time, they used Mandarin Chinese more frequently than English. Free time, TV time, and PC game time in English were important to Bob for leisure time and for rewards from his mother for good social behavior or doing well. Ying mentioned once that Bob exhibited impolite behavior at the Tzu Chi center, so she took away his TV and PC game time for a week. Table 11 shows that Bob had equal opportunities to practice fluency in both Mandarin Chinese and English oral literacy and overall. The Wang family put most effort into academic literacy activities, especially in English.

### **Formal Literacy Practices**

**Parental direct teaching in Mandarin Chinese.** Ying was good at teaching young children Zhuyin, and she taught a Chinese course for many years. She applied the strategies she used in the classroom in the home environment for parent–child interaction. At Saturday Chinese school, she taught a Level 1 Chinese class focused on Zhuyin once a week for two hours; she taught five phonetic symbols to students each session until they

were familiar with all 37 phonetic symbols during the four-month period. During spring semester, she involved students in many games or activities to practice combining phonetic symbols to sound out the names of objects. When they studied phonetic symbols, Ying added Chinese characters so that students could learn to read the Chinese characters aloud. Her goal for students was to have them sound out words independently. Ying shared some particularly effective activities she used in teaching children the 37 phonetic symbols to sound out Chinese characters and further recognize Chinese characters. She said singing and playing were the basic activities she used most often: I brought a box of toys and a box of phonetic symbols. I took one toy out, and the children found or wrote or sounded out the right phonetic symbols for its name. I extended this to group competition. I had a group of students use their bodies to form the shape of the phonetic symbols. I wrote a few sentences that I just taught on colored paper and cut them into flashcards. One group of children left the room while the other group hid the cards inside the room. To make it a little easier to find the cards, I required them to leave one corner of the paper exposed. When the group came back into the room to find the cards, I asked the others how many cards they had hidden. They looked for the cards. If one or two cards could not be found, they decided whether to ask help from an angel—that was me. After all the slips of colored paper were found, I told the children that they could put them in order, read the sentence, and tell me what it meant. Or I made one dice or a few die and put phonetic symbols on six sides for a game of Bingo. Or we

Table 11

*Frequency and Duration of Chinese–English Language Use: Wang Family*

Chinese	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Homework	Library	Family time	TV time	PC game	Free time	Others	
8/8-8/14	7	7	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	Frequency of use of Mandarin Chinese during 12-week period was 217
8/15-8/21	7	7	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	
8/22-8/28	7	7	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
8/29-9/4	7	7	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	
9/5-9/11	3	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	
9/12-9/18	7	7	0	1	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	
9/19-9/25	7	7	0	0	2	0	2	4	0	1	0	
9/26-10/2	7	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
10/3-10/9	7	7	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	
10/10-10/16	7	7	2	3	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	
10/17-10/23	7	7	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	
10/24-10/30	7	7	2	2	4	0	1	1	1	0	0	
Total	80	80	5	6	17	0	16	11	1	1	0	217
English	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Homework	Library	Family time	TV time	PC game	Free time	Others	
8/8-8/14	0	0	7	7	0	1	0	7	5	0	0	Frequency of use of English during 12-week period was 533.
8/15-8/21	7	7	7	7	0	1	0	7	5	7	0	
8/22-8/28	7	7	7	7	7	1	0	7	1	7	0	
8/29-9/4	7	7	7	7	7	1	0	7	2	7	0	
9/5-9/11	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	3	2	3	0	
9/12-9/18	7	7	7	7	4	0	0	3	7	7	0	
9/19-9/25	7	7	7	6	6	0	1	1	7	7	0	
9/26-10/2	7	7	7	6	5	0	0	2	2	1	0	
10/3-10/9	7	7	7	6	5	1	1	0	6	1	0	
10/10-10/16	7	7	7	6	4	0	0	6	7	7	0	
10/17-10/23	7	7	7	6	6	0	0	7	7	7	0	
10/24-10/30	7	7	7	5	5	1	0	7	5	7	0	
Total	73	73	80	73	52	6	2	57	56	61	0	533



formed a circle and sang. If we got stuck on a word from the lyrics, we had to say or find the phonetic symbol for the word. Rewards for them were very motivational at this age. I made one reward card with 50 spaces. If they participated in the classroom, were on time, spoke up when they read the text, or answered questions, they gained a point during game play or competition. They could earn stamps to fill up the card, and then they could choose a gift. Ying said that especially with young children, play was an important element in learning.

**Parental direct assistance with English homework.** At times Ying was able to assist her children, especially on projects that involved crafts, which she enjoyed. She supported many of Bob's class projects by helping him prepare for his presentation (see Figure 18). She told me Bob earned 96 out of 100 on his last project, which was displayed in the classroom. She showed me the prehistoric Indian mound they worked on together. Bob planned to submit it the next day. She explained the process: Bob showed



*Figure 18.* Prehistoric Indian mound.

her a letter from the teacher, which required a parent's signature. The letter contained what students were to learn as well as detailed guidelines and directions for building and presenting their own project and the deadline. Ying asked Bob to explain in detail what the letter said, and she underlined the important key concepts (see Figure 19). Bob also explained rubric (see Figure 20), and Ying wrote few Mandarin Chinese words to remind herself about requirements for the project to cover the rubric well for a good grade. Ying asked Bob to brainstorm about what he wanted his mound look like. The next day, Bob discussed with Ying his idea for his mound, who lived around there, whether it had any animals, what were they doing there. They went to Michael's [craft store] the next day to find the materials they needed, but the few model boxes they located were expensive and not quite like the blueprint Bob had in mind; so they searched for a few more materials and discussed their use in the project. After all materials were ready, they worked



Figure 19: Project information letter.

	STRONG (10)	(8)	(6)
Time	Completes project on time		Project is late
Purpose	Shows elevation (looks like a mound)	Some attempt at resembling a mound	No elevation. Doesn't look like a mound.
Creativity	Creative in approach, adds extra details	Project ideas are ordinary	Project appears unfinished, plain
Neatness	Entire mound is neatly done.		Mound is not neat, painting, etc.
Board	Mound is mounted on a sturdy board - no larger than 24" x 18"	Mound is mounted, but not strong enough, wrong size	Mound is on an inappropriate base, wrong size
Speech	The speech is 1-2 minutes long	The speech is longer than 2 minutes	The speech is less than 1 minute
Content	(10) Very informative speech	(8) Speech had some information	The speech is less than 1 minute
Facts and Opinions	(10) Had the correct amount of facts and opinions	(8) Speech was missing one fact and/or opinion	(6) Speech was missing two facts and/or opinions
Speech	(10) Good eye contact, good volume, good rate	(8) Only had 2 out of 3	(6) Only had 1 out of 3

Figure 20: Project rubric.

together to build the Indian mound. The end result was a mound shaped from newspaper and green material and placed on a board made by Ying. Using Play-Doh, Bob made all the characters (with a little help on the house and headdress from Ying); he made Indians with tools and animals and placed them. Then Ying asked what was Bob going to write to present the project and encourage him to cover what the rubric specified. After he finished writing his project independently, Ying suggested that he practice his presentation in front of Ying and his family.

Even though Ying was unable to assist her children with English language and literacy learning, she tried her best to provide her children outside resources and inspire them through her involvement. She was thoroughly invested in her children. Ying's case has provided another picture of what parents, limited in both English skills and financial capital, could do to contribute to their children's academic and English language learning.

### **Case 3: Gui and Debbie's Immigrant Chinese Middle-Class Family**

Four people constitute the family in Case 3: Mr. Yang (father), Gui (mother), older brother (son), and Debbie (daughter). Both Mr. Yang and his wife Gui were international students from Taiwan studying at an American university through a work opportunity that allowed them to immigrate to the United States. They married, had two children, and remained in the US for work and for the sake of their children's education. Mr. Yang, who worked at an international company as a physical scientist, was the primary source of income for the family. Table 12 shows the Yang family's background. In

Table 12

*The Yang Family*

Family member	Reason in USA	Years in USA	Language spoken at home	Other spoken languages	Education level	Current occupation
Mr. Yang (Father)	Work, Education	21	Mandarin	English Taiwanese	Ph.D. (USA)	Physical scientist
Gui (Mother)	Family	20	Mandarin	English Taiwanese	Master's (USA)	Chinese teacher
Older brother (Son, age 16)	Family	16	Mandarin	English Spanish	High school (USA)	Student
Debbie (Daughter, age 10)	Family	10	Mandarin English	English Spanish	Elementary school (USA)	Student

2005, the family relocated to Ohio for Mr. Yang's work. They purchased a home near the families of Mr. Yang's Chinese colleagues, who recommended the town's fine school system. Gui became a full-time mother when her daughter turned 5 years old so that she could devote full attention to her two children's physical and psychological needs, academics, and extracurricular activities. She took them to lessons at the local community center to learn and to play with other children, believing that "sports facilitate their health and group activities promote their social interactive ability." Gui's first child-rearing experiences affected the way she cared for her second child; thus, Debbie engaged in the same extracurricular activities that her older brother had enjoyed. For example, when the boy took tennis lessons, Gui took him and the baby Debbie to the club, where they stayed until he finished his lesson. While they waited, Gui played games and taught Debbie numbers, the names of body parts, and so on. To save commute time and avoid the difficulty of finding another good coach or teacher, Gui let Debbie take tennis lessons there, too, when she was old enough. The siblings participated in some of the same activities: swimming, piano lessons, and violin lessons. Table 13 shows Debbie's

typical week and illustrates a focus on parent–child social interaction, academic learning, extracurricular activities, and social life.

Gui kept busy with many duties, especially in fall 2011. First, attending to her children’s needs was still her priority. Second, she became a full-time student during spring 2011, working on her third master’s degree in curriculum and instruction in the Education Department at the university. Third, during both semesters she taught Saturday Chinese School and children’s classes at the Tzu Chi Center. Fourth, she received an offer to teach Chinese full-time for a public school district in fall 2011, when I collected data.

### **Chinese and English Social Environment in the United States**

Mr. Yang worked for an international company, and Gui studied at the university while their son studied at a private high school and regularly went to the university laboratory to conduct experiments with a professor for his science class. Debbie finished elementary school. This year was critical for Gui and her family because she was working on a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction as well as a license that would certify her as a world language teacher in Mandarin Chinese; therefore, Debbie’s regular extracurricular activities had to fit into Gui’s schedule. During spring and summer semesters, Debbie’s extracurricular activities involved LEGO robotics, piano, violin, chorus, and swimming with American coaches and teachers. Fall 2011 was Gui’s final semester of course work and also a transition period for her family, particularly for Debbie because Gui’s busy schedule limited the time she had available to transport Debbie to all her activities. Gui discussed reducing the number of Debbie’s activities,

Table 13

*Out-of-School Parental Involvement and Investment: Debbie's Typical Week*

Date/ Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Time	Saturday	Sunday
School bus arrives home 3:45 p.m.  Lesson, free time, piano and violin practice vary from 30–60 minutes  Bedtime around 10:00 p.m.	LEGO Robotics	Snack, free time and reading				9:00 a.m.	Breakfast time	Free day for family to get together for a meal or watch a DVD borrowed from the library. Sometime, they visited family friends, bookstores, or the library or the family played sports, games, or swam. In the evening, Debbie worked on Chinese homework.
	English homework			Chinese homework			Saturday Chinese school 10–12 p.m. Chinese knot lesson 12-1 p.m.	
	Meal Time					10:00 p.m.	Meal time	
	Piano lesson	Free time (Reading time)		Violin lesson	Tzu Chi children classes 2–4 p.m.			
	Piano and violin practice						Tzu Chi staff bi-monthly meeting 4–6 p.m.	
						Family dinner time		
						Chinese homework		

asking her to rank her favorites. Debbie settled on LEGO robotics and piano for fall semester. During the summer, Gui was able to spend most of her time with her children. Debbie attended few weeks of summer camp; during the last two weeks before school, she focused on study skills and English written literacy. They also spent one week visiting Ivy League universities with her older brother. On weekends, they swam in their community swimming pool, played tennis, or visited friends. During the week Gui took Debbie to the public library and visited book stores or read for hours at home.

The Chinese social environment for the Yang family included Saturday Chinese school and children's classes and activities at the Tzu Chi Center as well as association with other Chinese families, university classmates, and work colleagues, who became the Yangs' good friends. Both Mr. Yang and Gui were members of the Tzu Chi Center, where Gui taught children's classes for third and fourth graders, including her daughter Debbie. She also taught at the Saturday Chinese School, where she made friends with other teachers, who were also members of the Tzu Chi community.

### **Parent's Experiences**

**Parenting.** An uproar arose after Amy Chua wrote "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior: Can a Regimen of No Playdates, No TV, No Computer Games and Hours of Music Practice Create Happy Kids? And What Happens When They Fight Back?" in the *Wall Street Journal*. When asked about the article, Gui explained she was not as strict as a tiger mother, but she was not at all indulgent either. For example, she allowed a rare sleepover only if it served a particular purpose, such as work for a school project; and she permitted her son to have a farewell sleepover before they moved to Ohio. Before she

was a “cat mother” because the tiger and cat are from the same family but the cat was less ferocious than the tiger.

Gui applied the same concepts, strategies, and effort that she invested when raising her son to raising Debbie, but the outcome for Debbie was different. Gui’s son was naturally talented and excelled academically, earning straight As with little pressure from his mother; Debbie, however, was different. Gui tried to determine the right way to help Debbie. For example, Debbie took many hours to do her homework. What could be accomplished in minutes took Debbie hours: She interrupted her work frequently to get a drink of water, go to the bathroom, or sharpen her pencils. She seemed unwilling to focus and finish her homework in a timely manner; furthermore, when Debbie faced challenges, she easily lost confidence and stopped working. No matter how much Gui comforted and cheered her, nothing worked. Gui tried to change her own thinking. She said, “It is blessing if children are safe and happy. What matters most is that they are happy.” Gui stated that her husband believed that she put her children first over other things, even him and herself. Mr. Yang mentioned to her once that she might not have been an excellent wife or housekeeper, yet she was an excellent mother.

**Parent’s language experiences.** With regard to Gui’s experiences with acquiring Mandarin Chinese language and literacy, she stated that the family was Taiwanese, and they spoke the Taiwanese dialect at home and with most neighborhood friends except two mainlander families, who spoke Mandarin Chinese. In terms of her experiences with Mandarin Chinese language and literacy, she had attended one year of kindergarten that included activities such as singing and playing. The focus of kindergarten was not



literacy, but the teachers spoke Mandarin Chinese to students. Gui's formal learning of Mandarin Chinese language and literacy began in first grade in a rural elementary school, where little homework was required. In second grade, she transferred to a suburban school, where her classmates included many mainlander students and teachers so strict that she was afraid to go to school. In third grade, her family moved to the city school district, where her uncles were teachers, so she felt comfortable. After school, she visited her uncles' homes and studied or did her homework with her cousins, the older helping the younger. Her older cousin helped with the order of strokes for difficult words; she followed the examples and practiced writing to learn those words. One summer, she focused on handwriting and eventually represented her class in calligraphy competitions. Gui's mother subscribed to the *Mandarin Daily News* and bought storybooks for her and her brothers; sometimes, she supervised them while they completed their homework independently. Gui developed an interest in written composition from her extracurricular reading, and she was occasionally selected to participate in writing competitions. In elementary school, she followed her teachers' instruction and did her homework, so she did fine in Mandarin Chinese. In middle school, she disliked studying Mandarin Chinese because of the longer texts students were required memorize in order to pass examinations. The strict grading system used on these examinations intensified her negative feelings for studying Mandarin Chinese; therefore, Gui's mother had to force her to memorize texts and then recite them to her. In high school, she continued to dislike studying Mandarin Chinese because she was required to memorize even longer texts from difficult Chinese literary classics; furthermore, science, mathematics, and

English seemed more important because she planned to pursue a science major, not liberal arts in the university. She therefore tended to put more effort into others subjects to raise her overall GPA, so her Mandarin Chinese scores were never high.

With regard to Gui's experiences with acquiring English language and literacy, the summer before Gui entered middle school in Taiwan, her mother found a well-known English tutor to give her a good start in English class in middle school. Later, her mother's colleagues' children went to after-school English classes with a good reputation for teaching English. The teacher was strict, but the instruction, which was neither mechanical nor requiring recitation, was understandable; and Gui was able to absorb what she learned. The teacher taught students how to sound out words, and the teaching of grammar was structured and coherent. Gui understood the way this English teacher analyzed grammar; by contrast the Mandarin Chinese teacher's explanations were incomprehensible to Gui. The teacher also provided challenging tasks according to the students' potential, stimulating Gui's motivation. Gui felt that what she learned in the after-school English class was deeper than what she learned in school. In fact, she was appointed as classroom assistant in her middle school English class. Overall, she compared her experiences with acquiring language and literacy. Mandarin Chinese was a course she had to pass, but she had to do more than simply pass English: She had to learn it well because she would need it later at the university, where some departments used English textbooks instead of Chinese textbooks, such as in medical technology, which she studied later at the university.

Gui's experiences with learning the English language and acquiring literacy in the US resembled that of other international students, whose writing was better than their oral ability. She had a difficult time beginning her studies in America; therefore, when she watched movies, besides listening to what actors said, she turned on the subtitles for better understanding. When she started to communicate with Americans, she added body language when she spoke to others so they could understand her clearly. Sometime her children still corrected her English. As a student she found making presentations to be the most challenging task, but she knew that doing so was most beneficial to her English ability because her preparation for each presentation gradually improved her English. Her advisor changed her thinking and behavior, and she took advantage of many opportunities to communicate with her advisor, classmates, and her colleagues. First, her advisor told her that if she wanted her English to improve, even if doing so was difficult, she had to stop thinking that her English was not as good as that of her American colleagues and to work on improving her English at once. Second, her advisor insisted that she speak only English in the laboratory because some Chinese students working in the same laboratory spoke Mandarin Chinese to another. Her advisor switched Gui to another laboratory with more American colleagues to speak English with her. Gui found her advisor's measures very challenging and difficult at first, but they were very helpful and her English improved greatly in the long run. By the end of her studies, she performed well and her advisor was proud of her.

## Parent's Beliefs

**Parental expectations for Debbie's academic achievement.** Gui never directly required a particular GPA from her children; instead she hoped both her children's academic outcomes would match their highest capabilities. Both of her children had gained early entrance for kindergarten, and they were in classes for the gifted. When asked about Gui's expectations for her children's academic achievement, she responded:

My two children are very different. You raise your first child as a new mother who follows books carefully, and you raise the second child based on your experiences and with flexibility. The more I invest in and am involved with my son, the more I can see his physical and academic growth. He has become self-regulated and mature. My son is a straight A student and active in numerous extracurriculars, such as the debate team; he is interested in science and goes to a university laboratory to work with a professor on projects. I am still not sure how to work with my young daughter. She faces difficulties and challenges and freezes up, and nothing the teacher or I do can help her. That's one of the reasons for my third master's degrees. I am studying curriculum and instruction in the Education Department, trying to understand my daughter, what she thinks, and how she learns; and trying to find a better way to assist her in her learning, especially when she faces difficulties or challenges.

She thought Debbie was a sensitive child and a perfectionist. If she could not be nearly perfect, she would not have the confidence even to try, and she might also need more attention from Gui. As a result of parent-child interaction Gui discovered that each child

is unique, and each has his or her own pace even in the same family. She decided to wait and see how Debbie progressed.

**The value parent placed on Mandarin Chinese or English or both.** Gui valued both Mandarin Chinese and English. Her reasons that her children should learn Mandarin Chinese and English were as follows:

First, we are Chinese and our native language is Mandarin Chinese; therefore, my children absolutely cannot say they do not know Mandarin Chinese. Second, all our families and relatives are in Taiwan, so when they visit Taiwan, they must be to speak Mandarin Chinese with them. Third, Mandarin Chinese is very popular and much in demand now. American teachers who knew we speak Mandarin Chinese to our children at home encouraged me to insist my children continue to learn Mandarin Chinese.

Gui further explained she believed that children could progress rapidly in mathematical skills through much practice and with good teaching, but improving in languages in a short time was difficult, especially written language; so she strongly emphasized the importance of reading and writing in English over mathematics. The reasons that Gui valued English are shown in the following comment:

We live in the United States, so no question about how important it is to learn and use English for academic achievement and social success. To survive in American society, it is very important to learn English well and master it for upward social mobility. I am not worried if they are not in mathematics classes for the gifted. But I would if their English reading and writing would not allow

placement in advanced classes. The higher the grade they are in, the more difficult their English will be; and in the long term, we will not be able to help them with their learning of English. Also they cannot improve their English ability in a short time as they can in mathematics.

In contrast with other subjects, Gui emphasized her children's English reading and writing abilities; and she hoped they could do better in these areas.

**Parent's role in scaffolding Debbie's language-learning experiences.** Gui jokingly told me that she was the minister of education, and her husband was the minister of finance in their house, indicating their duties in the family. Her husband trusted Gui to educate their children so he could focus on his work to earn money. He fully supported Gui, and he was willing to pay for whatever she chose to do for their children, including the cost of books, lessons, and even tuition for private school.

Gui played a role in scaffolding Debbie's language-learning experiences; she was actively involved in her children's learning at home and in school. Through interaction with her first child, she attended to language and literacy, mathematics, and extracurricular activities as a novice developing experience. Gui tried to remain flexible, articulating literacy materials and intertwining them with instruction to scaffold her second child's language learning and literacy. Gui knew that when children are young, they have a golden opportunity to learn, especially languages. When her children were young at home, she taught them Mandarin Chinese language and literacy as well as mathematics, but not English oral literacy for two reasons: First, some of her friends, whose children were older than Gui's, told her that living in America for good, she did

not have to worry about their English abilities. Instead they advised her to worry about their Mandarin Chinese ability because after they attended public schools, English would become their dominant language. Second, she resisted teaching her children English because she wanted them to learn from native speakers to avoid an accent. She taught them Mandarin Chinese oral skills by talking to them and helped them acquire literacy by reading Chinese books to them whenever they wished. She also taught them mathematics, addition and subtraction, when they were 4 years old. She tried to find teachable moments to inspire her children in Mandarin Chinese or mathematics learning during commutes or spare moments. Beside relying on her own language learning experiences, she also read many books on child rearing and education to improve her knowledge and strategies. She said:

I am learning by working with my children when I scaffold their learning of languages and their academics. I allow them to learn from their mistakes. Once they were in school, I communicated with their teachers about what they were learning and how can I assist them. American teachers provided much information and influenced the way I taught them. For example, I taught mathematics the way I learned in Taiwan, which is the fast way to get a correct answer. Teachers told me not to do that. In America, teachers taught them the right path to the correct answer. So when I shared my way of solving mathematics questions, I also told my children there are other ways, too. They can decide which way works best for them. Similar ideas applied to their study strategies in language learning.

### **Home Literacy Environment**

**Time management.** Table 13 shows Debbie's typical week at the beginning of fall semester; she needed to manage her own time because she was growing up. Summer semester and fall semester involved two different schedules for Debbie. For example, during summer Gui spent lot of time with her, helping her manage her time. Parent and child planned Debbie's academic and leisure activities together. The whole family spent time together on weekends. During fall semester, Gui let Debbie manage her own time with guidance from Gui: homework first, piano practice second, reading third, and leisure last. Gui usually arrived home a little later than Debbie except for the nights when her three evening courses met; then she returned home later than her husband and son. When Debbie came home from school around 3:45 p.m., Gui called her and asked how her day had gone and what her plans were for the evening. Gui reminded Debbie to do homework first and then practice piano. Her father and older brother came home around 5:30 p.m. They had meal together; then they worked independently until Gui arrived home. She checked Debbie's homework, and if she needed assistance, she helped her. If not, Gui studied and completed her own homework or prepared her teaching materials. Debbie sat in her cozy corner and selected a book from her bookshelf to read. Debbie loved to read, and her average reading time was around three hours almost every day.

**Space design.** In the Yang family's two-story home, the main floor served as their social area; it included their living room, dining room, and kitchen. Their bedrooms were on the second floor, where each of the children had their own bedrooms. Debbie's bedroom had one bed and a desk with a chair; she had a few low bookshelves for easy



access to the books, each full of books and stuffed animals. She gathered her favorite things together in a cozy reading corner, where she could sit and read for long periods of time (see Figure 21). The basement was used for the storage of the children's school projects, Gui's teaching materials, and family memorabilia.

**Home atmosphere.** Both Mr. Yang and Gui had advanced degrees. Gui was a learning parent, interacting with their children as they pursued learning at home and in school. She worked hard to learn and to do her best to educate her children. She valued and tried to find teachable moments through play in order to teach them mathematics, Mandarin Chinese, and other age-appropriate concepts. She prioritized her reading list as follows: homework for her own courses or teaching, education-related books to enhance her knowledge to work with her children, and finally nonfiction reading in subjects of interest to her. Mr. Yang and Gui were fine role models, focusing on tasks done on time and done well; they believed that a student's priority was finishing homework on time and doing well in course work. They also modeled the importance of leisure time and spent it with the whole family, taking part in sports or meaningful events at the Tzu Chi Center, tennis, or swimming. Teaching their children by example and precept, the Yangs motivated them to develop the habit of reading, which they loved. The children also excelled in many areas, and they enjoyed spending time with the family and having fun together.

**Literary resources.** Gui's bookshelves were filled with books for adults and children (see Figures 22 and 23). She had more books than would fit on their bookshelves, but she did not want to buy another bookshelf. If she did, she would want



*Figure 21.* Debbie's cozy reading corner.

to fill that one, too, so she would keep buying books; therefore, she planned to continue buying books until she could fill another bookshelf or place old books in the basement and new ones in the bookshelves they currently owned. Gui bought Mandarin Chinese books from Taiwan and English books from American books stores or book fair events at the children's school. They also bought Mandarin Chinese books from books fairs at the Tzu Chi Center and borrowed English books from their children's school library or the public library. She bought many books, sets of CDs with Chinese nursery rhymes, stories spoken in Taiwanese or in Mandarin Chinese because she wanted her children to focus on Mandarin Chinese only when they were very young. She ordered English magazines about science, discovery, and tennis. She did not buy DVDs; instead they borrowed them from the public library because she found their children did not watch DVDs over and over again, yet they read some books many times. They watched Chinese TV series on the Internet during meal time, such as 食尚玩家 [*Super Taste*] so that the children not only listened to spoken Mandarin Chinese but also learned about the cuisine of Taiwan.



*Figures 22.* Children books.



*Figures23.* Adult and children books.

Viewing the show stimulated Debbie's desire to visit Taiwan and sample the food. They also watched 星光大道 [*A Million Stars*], a singing competition, because Debbie liked to sing. The show gave her some knowledge of Mandarin Chinese musical terms from the host, singers, and judges' discussion. Some of Debbie's academic projects or clubs required online searches or the online websites in English, and she liked to share her work with Gui.

### **Informal Literacy Practices**

**Features and interaction.** Debbie's parents created many opportunities to support the children in learning both Mandarin Chinese and English oral and written literacy through various forms of interaction to promote literacy acquisition in their home and in the Chinese social community. Besides working independently the children interacted with siblings or peers, such as the children of family friends or those in the social community, and with parents or other adults. Gui and her husband mainly spoke Mandarin Chinese to their children after they were born, and Gui did not want to speak English to their children to avoid their developing an accent; therefore, before their

children attended preschool at age 3, they learned only Mandarin Chinese as their mother tongue. For the development of the children's Mandarin Chinese oral literacy, Gui spoke to her children frequently because she learned that hearing language is beneficial for an infant. At one point Gui's younger brother stayed with them when he was studying at an American university, so Gui and her brother talked to Debbie, who was 2 years old at the time, in the Taiwanese dialect.

The relationship with one's parents is one of the most important principles of Chinese ethics. Gui regularly telephoned Taiwan to talk to her parents and parents-in-law or other relatives, so they encouraged the children to talk to their grandparents as often as possible, especially to offer them good wishes on birthdays or important Chinese holidays, such as Chinese New Year; or if they earned rewards so their grandparents could be happy or proud of them. Children learned about filial relationships and practiced oral literacy by speaking to their grandparents. Whenever Gui was in the car with her children, she played CDs so they could hear Chinese songs or Chinese stories during the commute; the more they listened, the better their listening skills. In addition, they asked Gui the meaning of the terms, idioms, or stories they heard, and she used such teachable moments to guide them to further thinking and extended discussion to enhance their language proficiency. For example, once they listened to a story describing a mother as a tree and child as a caterpillar. Debbie understood the surface meaning of story, but she did not understand why the mother was a tree and the child a caterpillar. So Gui guided Debbie to think deeper and let her freely express whether she was a tree or a caterpillar and consider their mutual relationship and impact upon each other.

Gui always used time wisely: When waiting for a lesson to begin, for example, she played games or engaged in activities to enrich her children's language proficiency with mathematics concepts she wanted to teach them. Gui taught her children mathematics when they were 4 years old by asking them questions on arithmetic operations—from easy to challenging—after they had learned basic mathematics. Through much practice, her children were able to calculate answers in their heads. She taught them at their own pace, but they liked Gui to challenge them.

When Gui's son graduated from Saturday Chinese school, Debbie wanted to quit just as she thought her older brother had done; but Gui explained that her older brother had graduated and not quit the Chinese school. Debbie found going to Saturday Chinese school to be difficult. Gui explained that Debbie was a perfectionist, and if she could not be perfect before an audience, she did not want others to see her as average; therefore, she resisted Mandarin Chinese and wanted to stop because she did not feel confident in her abilities. Gui, however, encouraged her and let her know her progress was acceptable and that quitting was not permitted. Debbie's Mandarin Chinese was not as good as her brother's at a similar age because their earliest experiences with the language differed.

First, like Debbie Gui's son did not learn English until he attended preschool, but through her older brother, Debbie explored English at home before preschool. He was 6 years older than she and spoke both Mandarin Chinese and English to her. Second, Gui and her husband spoke Mandarin Chinese to them, and their son responded in Mandarin Chinese as well. Debbie was aware that both her parents were capable of speaking English, so she spoke Mandarin Chinese with a few English words, then switched to

more English with a few Mandarin Chinese words in her responses to her parents after English became her dominant language. Gui said, "Children are smart. They know what language to speak to whom." For example, at the Tzu Chi Center, when Debbie spoke to Ying (see Case 2), she spoke only Mandarin Chinese because she knew Ying could speak only Mandarin Chinese. Gui regretted that she had not hidden her English ability from her daughter because a few of Gui's friends had done so in order that their children responded only in Mandarin Chinese to their mothers; therefore, their children's Mandarin Chinese and English abilities were nearly balanced.

Gui gave an example of the importance of Mandarin Chinese for their family. The following situation left her dumbfounded. On one occasion Debbie had done something wrong, and both mother and daughter were upset. Gui wanted to reason with Debbie about what she had done, so she told Debbie her actions were inappropriate, what she should have done, and the reasons for right behavior. Gui told her daughter that she needed to change immediately to avoid creating a bad impression, but Debbie interrupted and told her mother she did not understand her Mandarin Chinese. Gui became more upset, but she needed to make sure Debbie understood, so she tried to speak English to her. After a few minutes Debbie corrected Gui's English. Gui became very angry and told Debbie, "See, I told you to speak Mandarin Chinese to me and master it; otherwise, how can I reason with you and how can you communicate with me?"

To develop Mandarin Chinese written literacy, Gui's children attended Saturday Chinese school, which offered Chinese courses from preschool and kindergarten to Grade 9. Debbie attended Chinese school when she was in kindergarten, and Gui relied on the

Chinese teacher for her formal Chinese training. She tried to assist with their homework, scaffolding them so they could do well in school. As a Chinese teacher herself, she said,

You can see the difference in the performance of students who have had and who have not had parents' assistance or encouragement at home to learn Mandarin Chinese. The ones with help usually perform better than those without help from their parents.

Debbie copied new vocabulary (see Figure 24) or phrases or recited passages from the textbook independently. Gui tutored Debbie on her homework for a new chapter and read aloud exercise practice questions for word solitaire and making sentences and polyphones (see Figure 25). Then Gui checked all the answers to Debbie's homework questions. Gui inspired Debbie with a few phrases to connect from previous phrases for word solitaire practice. Debbie asked how to write the word in the sentence she made, and Gui wrote on the paper or found the word in the textbook to copy into her sentence. Polyphones were difficult for many students and easily confused. Gui had to explain different sounds and different meanings to Debbie to make sure she had the right word for the sound along with a meaningful phrase. So her children could acquire Mandarin Chinese written literacy, Gui also used the Chinese market or Chinese restaurant as external opportunities. When they visited these sites, Gui reviewed or taught Debbie the menu to make sure she knew what she read; if not, Gui explained it to



Figure 24. Copying new vocabulary.



Figure 25. Polyphones.

her and let her order the meal she liked. Gui told Debbie that the Chinese meals she cooked were made with traditional Chinese vegetables, pointing out their names at the Chinese market so she could link the names with the real vegetables. Gui discovered that writing was most difficult for them, and pushing them was not effective.

To develop their English oral literacy, Gui took her children to story time at the public library; they also watched a few children's shows on public television at home. Debbie attended preschool at age 3, but Gui did not tutor her until she entered kindergarten. When Debbie brought books home to read, Gui read to her or she read to Gui or they took turns in parent-child shared reading. Gui taught Debbie to use her finger to point to the words she read aloud. This action helped Debbie to focus and to match the sound with words. They practiced this strategy in both Mandarin Chinese and English from the time Debbie was a beginning reader until the time she became a skilled reader. Gui also made rhyming words flash cards to enhance Debbie's phonics skill and



helped her learn to read by matching the sound and its spelling. By the end of kindergarten, she could sound out many short books by herself, needing help with only a few difficult or long words. When Debbie was a beginning reader, Gui discussed what she read by looking at the picture books together page by page. In one strategy suggested by an American teacher, Gui asked Debbie to retell the story to her after she finished reading a book; Gui then used questions to help Debbie to rethink what she read and discuss it further. Gui believed this strategy enhanced Debbie's reading comprehension and writing, and he continued to use these strategies with Debbie at the time of this writing.

To promote the development of her children's English written literacy, Gui asked every teacher whom she met at parent-teacher conferences, "How is my child's reading and writing? Because English is not our native language, how can I assist my child to do better in English reading and writing?" Teachers always answered that her child was doing fine. Gui described her children's reading process to the teachers, stating that they loved to read and they could do so for hours. The teacher, guessing perhaps the child was browsing through books quickly, suggested that Gui ask her child questions about the content or to retell the story in order to slow her down and guide her to think through the reading material from the reader's and author's points of view.

Gui tried to scaffold her children into deeper thinking of the reading content when they were in elementary school, but asking proper questions became difficult without reading the book or spending time to think about proper questions to discuss with her children because their books gradually became longer and more complex: She could not

understand them by simple browsing for a short time and come up with questions to discuss with her child. So when the children entered the higher grades, she relied on school personnel to help them acquire written English literacy. In fact, she eventually sent her son to a private high school, where he had more resources and received attention from teachers to promote his study.

In addition, Gui always paid attention to the resources that school offered for academic learning or opportunities pertaining to English reading and writing. Gui discovered a two-week summer camp focused on study skills, vocabulary and grammar, and reading and writing. She registered Debbie to attend to improve in these areas. One of the writing projects was to write clear directions for others to follow step by step. Debbie chose to write about making paper cranes, so Gui suggested that she search online for the process and try to make one. She could then describe the process step by step for the project. When a problem arose describing a particular step, Debbie discussed it with Gui, who recommended that she check the online dictionary. Gui also used translation from Mandarin Chinese to find the right words and suggested that Debbie place new or unfamiliar vocabulary on her board on her bedroom wall, so Gui could test her or Debbie could memorize the spelling of the words and review their definitions when she was near the vocabulary wall (see Figure 26). Ultimately, Debbie was happy and shared with Gui that her classmate told her that the project was successful because she followed the steps and made a crane.

**Frequency and types of Chinese and English language use.** This section covers findings as shown on the Weekly Schedule Checklist (Appendix H) for the Yang



*Figure 26.* Vocabulary wall.

family's 11 weeks of home literacy and extracurricular activities for Debbie. During the fourth week, Gui was too busy to mark the checklist, so I have left the week 8/29 to 9/4 blank. Debbie attended LEGO robotics, piano, and violin, Saturday Chinese, and Tzu Chi children's lessons. The following results derived from the activity section of the checklist. The activity findings (see Table 14) provide an overall picture of Yang family's home literacy practices regarding frequency and types of literacy activities and other activities as well as parent and child's use of Chinese or English at home or in the social community. During the first three weeks Gui tried to self-report as other participant mothers did, marking most of activities during August. After the fourth week, she marked only that she helped Debbie to do her "homework" and wrote a paragraph explaining how she helped her daughter. Thus, the significance of using the total number of listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities in Chinese or in English for comparison was lost.

She provided some examples to report on the Weekly Schedule Checklists; for example, math HW indicated that Gui assisted Debbie with mathematics homework. LA HW indicated she helped Debbie with language arts homework. Chinese HW indicated she scaffolded Debbie's Chinese homework. Gui wrote on the back of the list: 10/23 "Worked on Debbie's Chinese HW—reading, worksheets, making phrases and sentences," and 10/25 "Checked Debbie's math HW." The highest frequency of subject homework during those weeks occurred in mathematics homework, three to five times per week; and Gui helped Debbie mainly on mathematics concepts, reflection writing, and reviewing for tests. Chinese homework assistance always occurred twice per week on Fridays and Sundays, and Gui helped Debbie with her writing on 10/23. Language arts and science homework averaged once per week each, and Gui helped Debbie with vocabulary definitions or writing.

### **Formal Literacy Practices**

Gui assisted Debbie with homework in Mandarin Chinese or English on three levels. First, if the homework was easy, she finished it by herself. Second, if it was challenging, Gui sat beside Debbie and assisted her when she asked questions. Third, on the most difficult portions, Gui read the information with her and through discussion guided her thinking about the key ideas necessary to complete her homework. During fall semester Gui was very busy, so she mainly assisted Debbie in her academic subjects, checking her mathematics homework, proofreading her writing, listening to her oral project presentation, and reviewing content with her for tests. For Chinese homework, Gui checked Debbie's homework, assisted her on challenging portions, and reviewed and

Table 14

*Frequency and Duration of Chinese–English Language Use: Yang Family*

Chinese	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Homework	Library	Family time	TV time	PC game	Free time	Others	Total 11 weeks of frequency of use Mandarin Chinese was 138.	
8/8-8/14	3	3	1	0	0	0	7	0	0	5	0		Total 11 weeks of frequency of use Mandarin Chinese was 138.
8/15-8/21	4	4	4	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0		
8/22-8/28	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2		
8/29-9/4													
9/5-9/11	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		
9/12-9/18	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0		
9/19-9/25	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0		
9/26-10/2	3	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10/3-10/9	3	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10/10-10/16	3	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10/17-10/23	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1		
10/24-10/30	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Total	27	27	25	20	15	1	15	0	0	5	3		
English	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Homework	Library	Family time	TV time	PC game	Free time	Others	Total 11 weeks of frequency of use English was 97.	
8/8-8/14	0	4	5	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0		Total 11 weeks of frequency of use English was 97.
8/15-8/21	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	4	7	0		
8/22-8/28	0	0	7	0	1	0	1	0	2	6	5		
8/29-9/4													
9/5-9/11	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0		
9/12-9/18	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0		
9/19-9/25	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0		
9/26-10/2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10/3-10/9	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10/10-10/16	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10/17-10/23	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10/24-10/30	0	0	2	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	1		
Total	4	4	19	6	29	0	1	5	8	15	6		

prequizzed her on test content. Gui worked with Debbie to prepare her for annual competitive events at her Chinese school, including a literacy game, a dictionary game, storytelling, and a recitation contest.

**Parental direct assistance with Mandarin Chinese homework.** Gui gave an example of the way she directly assisted Debbie in preparing for the storytelling contest. Mother and daughter went to the Internet link that the Chinese teacher provided to select a story they could present for the contest. They browsed some stories, and Gui suggested that Debbie choose three stories and think about which one she wanted to use for the contest. After Debbie chose 老鼠娶親 ["Mouse Gets Married"], Gui printed out the story and asked Debbie to read it aloud; Gui paid attention to her reading and rewrote the sentences in easier phrases for Debbie to try read aloud again (see Figure 27).

The next day, Gui printed out the revised story and followed the same procedure (see Figure 28). On the third day, Gui and Debbie listened and prepared the final version for



Figures 27. “Mouse Gets Married,” first version.

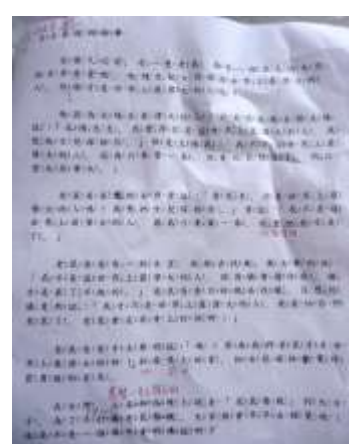


Figure 28. “Mouse Gets Married,” second version.

storytelling. Gui audio recorded the story for Debbie to practice by herself over the next few days. They also discussed how to present the plot of the story; they found pictures of the characters online. Gui printed them out and used posterboard with spoons taped to it as a holder for Debbie to show the characters while she told the story (see Figure 29).



*Figure 29.* “Mouse Gets Married,” main characters.

After Debbie practiced, she was quite fluent with the story. Debbie dressed up and wore Mickey Mouse ears and rehearsed her presentation in front of her family the night before the contest. According to Gui Debbie did a fine job on the day of the contest.

**Parental direct assistance with English homework.** Debbie liked to show Gui her projects before handing them in to the teacher. She wanted her mother to tell her how she did on the projects; for example, Debbie shared and discussed with Gui her ideas for a project on minerals. She needed to choose three kinds of minerals from a list her teacher provided; she was required to use PowerPoint slides to present the characteristics of her three minerals. After Debbie finished her PowerPoint file for the minerals project,

she showed Gui and asked her for suggestions. Gui advised Debbie to add a summary of each mineral's characteristics in a table to better organize each slide to make her presentation visually outstanding. In another example, Debbie was assigned to write an end-of-the-book journal entry for her language arts homework, but she had problems with the reflection portion. Gui had suggested to Debbie that for this kind of homework she should excerpt important points or questions from the book she read and post them on the page (see Figure 30). Because Gui had not read the book, she could ask Debbie only general questions following the teacher's guidelines (see Figure 31) to stimulate her thinking and opinions to help her to summarize and organize her thoughts for reflection.

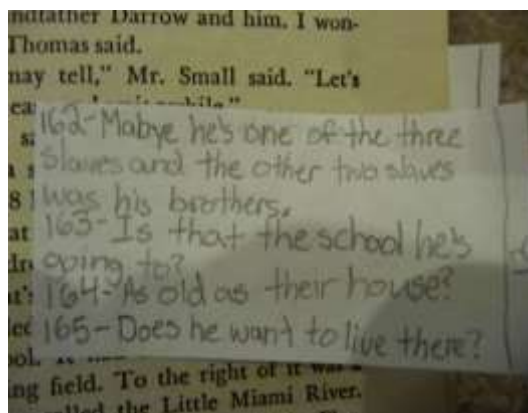


Figure 30. Debbie's reading key points.

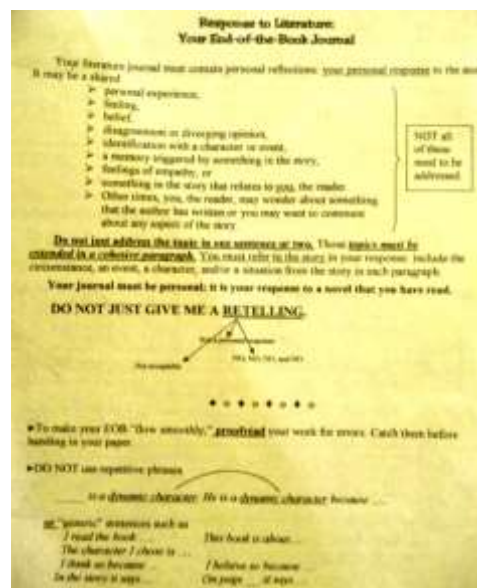


Figure 31. End-of-the-book journal guidelines.

#### Case 4: Mei and Hua's Immigrant Chinese Middle-Class Family

Five people constituted the Lee family: Mr. Lee (father), Mei (mother), Hua (son), younger sister (daughter), and younger brother (son). In addition, Mr. Lee's parents and Mei's father took turns visiting the Lee family for 6 months at a time, helping Mei take



care of their two babies, who were a year apart. Mr. Lee and Mei were international students from China, studying at an American university, having immigrated to the United States through a work opportunity. After they married and had their first child, they remained in America permanently for work and for their child's education. Mr. Lee, an associate professor in the Chemistry Department at a state university, provided the main income for the whole family. Table 15 shows the Lee family's background.

Table 15

*The Lee Family*

Family member	Reason in USA	Years in USA	Language spoken at home	Other spoken languages	Level of education	Current occupation
Mr. Lee (Father)	Work	14	Mandarin, Ningbo dialect	English, Ningbo dialect	Ph.D. (USA)	Chemistry professor
Mei (Mother)	Family	13	Mandarin	English, Cantonese	Master's (USA)	Housewife
Hua (Son, age 11)	Family	11	Mandarin	English	Elementary school (USA)	student
Younger sister (Daughter, age 2 )	Family	2	Mandarin	English		
Younger brother (Son, age 1 )	Family	1	Mandarin			
Mr. Lee's father (Grandfather)	Family	6 months per year	Mandarin, Ningbo dialect			Retired
Mr. Lee's mother (Grandmother)	Family	6 months per year	Mandarin, Ningbo dialect			Retired
Mei's father (Grandfather)	Family	6 months per year	Mandarin, Cantonese			Retired

When Mr. Lee found a faculty position in Ohio, the family moved there. A few years later, they bought a home near Mr. Lee's university. After their first son Hua was born, Mei became a housewife because he had allergies and asthma; so she had to spend

extra time caring for him. She read considerable information on how to take care of a child with allergies and asthma and followed advice from her parents, doctor, and friends to find the right foods for him. Mei did her best to improve his health in order to prevent his symptoms from becoming worse. She even postponed his entrance into preschool until he was 4 years old. He went to a half-day co-op preschool, where Mei volunteered to assist with classroom activities or school events; thus, she received a tuition discount as well as supported Hua's physical needs while he adapted to his first year of preschool. In addition, Hua felt comfortable when Mei was around him at school. When Hua was 9 and Mei had her second and third children, she had less energy to attend to him. She was less worried about his health and his academic study because he had learned to take care of his physical needs and did well in school. Mei put her effort into the care of her babies with the grandparents' help at home. Tables 16 and 17 show parent involvement and investment in Hua's upbringing. Table 16 demonstrates Hua's typical week and Mei's out-of-school parental involvement and investment in Hua's academics and the development of his Chinese-English biliteracy, extracurricular activities, and entertainment. Table 17 lists Mei's efforts on behalf of Hua's physical growth and extracurricular activities.

### **Chinese and English Social Environment in the United States**

Hua explored Mandarin Chinese as his native language at home or in the Chinese social community, and he explored English as his native language in school and in mainstream society. Hua had many opportunities to practice oral literacy in Mandarin Chinese at home with his mother, father, grandparents, even his younger siblings; he

spoke to them and listened to them communicate in Mandarin Chinese. He explored Mandarin Chinese when his grandparents watched Chinese TV series or Chinese friends visited the family. Mei had taken the three children to Sunday worship services at the same Chinese church that Han and Ting (see Case 1) attended almost every Sunday since 2006. Services were held in an American church, where adults listened to a Chinese pastor preach in Mandarin Chinese and children attended Sunday school with American children. When Hua was young, he attended Sunday school; and a few mothers volunteered to take turns preparing lunch for all Chinese families in attendance. Afterward, he attended two hours of Sunday Chinese lessons, instituted five years earlier and organized by the pastor and some mothers. The students were attendees' children, and mothers volunteered as teachers. The Sunday Chinese classes were not open to the public; they were available mainly to Chinese families and only a few American students from Sunday school. Mei and another mother had taken turns teaching Hua and his classmates since they were first graders. Because no Sunday school and no Sunday Chinese school were held during the summer, Hua remained with his mother to listen to the Chinese pastor deliver his sermons.

In Hua's English social environment, he spoke English with his teachers, classmates, and many people in mainstream society. Mei recalled that Hua learned English when he initially attended half-day preschool; later she saw significant improvement in Hua's English language skills from kindergarten to first grade. He began as an average ESL student, and by the time he was in fourth grade, he was in the

Table 16

*Out-of-School Parental Involvement and Investment: Hua's Typical Week*

Date/Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Time	Saturday	Sunday
Arrives home 3:45 p.m.  Lessons, sports, free time, PC game time vary from 45–60 minutes  Bedtime around 9:30 p.m.	Snack, English homework					9:00 a.m.        9:30 p.m.	Breakfast	Breakfast
	Chinese homework						Chinese homework	Sunday church service
	Free time, PC game time, TV time						Free, PC game, TV time	10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.
	Meal time						Lunch	Lunch at church 12–1 p.m.
	Piano practice		Piano lesson	Piano practice			Family time	Chinese lesson 1–3 p.m.
	Free time	Swimming practice	Taekwondo	Swimming practice	Free time		Swimming practice	Visit friends, library; family time or free time
	English reading						Meal Time	
	Mathematics practice						Family or Free time	

Table 17

*Parental Involvement and Investment in Hua's Personal Development*

Mother	Child	Lesson	Age
Mei	Hua	Mei's efforts on behalf of Hua's physical growth and extracurricular activities for learning and development	
		Mei read materials on early childhood development and listened to music.	Prenatal
		Mei emphasized Hua's physical health development.	Birth to age 4
		Mei retold stories from English picture books to Hua in Mandarin Chinese.	Age 2 to 6
		Mei helped Hua with school reading materials in English.	Age 5 to 7
		Soccer team	Age 5
		Chinese lessons	Age 6 to present
		Karate lessons	Age 6 to 9
		Taekwondo lessons	Age 9 to present
		Chess lessons	Age 9 to 10
		Swimming lessons	Age 7 to present
		Piano lessons	Age 7 to present

advanced reading and advanced mathematics classes. Mei was encouraged, so she signed him up for after-school programs so he could interact socially with classmates to enhance his English language skills and literacy. He was also involved in the Chess Club at school; he did well, so he continued to play the game. Hua took lessons in piano and soccer with American teachers and coaches, but Mei quickly learned that soccer was not appropriate for children with asthma. She let Hua do karate instead, and later taekwondo. Mei also taught Hua how to swim after he was a little older. Mei bought an annual family membership for the recreation center, and she took Hua to practice swimming three times per week. In addition, Mei and her children attended the Chinese church-sponsored family Bible study on Friday nights at Yu and Chris' s house (see Case 5), where Hua interacted socially and spoke with Chinese adults in Mandarin Chinese and with the children in English.

### **Parent's Experiences**

**Parenting.** When asked which of the three parenting styles she practiced—authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive—Mei compared herself with other Chinese parents; she stated that she was less authoritative than other Chinese parents. The comparison extended to American parents, too. She characterized herself as an authoritative parent, explaining the way she educated Hua depended on his behavior: He was a boy who did not focus easily, so he was not effective in studying alone. If she pushed him, he moved one step; if she did not push, he did not move. Mei said:

Because of the way Hua acted, I had to be strict with him. I did not require my child to become Number 1 at school. If he understood or mastered the subjects,

that was fine; but if he was lazy and showed little interested in studying, I had to be stricter with him so he would learn.

Mei had Hua work on homework first, completing 10 extra mathematics questions per day; they adapted the amount of Chinese homework her was required to do to his various lessons and practices. If he finished his work and wanted to play PC games for fun within the time limits Mei set for him, that was fine with her. She thought she was strict about certain important things, but she noted that he could self-manage many things, too.

**Parent's language experiences.** Mei shared her experiences with acquiring Mandarin Chinese language and literacy. Before she went to kindergarten, her mother had taught her to recognize basic words in Mandarin Chinese, such as family names. She could also write her own name. All her study in China was in Mandarin Chinese with English as a foreign language. From elementary school through university, she studied the Mandarin Chinese language and acquired literacy. Mei said she loved to read; when she was young, she read books she owned or borrowed from classmates or friends. During her youth, reading materials were not as plentiful and accessible as they are now. Local libraries had fewer books and offered fewer services. The books and magazines she owned were provided by her father because he supported his children's education, so he provided what she requested. She had read adult fiction even when she was young, and doing so enhanced her ability to comprehend faster. Mei's father never pressured her to attain a particular standard; he was happy with what she did in school. Mei recalled that learning correct Mandarin Chinese pronunciation was a challenge for her because she lived in Guangdong, where people conversed in Cantonese. The teacher taught

incorrectly, so students learn incorrectly; thus her Mandarin Chinese was affected by her Cantonese accent. She was told that her Cantonese accent interfered with her communication in Mandarin Chinese.

Mei's also shared her experiences with acquiring English language and literacy. She said that English was important in China and gained the attention of educators, parents, and students. Her middle-class parents supported their children's education, buying English tapes to promote her language learning and literacy; yet she reported that her skills were not her strong because of the limitations of her English teachers. They taught English directly from the textbook, and students had little opportunity for application. She was able to master English to the extent that she could do well on examinations but was unable to use English. Test scores were very important to Mei, so she studied hard for high achievement. She said: "The purpose of study is to reach for high achievement, and you can't achieve merely with textbooks. The knowledge contained in textbooks is not enough in real life." Mei implied that her English teachers failed to teach students that English is a key to open the door of knowledge and to extend their global view and assure a bright future.

Mei ranked her English skills as follows from best to worst: reading, then listening and speaking, and finally writing. After living in the US for a long time, her listening improved; she believed that her speech was acceptable, but she had difficulty expressing herself fluently. Lacking the opportunities she needed to progress in writing, she hoped her writing would eventually improve. She found studying in an American university extremely difficult because conversation differed from academic language, so



she worked very hard to catch on and do well in the school. Later, when she had time, she enhanced her vocabulary. When she worked, she used her 2-hour commute to listen to adult audio books and often listened to the radio to improve her listening skills; she did so for nearly two years. She found that in China English was something to be studied in a textbook, but in the US English was part of everyday life. Mei said:

You need to use English to deal with daily life, to communicate with others in English, to look for a job, to assist your children in their education, and to understand letters or emails sent back and forth in English from teachers.

### **Parent's Beliefs**

**Parental expectations for Hua's academic achievement.** When Mei was asked about her expectations for Hua's academic achievement, she answered simply: "All As." She said, "I set a goal for him to work toward. If he is not capable, it is OK. I believe it is good to set a goal and push him forward." She believed in Hua's ability to achieve, but she understood that he needed to be pushed to reach his potential; therefore, setting a goal for him was important. If he had trouble in some critical situations, Mei scaffolded him toward his zone of proximal development. For example, at home, the Lee family mainly spoke Mandarin Chinese to Hua when he attended preschool and kindergarten; at that time he had difficulty with English and his performance was below that of his American classmates. In vocabulary and reading at school, he was below average. Mei encouraged him, and they went to the public library often to borrow books; she also assisted him with school reading materials. She said:

I take him to the library for the reading program and borrow books for extra reading besides school reading materials. I encourage him to read and recognize more vocabulary in order to catch up with American classmates. In kindergarten and first grade, Hua attended the ESL program and Title I class to improve his English. In first and second grades the report card did not provide actual grades, but by third grade Hua earned maybe one or two Bs and the rest As; in fourth grade, he earned all As. It sounds as if getting all As is hard, but it really isn't. Most of the time, I gave him a little challenge or push, which is good, and he proved he could do it.

**The value parent placed on Mandarin Chinese or English or both.** When asked what value Mei placed on Mandarin Chinese and English, she said she thought both were very important. In the US English was actually more important than Mandarin Chinese, but in the implementation stage she put most of her effort into teaching Hua Mandarin Chinese after he showed he could do a good job independently with academics. Mei responded:

I think both Mandarin Chinese and English are important. In the United States English requires more attention. Mandarin Chinese is also a language much in demand. If Chinese parents themselves are native speakers of Mandarin Chinese who can teach and provide good sources for their children to learn, especially oral literacy, that's really great. In my educational philosophy, English is very important. In practice, I spend more time assisting my son in learning Mandarin Chinese. When he learns English, the environment—mainstream society,

communities, and schools—will provide more effective ways for him to learn than I can. I just need to encourage him more, push him to achieve his potential. I believe he will learn well, and I just need to understand his learning situation and provide what he needs. Mandarin Chinese is a totally different story: Hua obtained his Mandarin Chinese language and literacy mainly from me. If I did not teach him or didn't insist on his learning Mandarin Chinese, he would not be able to learn well at all; therefore, I devote most of my time and energy to teach and assist him in learning Mandarin Chinese now.

Mei adhered to her plan to have Hua learn the Mandarin Chinese language and acquire literacy until he reached a level deemed acceptable by Mei, one at which his knowledge would be permanent. She said:

When children learn a language until age 3 to 5—even if their language is fluent—once they stop studying it, they eventually will forget that language totally. But if children learn one language from the time they are young until age 15 to 16, they can listen, speak, read newspapers, and write some simple passages, then they won't forget that language because they internalized it.

**Parent's role in scaffolding Hua's language-learning experiences.** Mei played various roles in scaffolding her son's Mandarin Chinese and English learning. When Hua was 6 years old, she put considerable effort in teaching him written Mandarin Chinese. To develop Hua's English literacy, Mei depended on public school teachers. She observed Hua's school performance carefully in order to determine whether he would need help. For example, in first grade his spelling was not good, so Mei asked Hua to

study more; then she pretested him on the words on the spelling list. With Mei's help, he learned to master spelling. In addition, Mei helped him understand then memorize the multiplication tables. She asked him to remember one table daily, but Hua thought it was boring and difficult to remember. Mei persevered and told him that after he memorized the multiplication table, he would be able to solve problems more quickly. Eventually, he finished memorizing the multiplication tables and finally recognized the benefit of doing so: His mathematical ability was excellent even though the process was difficult and painful.

Mei applied her study strategies or skills to scaffold his learning: Some worked and some did not because his personality and the environment differed from Mei's. She said:

I apply my learning experiences to him when I assist him in his academics. I think my Mandarin Chinese is very good because I love to read and read a lot. I am a fast learner. I read fiction for older students when I was in elementary school; therefore, after Hua went to kindergarten, I encouraged him to read by taking him to the library a few times every week to borrow books. I showed him how to search for books through the computer catalog, so he knew how to search for books when he was in first or second grade. For the multiplication table, I was interested in finding out the why or how behind it. I learned to think, discover, and find regularity in mathematics. I learned the reason and understood the logic of  $9 \times 9 = 81$  before I memorized the tables. After I understood, it was easy for me to remember the multiplication tables; but memorizing each fact seemed easier for

him than understanding why. Hua is not an active learner who loves to explore or dig out what is going on. Sometime, remembering the result seemed easier for him than knowing the whole process.

### **Home Literacy Environment**

**Time management.** Mei promoted Hua's Mandarin Chinese learning efficiency at home by setting up a routine for her son to do both English and Mandarin Chinese homework as a priority, then piano practice, then sports activities. He was allowed to spend the rest of his time reading. If he wanted to relax and play computer games, he could do so within time limits; and games were permitted only after his last priority was complete. On weekends or during summer or winter vacations, Hua's schedule was less rigid; on school days, beside his regular schedule, Mei tried to teach Hua how to find things to do. For Mandarin Chinese homework Mei made plans for Hua to work on homework from Monday through Saturday and attend Chinese lessons on Sundays. Hua participated in two sports to keep him healthy: taekwondo once a week and swimming three time per week. Mei taught Hua how to swim because she heard swimming is a good sport to reduce symptoms of asthma. Mei encouraged Hua to learn piano; he had a lesson once per week, and he practiced every day. Hua loved to read, so he found time to read. He learned to manage his time by adopting Mei's guideline.

**Space design.** The main floor of the Lees' two-story home served as their social area; it included a family room, dining room, kitchen, and office. A second floor included bedrooms, and a finished basement, which included one guest bedroom, primarily served as the children's play area. Mei displayed her children's art works on

the basement wall. The piano where Hua practiced every day was situated in the corner of family room. The computer was in the office (see Figure 32), which had a paned glass door, so Mei could monitor how long or what Hua was doing on the personal computer. He had his own bedroom, bed, closet, one small bookshelf, and desk with chair (see Figure 33). Mei noted that she rarely saw Hua or her friends' children who had grown up in the US sit up straight in front of a desk to study or read as Mei and her husband had done when they were children in China. Hua could do homework or read sitting down anywhere, and it seemed not bother him when he studied or read with background noise



*Figure 32.* Computer in the office in open space. *Figure 33.* Hua's desk.

or quiet. Because he did not study or read at his desk, he placed items on the work surface of the desk, and it became messy. Hua liked to do various tasks in the presence of family members, such as in the family room, where his grandparents sat on the sofa watching Chinese sitcoms or where Hua's siblings played. He also liked to sit on the carpet to read while Mei was busy in the kitchen. Mr. Lee usually worked late and returned home before dinner.

**Home atmosphere.** Three generations lived together as a traditional Chinese family: loving parents and children maintaining filial piety. Mr. Lee and Mei showed filial love to their parents, and their parents loved them and their grandchildren; the adults provided a good example for the children to learn filial devotion and respect for their elders. Because they were a big, lively family, Hua liked to study or read when family members were around instead of sitting quietly at his desk. Mei hoped he would develop the habit of organizing the area where he kept his books and personal items, so he could find his things easily. She did not have time to model reading at home for Hua because she was busy with her two babies. Instead she let him manage his school work, and she worked with him every day on his Mandarin Chinese, showing him that the family valued education very much and that they believed he was able to perform well academically. She wanted him to know that if he needed assistance, he could always come to his parents for help.

**Literacy resources.** Hua had two bookshelves for his Chinese and English books, school books, and magazines; one was in his bedroom, and the other in the office (see Figure 34). Mei hoped Hua knew how important books are: They represented knowledge. Mei's friends gave them some Mandarin Chinese books, and she also bought a few. Mei ordered science magazines of interest to Hua. They did not have cable; instead the grandparents brought a variety of DVDs from China—series, movies, cartoons for adult and for children. For Sunday Chinese class, the teachers chose a set of Chinese textbooks for the students and prepared their own materials as well. It took a year for them to find a set of reading textbooks designed for Chinese American children.



*Figure 34:* Hua's bookshelf in the office.

Mei said:

Everyone learned to speak their mother tongue, so naturally they are able to speak the language without learning theoretical things, such as phonics, Zhuyin, or Pinyin before they can speak. So we teach students to recognize vocabulary without teaching them Zhuyin, and this set of textbooks emphasizes reading, fostering students' reading ability.

For English reading materials, Mei took her children to the library to borrow books and taught Hua how to find them by using the library catalog on the computer to search the library database again and again until he knew how to search by computer for books he wanted to read. She remembered visiting the library most often when Hua was in kindergarten and first grade when he was a beginning reader. One day, Hua told her



that he had finished reading all the library books and the library had no more books for him to read. Mei told him that he had finished only what he liked to read but that he had not read all the nonfiction books. She told him they were good, too, and encouraged him to extend his reading to a wider variety of topics to enhance his reading comprehension.

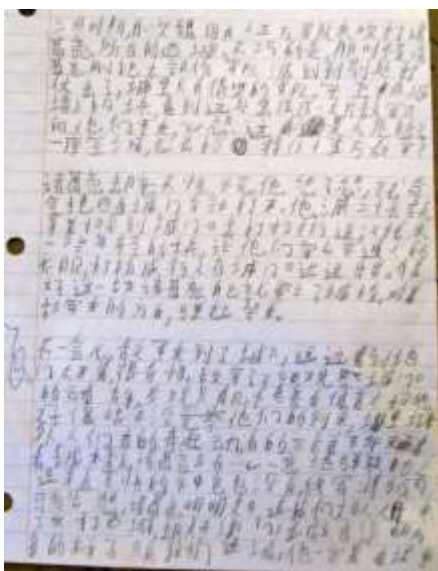
### **Informal Literacy Practices**

**Features and interaction.** Mr. Lee and Mei believed Mandarin Chinese is very important, so they agreed on Hua's learning the language and acquiring literacy. For the development of Hua's Mandarin Chinese oral and written literacy, Mr. Lee, Mei, and Hua's grandparents all spoke Mandarin Chinese to him and to one another at home. The grandparents used to watch Chinese series on DVDs with Chinese captions; if Hua was interested, he sat with them to watch and ask questions about the meaning of the terms or plot. He liked to watch Chinese cartoons. Mei stated that when Hua was 3 years old, she let him watch Chinese cartoons; thus, he developed some Chinese oral literacy from the characters' dialogue, learning words and phrases that Mei's family might not speak or use during their daily conversation. Mei believed this natural approach to language learning was more beneficial than textbooks or flashcards. Hua learned many phrases and applied them when speaking to his family. He understood some Chinese phrases and willingly asked adults about phrases he did not understand; they explained and he understood. A famous Chinese series 三國演義 [*The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*] recounts Chinese history and contains Chinese cultural elements of interest to many Chinese people for generations, but Hua's grandparents bought an adult version, not the cartoon series. It was too difficult for Hua, so he did not watch for long. He could follow the action but

did not understand the dialogue, even with Chinese captions; it was too fast for him to read and contained too many unfamiliar words to follow up.

Mei also looked at English picture books and translated the stories, retelling them in Mandarin Chinese to Hua as nightly bedtime stories when he was around three years old. Hua learned his first Chinese characters and some children's songs and poetry at 4 to 6 years of age. He showed some interest in cars and dinosaurs, so Mei found books on these topics to read to him and wrote down in Chinese characters the names of cars and dinosaurs on flashcards for Hua to recognize and remember. Mei estimated that she had made around 3,000 flashcards over the years. Two days per week Hua worked on word recognition, and Mei used 50 to 100 flashcards with him, depending on the degree of difficulty of the words. Randomly selecting 20 of the 50 or 100, she put familiar words on the right side; if he did not know the words, she taught him and put them on left side until they finished the flashcards. The next time, Mei placed the unfamiliar words with other 50 or 100 and taught Hua with this process repeatedly for several years. For poetry, Mei printed out short poems and placed them with related pictures on posters to read aloud; she explained their meaning with pictures, using the visuals to enhance his memorization of the poetry. By age 6, he recognized more than 100 words. When he was six and a half years old, the age at which children typically began the first-grade level of Chinese, Hua attended Sunday Chinese class, taught by Mei and another Chinese mother. At the time of my data collection, Hua was in his fifth year of Chinese class; and he had advanced to the Grade 4 level.

Following is Hua's routine for Mandarin Chinese homework: Monday, copy vocabulary and text (see Figure35); Tuesday and Thursday, write dictated vocabulary and text; Wednesday and Saturday, read text aloud; and Friday, use CD-ROM to study for vocabulary and text. Hua was eventually able to copy vocabulary and text and to study vocabulary and text using CD-ROMs independently at his computer. Mei worked with him on other Chinese homework, including dictation and reading aloud. If Hua was able to remember the vocabulary and text well, Mei dictated it to him, and he wrote it out. If Hua had not mastered some of the phrases or vocabulary well, then she slowly repeated the vocabulary or sentences or explained the definition or the meaning to remind him



*Figure 35.* Hua's copy of text, done independently.

how to write the vocabulary or phrases that he had just learned from the textbook. When Hua read aloud the chapter or story, Mei sat next to him and listened to his pronunciation. If he had difficulty sounding out words, she helped him; if he mispronounced words, she repeated the correct sounds to increase his phonological proficiency. Because Hua had

fewer opportunities to use Mandarin Chinese compared to English, his progress in learning Mandarin Chinese was slow. Because Hua easily forgot what he learned, Mei insisted that he engage in Mandarin Chinese oral and written literacy practice every day, thoroughly reviewing what was needed to enhance his Mandarin Chinese language and literacy.

After Hua started kindergarten, he and his mother went to the library to borrow English books to read. Mei read to him when they had time and every night as bedtime stories until he entered first grade. The more stories he heard, the more knowledge he gained. Once reading became routine, he built up his reading ability and enjoyed reading independently. As a first grader his reading was still below average, but soon he reached the average level, then advanced. By third grade, he received an award from the school library for reading the most books. In fifth grade, an award for highest reading achievement was given to only three students, one of whom was Hua; the principal took them to Border's book store to select a book as a reward and graduation gift. After Hua built up his habit of reading and reading competency, Mei became an observer and stepped away from his academic learning. She let him take responsibility unless he asked for help or she felt she needed to intervene. For example, toward the end of first grade, Mei had to remind Hua again and again to speak Mandarin Chinese to her when they communicated with each other. Eventually, he developed the habit of speaking Mandarin Chinese to his parents.

**Frequency and types of Chinese–English language use.** This section contains findings from the Weekly Schedule Checklist (Appendix H) from the Lee family's 12-

week schedule of home literacy activities and extracurricular lessons for Hua. He took lessons for piano, taekwondo, swimming, Chinese, and chess. The following results derive mainly from the activities portion of the checklist. The activity findings (see Table 18) provided an overall picture of the Lee family's home literacy practices, including frequency and types of literacy and leisure activities as well as parent-child Chinese or English language use at home or in the community. For Mei, daily family conversation involved oral literacy practice in listening and speaking. For daily Chinese homework, Hua copied or recited vocabulary and text and read aloud or wrote dictated text for homework. Watching Chinese cartoons constituted Chinese TV time. Free-time activities in Chinese included interaction with Mandarin Chinese-speaking family friends during free time or playing with or visiting a Chinese family friend. Mei did not mark academic learning that included his homework or writing in English because she was not involved and did not assist Hua with this, but she paid attention to his reading in English; so she marked reading when he completed reading activities at home. She also noted on the checklist when Hua went with her to Sunday school to listen to and speak English. When he watched English movies on the Internet, she marked TV time in English. Similarly, marking free time or PC games indicated that Hua played PC games in English or sometimes in Mandarin Chinese.

The findings from Table 18 show that the Lee family provided opportunities for Hua to engage in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and homework activities in Mandarin Chinese almost on a daily basis. At home, Mei insisted that Hua spend more time to develop his Mandarin Chinese oral and written literacy abilities than English,

confirming her statement that she tried her best to promote the development of Hua's Mandarin Chinese language and literacy. She relied heavily on Hua and his teachers to develop his English language and literacy at school and in mainstream society. Mei emphasized the importance of books as well as knowledge, motivating Hua's enjoyment of reading almost daily in English. TV, free, and PC game time were Hua's favorite leisure activities. Family time played an important role, revealing the close relationship to practice Mandarin Chinese at home, so his fluency in oral and written abilities increased. Mei hoped that with the external environment, the help of American teachers, his own self-motivation, and her encouragement, Hua could reach his potential to become a fully bilingual person.

### **Formal Literacy Practices**

**Parental direct teaching in Mandarin Chinese.** Mei was the only participant who agreed immediately to my request to conduct a home visit to complete an observation. The rest of the parents had difficulty committing to the home observation among the members of the Lee family. Table 18 shows that Hua had many opportunities for many reasons: time constraints, the late hours during which parent-child interaction took place, interaction that took place during car commutes, or fears that the child lacked confidence to speak or was unable to focus in the presence of strangers. I did two home observations involving read-aloud activities and observed a Chinese lesson taught by Mei in her classroom. Mei made plans for Hua to engage in Mandarin Chinese every day. She spent time and effort scaffolding Hua's acquisition of Mandarin Chinese language and literacy. Every Wednesday and Saturday she assisted him in 30-minute read-aloud

Table 18

*Frequency and Duration of Chinese–English Language Use: Lee Family*

Chinese	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Homework	Library	Family time	TV time	PC game	Free time	Others	Frequency of use of Mandarin Chinese during 12-week period was 524.
8/8-8/14	7	7	4	3	6	1	7	7	0	0	0	
8/15-8/21	5	7	5	3	6	1	7	7	0	0	0	
8/22-8/28	7	7	4	3	6	0	7	7	0	7	0	
8/29-9/4	7	7	7	4	6	0	7	7	0	7	0	
9/5-9/11	7	7	7	4	6	0	7	7	0	7	0	
9/12-9/18	7	7	0	4	6	0	7	7	1	0	0	
9/19-9/25	7	7	5	4	6	0	7	7	1	0	0	
9/26-10/2	7	7	6	4	6	0	7	7	0	0	0	
10/3-10/9	7	7	5	3	6	0	7	5	1	0	0	
10/10-10/16	7	7	7	4	6	0	7	7	0	0	0	
10/17-10/23	7	7	7	4	7	0	0	6	0	0	0	
10/24-10/30	7	7	7	4	6	0	7	0	0	0	0	
Total	82	84	64	44	73	2	77	74	3	21	0	524
English	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Homework	Library	Family time	TV time	PC game	Free time	Others	Frequency of use of English during 12-week period was 280.
8/8-8/14	0	7	7	0	0	0	0	7	7	7	0	
8/15-8/21	0	7	7	0	0	0	7	7	7	7	0	
8/22-8/28	7	7	7	0	0	0	7	1	5	6	0	
8/29-9/4	7	7	7	0	0	0	0	3	3	7	0	
9/5-9/11	7	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	0	
9/12-9/18	0	2	7	0	1	0	1	3	3	7	0	
9/19-9/25	1	1	7	0	0	0	0	3	3	7	0	
9/26-10/2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	
10/3-10/9	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	
10/10-10/16	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	
10/17-10/23	1	1	7	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	
10/24-10/30	3	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	
Total	29	43	63	0	1	0	15	35	46	48	0	280

activities at home. In Sunday Chinese school Hua read aloud from the current chapter in the textbook. My home observations took place in late summer, when school was about to begin; so for read-aloud time Mei used a book called 西遊記 [*Journey to The West*], a birthday gift to Hua from a friend of hers. The book contained Pinyin along with the Chinese characters to help Hua read aloud. Hua had learned Pinyin when he was in the third-level Chinese class. When I observed, he read Chapter 2, which he had practiced so that he was able to read aloud slowly by himself without stopping. If he had difficulty with any phrases, he tried to sound them two or three times and was eventually successful. Mei was patient and let Hua the review portions by himself. In the page and a half shown in Figure 36, he was unable to sound out two words, so Mei said them aloud and Hua repeated after her; then Mei explained what they meant to impress upon him the link between the sound and his understanding of the words.



Figure 36. Hua's read aloud from 西遊記 [*Journey to the West*].

For new portions of read-aloud sentences, Mei read aloud short sentences with appropriate pauses for Hua to repeat after her. If he did not repeat them correctly, she read the sentences aloud again for him to practice two or three times. Then she chose



new phrases and explained the meaning or the usage of the phrases and taught him for 30 minutes. At the time of my observation, Hua had some difficulty focusing on his task because not only did he want to relax a little but his younger sister also came to ask help from their mother. Mei encouraged him to maintain focus on what he doing until he was finished.

**Parental direct assistance with English homework.** For the development of Hua's English language and literacy, Mei positioned herself in an auxiliary role. She checked the materials Hua brought home from school in order to gauge his progress and to determine whether he needed help. If he did not do well, she found ways or resources to assist him; for example, if he did not do well on a worksheet, Mei asked him to go over the worksheet one more time to make sure he totally understood the content. In Grade 4, his progress in social studies was not as good as his other subjects, so Mei took him to the library to borrow books on related topics from social studies textbooks. These books were nonfiction, which he rarely chose on his own. Mei tried to encourage him to read more nonfiction books. If he was not interested in reading them, she suggested that he read his favorite books for a half-hour first and then nonfiction afterward. She also told him that reading social studies might be fun. Sometime, Mei browsed the textbook and the books from library; after Hua read the book, she asked him questions to stimulate his understanding of the material or helped him go back to the book to find an answer if he did not know. For example, when studying the states in the US, Mei asked Hua questions about Ohio or Pennsylvania to guide him through the books.

### Case 5: Yu and Chris's Immigrant Chinese Middle-Class Family

Four people constituted the Chen family: Mr. Chen (father), Yu (mother), an older brother (son), and Chris (son). Mr. Chen and Yu were born in China; he was a student, and she was a housewife raising their first son. After Mr. Chen earned his Ph.D., the Chen family immigrated to the United States as the result of a work opportunity; and they remained there permanently for work and for their children's education. At the time of this writing, Mr. Chen was employed as a material scientist; and Yu was a chemist in a laboratory. Both worked full time. Table 19 shows the Chen family's background:

Table 19

#### *The Chen Family*

Family member	Reason in USA	Years In USA	Language spoken at home	Other spoken languages	Education level	Current occupation
Mr. Chen (Father)	Work, Education	11	Mandarin	English	Ph D (USA)	Material scientist
Yu (Mother)	Family	11	Mandarin Fuzhou dialect	English	Bachelor's degree (China)	Chemist
Older brother (Son, age 17)	Family	11	Mandarin	English	High school (USA)	Student
Chris (Son, age 7)	Family	7	Mandarin English	English	Elementary school (USA)	Student

They relocated to Ohio in 2009 because of Mr. Chen's job. They searched for a good school district, asking Chinese church friends who had also come from China. Friends recommended a few good school districts for them to evaluate as they searched for their future home. After Mr. Chen and Yu discussed the quality of the schools and

the distance to their work places, they decided on a school system with a good reputation and purchased a home in an upscale community in the district. Yu had worked for years even after Chris was born. They found a Chinese family whose parents were in the US for a long visit, and the elders were willing to take care of Chris for a year. After Chris's caregivers returned to China, Mr. Chen and Yu found an American family to provide daycare until he went to preschool at age 3. At home Yu was the primary caregiver for their sons because she usually came home from work earlier than Mr. Chen. When he returned home after work, he helped with the care of their two sons so Yu could do housework and prepare meals. Mr. Chen played basketball with his sons and chess with Chris, who after lessons was almost as good as his father.

### **Chinese and English Social Environment in the United States**

The Chinese social environment for the Chen family involved interaction with their Chinese Church group. A sincere Christian family, they attended Chinese church every Sunday. Mr. Chen took part in the service, and Yu led a food preparation group that organized the meals for Sunday lunch and important events held at the Chinese church. At church, Chris interacted with Chinese children in English with adults in both Mandarin Chinese and English. On Fridays a family Bible study group met at their house from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. A few families gathered, Chris played violin, and Hua (see Case 4) played the piano while the group sang hymns. Then adults conducted their Bible study while Yu led the children to the basement for children's Bible study, which she had designed with two purposes in mind: She hoped every child would learn public speaking and worship God through Bible study. She planned for the children to conduct their own

session while she assisted them. The two children who were leaders for the week opened with a discussion on any topic they chose, followed by Psalms read aloud and discussed. At the end of the class, leaders concluded with an evaluation of how well the children had done during the session, noting when they spoke too softly or were not sitting up straight. In addition, Chris attended Sunday Chinese lessons for nearly two years, continuing what he had begun in another state. Mr. Chen regularly called family members in China, and Chris was encouraged to speak with his grandparents or relatives; Yu translated and helped him in switching from English to Mandarin Chinese to communicate what he intended to say to his family in China.

With regard to the Chen family's English social environment, Mr. Chen worked for a U.S. company, and Yu worked in a local laboratory. Chris had many opportunities to practice oral literacy in English with childcare providers, public school educators, and extracurricular coaches or teachers; his social interaction occurred in mainstream society. First, Chris was cared for and educated by an American family from the time he was one year old until the time of this writing. He had been involved with English speakers to the extent that English seemed like his native language. After Chris was born, Mr. Chen and Yu spoke Mandarin Chinese to him, but he used English to respond to his parents most of the time. Second, Chris played with neighborhood children almost every day. Third, Yu enrolled him in after-school programs to give him opportunities for social interaction with age mates; in addition, he interacted during chess, violin, and Taekwondo lessons with U.S. teachers and coaches. Overall, Mr. Chen and Yu were thoroughly invested in Chris' physical growth, talents, social skills, and his English language and literacy.

### **Parent's Experiences**

**Parenting.** I asked Yu whether she thought her parenting style was authoritarian, authoritative, or permissive. She responded that Chris was still young; hence, she believed she was flexible, depending on the situation. Yu demanded that Chris finish his schoolwork on time, but she let Chris manage his own extracurricular activities; for example, she registered him in community programs so he could investigate his own talents and interests. He pursued art, chess, soccer, basketball, and taekwondo. Chris enjoyed all his classes, but he particularly enjoyed chess and did well. He had won enough chess games to accumulate 500 points, which encouraged him to keep on practicing and competing with others. Comparing herself with other Chinese parents she and her husband knew, she thought she was authoritative and less strict than they were. For example, if neighbors invited Chris to play outside, it was fine with her even if he had homework. She let Chris play first and finish homework later. Yu admired Amy Chua, the so-called tiger mother, for the way she had raised her children; but Yu did not think Chua's methods would work with her children because the style of child rearing was too demanding.

**Parent's language experiences.** Yu's early experiences with Mandarin Chinese language and literacy did not leave a deep impression on her. In her generation in China, students focused on learning without much help from parents or after-school programs. Students merely followed what the teacher taught and finished homework to fulfill requirements; they attended classes, completed homework, and prepared for tests. The socioeconomic status of most of the families in her school was low during her school

years. She found writing Chinese characters difficult, yet because her teacher clearly demonstrated on the blackboard the order of strokes for each Chinese character for students to copy, follow, and practice, she eventually mastered them. Her parents checked her homework occasionally. She worked as chemist, performing hands-on skills that required little Mandarin Chinese.

During Yu's youth in China, many Chinese English teachers originally taught Russian; later they switched to English when it was in demand. She said very few English teachers were native speakers, perhaps one or two in the entire university; and they taught graduate classes. In her experience with English language and literacy through middle, high school, and university, English teachers heavily emphasized vocabulary and grammar for written literacy and written examinations. Her English teachers had heavy accents, so she felt she, too, spoke with a heavy accent; thus, Chinese students could earn good TOEFL or GRE scores but had a hard time communicating with their English-speaking classmates at the university.

Yu evaluated her English language and literacy ability, stating that after more than 10 years of practicing English in the US, she thought her listening, speaking, reading, and writing were fluent; but she could improve, especially in speaking and writing. Yu shared her English learning experience in the US: During her commute to work, she always listened to the radio to enhance her listening ability. At lunch, Yu shared what she heard on the radio with her American colleagues, improving her oral communication skills through discussion with them. For example, she learned about local events and how Americans celebrated them from her colleagues' explanation or discussion; doing so

helped her understand authentic local or American living and culture and advance her English language and literacy knowledge through daily conversation. At home, she watched news or movies on television. She also spent time reading with her children. She said that her children's English ability improved and that they could discuss definitions of English words. Sometimes, her children taught her how to pronounce English words; when Chris shared what he had learned with Yu, she learned from him, too.

### **Parent's Beliefs**

**Parental expectations for Chris's academic achievement.** When asked about her parental expectations for Chris's academic achievement, Yu said:

I have high hopes for my sons; we want them to be high achievers. Because Chris is still just a second grader, we have not talked about his future. The very least Chris should do now is to follow the school curriculum, finishing homework on time and fulfilling his teachers' requirements. If he is working according to his ability, I hope he will read more and achieve at an above-average level the class. He is aware that I want him to enter a good school in the future, and he knows that the only way to enroll in a top university in the US is to work hard.

Second graders at Chris's school did not receive letter grades; instead Yu received only teachers' comments about his academic performance, indicating his strengths at school.

**The value parent placed on Mandarin Chinese or English or both.** Yu stated:

We value both Mandarin Chinese and English. Otherwise, we would not send him to Sunday Chinese school. We are Chinese, and we want our children to

explore Chinese culture and to learn Mandarin Chinese because it is our mother tongue. Many Americans learn Mandarin Chinese now, too. It is impossible to say where our children will eventually find jobs, maybe in China. But my sons will not be able to learn Mandarin Chinese like Chinese students exploring authentic resources and language environment in learning Mandarin Chinese in their home country. At present we can only promote their learning Mandarin Chinese as a foundation for their future. When they are older, they may return to China and learn Mandarin Chinese for a whole summer. At any rate, now English is first, and Mandarin Chinese second for sure.

They tried their best to provide opportunities for him to explore and use Mandarin Chinese for as long as possible. During the interviews Yu shared two comments that confirmed her dedication to Chris' learning English first and Mandarin Chinese second.

First, she said:

From my work experiences I realize how important reading and English language and literacy are to my family. Compared to American colleagues, I was not able to speak in English about what I did; thus, I earned less than my colleagues even though I did more work than they did.

Yu's friends told her that children's proficiency with Mandarin Chinese depended on the parents; children's Mandarin Chinese language and literacy ability varied depending on how much and how long parents insisted on promoting their children's language skills. Later, the children of friends attended universities, and their parents shared how important English language and literacy ability are to students.



Second, Yu told the story of a Chinese American girl who immigrated to the US when she was in elementary school:

This girl is a student at MIT. Both her Mandarin Chinese and English language and literacy are excellent. She earned perfect scores on the SAT, and she had a high GPA. She returned home for the holidays, and she told her mother that she found out her English was still not as good as that of her American classmates. She was nervous and had difficulty handling her schoolwork. She had to work so hard, reading a lot and spending more time studying, but her classmates seemed to read faster and write more quickly than she did.

Her mother shared her daughter's experience to let other mothers know that Chinese parents were not able to scaffold their children's English learning as American parents could; she advised them not to focus on Mandarin Chinese too much but to attend to their children's English language and literacy development.

Chris had asked to leave Sunday Chinese School a few months before I interviewed his mother, so Yu taught him Mandarin Chinese at home. To describe his Mandarin Chinese learning schedule, she repeated an old Chinese saying—"Three days fishing, five days drying nets"—indicating that keeping up with Mandarin Chinese was a challenging task for both of Yu and Chris.

**Parent's role in scaffolding Chris's language-learning experiences.** Yu discussed her role in scaffolding Chris's experiences with language learning:

I shared my learning experience with Mandarin Chinese with Chris and offered my strategy in writing Chinese characters. I told him that I used to copy new

Chinese characters 10 times each, and through practice I learned the meanings of the words and how to write them. I suggested Chris do the same in order to learn and master Mandarin Chinese vocabulary. He disliked writing 10 times, so he wrote each word only two or three times, but he was able to learn this way, albeit slowly. I memorized English vocabulary when I learned English in China, but I found it was not a good way for him to learn English vocabulary in the US.

Overall, my strategy in Mandarin Chinese seems to work for him, but the strategy definitely did not work for him in English because the environment and the way his teacher taught differed from what I did.

The major difference between the language environments of Yu and her son is that for Chris the environment in which he could use Mandarin Chinese was limited. Mr. Chen and Yu did not force him to practice Mandarin Chinese even though he attended almost two years of Sunday Chinese school. Yu found that girls performed better than boys in Chinese classes, yet she believed that parents strongly determined their children's success: If parents emphasized learning Chinese, their children learned better; otherwise the opposite occurred. For nearly eight hours each day, five days per week, Chris learned and used English even though English was not his dominant language. Mr. Chen and Yu tried to speak Mandarin Chinese to Chris, but he responded in English; sometimes, they reminded him to speak Mandarin Chinese to them. Yu also encouraged him to speak Mandarin Chinese with his grandparents, but because of his limited ability he usually spoke with them only a short time. In addition, when they visited China once every two years for three or four weeks, he became really comfortable speaking Mandarin Chinese

with their relatives in China, but once they returned to the US, Chris gradually shifted back to speaking English.

### **Home Literacy Environment**

**Time management.** Table 20 shows how the Chen family spent their time after school and work in a typical week for Chris. Both Mr. Chen and Yu were full-time employees, busy year round. The schedule shows that his parents hoped Chris had a happy childhood, playing with similar aged children because his older brother was 10 years older than him. After Chris arrived home by bus around 4 p.m., he usually relaxed and ate a snack. His neighborhood friends asked him to come out to play almost daily. As a second grader, he had little homework, maybe two to three times per week. Yu encouraged Chris to play with his friends in the neighborhood, letting him play first and do homework later, before or after dinner. Two or three times per week his parents also gave him extra mathematics questions, which were harder than what the teacher taught, so he could practice and master numeracy skills. He practiced his violin three to four times per week for 30 to 40 minutes each. After dinner, the whole family liked to take a walk in their neighborhood. Mr. Chen, Yu, and Chris also went to taekwondo together once or twice a week. Chris liked to play chess with his father when they had time. For Chinese homework, Yu scaffolded Chris in order to finish his homework. Friday was Bible study night. Chris also read books by himself. They went to bed around 9:30 p.m. because they rose early for work and school. On Saturdays they spent family time together and on Sundays attended Chinese church, Chinese lessons, and violin lessons. They took a winter vacation each year like other Americans. During winter 2011 they

Table 20

*Out-of-School Parental Involvement and Investment: Chris's Typical Week*

Date/Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Time	Saturday	Sunday	
School bus arrived home 3:45 p.m.  Lessons, free time, PC game time vary from 45–60 minutes,  Bedtime around 9:30 p.m.	Snack, free time, outdoor play, or TV time					9:00 a.m.           9:30 p.m.	Breakfast	Breakfast	
	English homework						Chinese homework	Sunday church service and Sunday school 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	
	Mathematics practice or Chinese homework						Free, PC game, TV time	Lunch at church 12:00–1:30 p.m.	
	Meal time						Lunch	Chinese lesson 1:30–2:30 p.m.	
	Violin practice						Family time	Violin lesson	
	Free time	Taekwondo	Free time	Taekwondo	Bible study night		Meal time	Visit friends, library, family time or free time	
	English reading							Family or Free time	
	Chess practice with Mr. Chen								

went on a cruise and visited Disney World on the way home; in winter 2012, they traveled to China and visited their families there because Mr. Chen's father was ill.

**Space design.** Bedrooms for the whole family were located upstairs at the Chen family home, and the basement was finished as a children's play area. On the first floor the Chen family interacted with one another in the dining room, living room, office, kitchen, and game room. Two desks were located near the kitchen and living room. On one desk was a computer (see Figure 37) on which Yu encouraged Chris to practice writing; she explained that he wrote in a notebook regularly in school, so she wanted him to enhance his writing skills as well as practice typing skills and learning how to use Microsoft word processing technology. Sometimes, he performed Internet searches through Google for his English homework, using it primarily for definitions of vocabulary words. Chris played computer games with Yu's permission. Before he attended chess lessons, he used to play chess games or mathematics game online as well as some other games his friends recommended or he found interesting. Another desk with three chairs was located beside a large bookshelf in the corner of living room, where Chris did his English homework, extra mathematics workbook practice, or Chinese homework (see Figure 38) with Yu or Mr. Chen when he needed assistance. Chris liked to sit on the sofa to watch TV, read, or draw his favorite cartoon characters in his sketchbook.

**Home atmosphere.** Yu and her husband spent most of their off hours taking care of their children's needs and teaching them by working with them. Their children were the center of family life. Mr. Chen and Yu demonstrated to their children the way they



*Figure 37.* Desk with computer.



*Figure 38.* Desk for homework.

shared family duties, their role as parents, and their lives as Christians. Yu took care of housework, prepared meals for the family, and made sure the children behaved and did their school work. Mr. Chen supported the family and spent time with their children. Both Mr. Chen and Yu hoped the whole family would live as Christians, so they promoted close family relationships by spending time together daily, playing chess, exercising, or reading the Bible. Mr. Chen and Yu showed that they valued education by supporting their children in their academic pursuits, assisting them when they needed help. Even though Chris was only a 7-year-old boy, they treated him as a mature child, letting him manage his schoolwork and encouraging him to help Yu with household chores.

**Literacy resources.** The Mandarin Chinese literacy resources (see Figure 39) Yu purchased included Chinese books, CDs containing bedtime stories, and educational DVDs from China for learning Mandarin Chinese and mathematics. Yu displayed

Chris's drawings from art class on the kitchen cabinet doors and a Chinese poster with basic Chinese characters (see Figure 40) on the wall across from the dining table at his



Figure 39. Mandarin Chinese books



Figure 40. Chinese characters poster.

and English workbooks.

eye level. For English literacy resources, the family drew from two main sources: They visited the library regularly and borrowed one or two bagsful of books each time, and they bought boxes of used books at library sales. After Chris finished reading them, Yu donated the purchased books back to library or to other organizations because she did not like to keep books at home for long periods of time. Chris's teachers gave students some *National Geographic* magazines to take home at the end of the school term, and Yu bought sets of age-appropriate basic skills or mathematics workbooks for Chris to work on during summer vacation. She rarely bought new books because Chris read books borrowed from the school library or public library. Yu let Chris use the computer for educational and leisure purposes. He used Microsoft Word, searched the Internet,

watched YouTube, and played games on the computer. They had Xbox and TV without cable.

### **Informal Literacy Practices**

**Features and interaction.** Yu was aware of the importance of reading, so she began reading English picture books to Chris as bedtime stories when he was 8 months old. Later, when she found that his eyes focused on the pictures in the books, she read to him more regularly. When he was around a year old, he sometimes fixated on a picture book and would not let go of it. Yu tried to read to him daily after he showed interest in books. Young Chris enjoyed certain books so much that he wanted to hear them over and over again every day. Yu remembered she was so tired at times that she skipped a few pages, but Chris, who knew parts of the story were missing, said, "No, no"; so she had to go back to read the missing pages and finish reading the whole story to satisfy him. Yu chose the books to read to Chris until he was 3 years old; at that point he borrowed whatever books he liked. Chris went to full-day preschool around age three, and the teacher also read to them regularly. After he listened and looked at the pictures or words in books, he was so familiar with the story that he knew them in his mind even though he did not know every word in the books. He picked up some of the most frequently used words, such as *I* and *me*. After years of reading to Chris, mother and both sons took turns reading the books together. At first, Yu and her elder son read the long phrases, and Chris read the short or repeated phrases; then they read phrases of equal length. Sometimes, Mr. Chen also joined their reading sessions. Chris started to read books by himself around age four and half. After he learned to read independently, he still



occasionally asked Yu to read with him. Yu joked to Chris once, “We worked hard to read to you until you fell asleep. In the future, if we cannot sleep, it will be your turn to read to us until we fall asleep.”

So that the Chen children could acquire Mandarin Chinese oral literacy, Yu and Mr. Chen scaffolded their oral skills by speaking Mandarin Chinese to them daily. They also facilitated their speaking the language by providing opportunities involving the Chinese community, friends, or family in China via telephone; they also visited China once every two years. Yu did not promote Mandarin Chinese written literacy at home until Chris went to Chinese school to learn Mandarin Chinese at age 5. Yu assisted Chris in reading aloud his chapter from the textbook, helped him with his Chinese homework, and reminded him to practice vocabulary or phrases by copying them independently.

**Frequency and types of Chinese–English language use.** This section contains findings from the Weekly Schedule Checklist (Appendix H) for the Chen family’s 11 weeks of home literacy activities. Yu was initially unaware that she needed to mark the checklist, so the first week on the schedule checklist was left blank. Because I did not count the first week, a total of 11 weeks were counted for the Chen family.

Extracurricular lessons Chris attended included lessons in violin, taekwondo, Chinese, and chess. When Chris played with friends, they rode their scooters or bicycles around the neighborhood.

The activity findings (see Table 21) provide an overall picture of the Chen family’s home literacy practices, in particular frequency and types of literacy activities and other activities as well as parent and child’s Chinese or English language use at home

or in social community. When Chris spoke English, Yu marked speaking activities in the English section. Speaking activities in Chinese occurred most often during weekends when Chris spoke with his Chinese classmates in the Sunday Chinese classroom. Chris's reading activities in Chinese focused on his Mandarin Chinese textbook. Writing activities in Chinese constituted any writing Chris did in Mandarin Chinese. Homework activities in Chinese were exemplified by Chris's engagement in his Chinese homework. Checks marks in the blocks for PC games indicated that he played Chinese games on the PC; TV time in Chinese indicated that he watched Chinese cartoon series. The same principles applied to English use.

The findings from Table 21 show that the Chen family provided opportunities for Chris to listen, speak, read, and write in English more frequently than in Chinese. English reading received the most attention followed by writing because Yu encouraged Chris and he also enjoyed working on his English reading and writing. The total of reading activities and writing activities in English compared to Mandarin Chinese indicated that Chris had more opportunities for reading and writing in English than in Mandarin Chinese. The tendency toward more English homework than Chinese homework may indicate more opportunities and resources for Chris in the English environment than in the Chinese environment. In the Chen family the frequency of academic literacy activities, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and homework, was greater than nonacademic activities, such as TV time, PC game time, and free time in both English and Chinese. During family time, they took walks, played basketball and

Table 21

*Frequency and Duration of Chinese–English Language Use: Chen Family*

Chinese	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Homework	Library	Family time	TV time	PC game	Free time	Other	
8/8–8/14												
8/15–8/21	0	0	0	3	5	0	7	0	0	0	0	
8/22–8/28	0	4	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	
8/29–9/4	0	4	2	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	
9/5–9/11	0	3	5	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	
9/12–9/18	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	
9/19–9/25	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	
9/26–10/2	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	
10/3–10/9	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
10/10–10/16	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	
10/17–10/23	0	3	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	
10/24–10/30	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Total	0	32	14	7	8	0	18	6	3	0	0	88
English	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Homework	Library	Family time	TV time	PC game	Free time	Other	
8/8–8/14												
8/15–8/21	6	6	6	0	0	1	0	6	6	0	0	
8/22–8/28	0	6	3	3	2	1	2	3	3	0	0	
8/29–9/4	0	2	5	2	3	1	0	3	3	0	0	
9/5–9/11	0	0	1	5	3	1	0	6	0	3	0	
9/12–9/18	0	0	6	5	4	1	2	1	3	0	0	
9/19–9/25	0	0	6	6	2	1	4	1	1	0	0	
9/26–10/2	0	6	6	5	4	1	2	2	2	0	0	
10/3–10/9	0	6	6	4	4	1	4	3	2	0	0	
10/10–10/16	0	5	5	3	5	0	2	2	1	0	0	
10/17–10/23	0	0	5	6	3	0	3	2	1	0	0	
10/24–10/30	0	0	6	5	3	1	3	2	1	0	0	
Total	6	31	55	44	33	9	22	31	23	3	0	257

Frequency of use of Mandarin Chinese over 11 weeks was 88.

Frequency of use of English over 11 weeks was 257.

chess and engaged in taekwondo. TV time and PC game time for Chris were limited to 30 to 40 minutes each time. Overall, the Chen family put most effort into academic literacy activities, especially in English.

### Formal Literacy Practices

**Parental direct assistance with English homework.** By supporting Chris in academic learning, Yu paid attention to his homework every day, read his take-home materials to understand what he learned or what he needed to do to complete his homework, and assisted him in finishing his homework on time. Chris was in the second grade, an important time for developing reading and writing. His teacher provided many opportunities for students to acquire vocabulary and written literacy; therefore, Chris worked on his spelling list for weekly tests and practiced writing skills by writing short paragraphs regularly. Yu motivated Chris to study his spelling lists (see Figure 41), a few words each day. She also encouraged him to memorize and understand the



Figure 41. Chris's spelling list.

definitions of these words. When Chris finished his spelling list, Yu dictated the list to him so he always earned high scores on his spelling tests. For writing assignments, she helped him follow the format the teacher provided to start writing independently; if he had questions, she discussed them with him. She suggested Chris write as much as he could, and then they discussed all his questions at once. At first, he had trouble choosing words to express what he meant, so Yu taught him how to find definitions online; soon he took the initiative to search online independently. After Chris practiced some writing, he was able to complete his writing homework by himself. Yu still checked his writing for spelling and asked him to share with her what he wrote. She always praised his work (see Figure 42) and encouraged Chris to read and write by teaching him to use the



*Figure 42.* Sample of Chris's writing homework.

computer to type stories for his creative writing. He typed two stories during the second semester of his first grade year by himself (see Figure 43).

### A Pig Eats Pie

Once upon a time, there was a pig named Bobby who loved pie (and he hated broccoli). Bobby loved pie so much that he begged to his mom that he could have it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner everyday. His mom did not like that. In fact she did not like it at all.

One day, for lunch, Bobby was eating *pie*, for desert he asked his mom for pie. His Mom got so angry. She said, "I hate this! Go to your room! I can't take this!" Then Bobby went to his room. When he was in his room, his mom had a plan. When his mom called "you can come down now"! She gave Bobby a *pie*. Then Bobby ate it. Bobby said "yuck! Ewe! Broccoli flavored pie! Then his mom told him "have you learned your lesson yet"? Then Bobby said " yes. I have". And they lived happily ever after.

The End

### The Green Dragon

One day, a boy named Kurt went on an adventure. His mom said they were going on vacation by old Non-exploded the volcano. And they did. On the way, Kurt's dad told them about a green dragon who lives there. Kurt was **not** afraid. In fact, dragons were his favorite things. When they were there, they got all of their stuff out, played some games, and it was like that for three days. On the fourth day, they went hiking on old non-exploded. Then, they saw a green blur. Then it shot down in front of them. Kurt, his dad and his mom ran down the old volcano. But the green dragon flew down too. **AAAAH!** They screamed. But the green dragon followed them. But much to their surprise, it roasted their hot dogs. But just a little too much. Kurt decided to name it Dan.

Figure 43. Chris's two typed stories.

**Parental direct teaching in Mandarin Chinese.** At Sunday Chinese school the teachers chose a set of teaching materials that emphasized reading to learn Mandarin Chinese, not Pinyin to learn to read. The teachers did not teach Pinyin to students beginning to learn Mandarin Chinese. They believed that through lots of reading students eventually would learn the vocabulary and the meaning of the content. The teachers provided many reading opportunities by teaching small new portions and continued reviewing old content: Classes were only one hour per week, and students easily forgot what they learned during the week, especially if parents did not reinforce what their children had learned. Sunday Chinese school was closed during the summer vacation, but for homework they had one summer book containing reading and exercise questions

for parents and students to work on. Yu tried to assist Chris with reading his textbook aloud and working on exercise a few times per week during the summer. For reading aloud Chris read the content to his mother, and when he had difficulty, she spoke the words for him to practice reading aloud again. If Chris did not know the meaning of some vocabulary, Yu wrote its meaning in English above the Chinese characters (see Figure 44) so he could remember and speak the words until he read fluently before they worked on the next section. Then Chris wrote a few exercise questions with Yu's assistance if needed after reading aloud each time.

**Parental direct teaching in mathematics.** Yu had one set of Chinese picture books for Chris to learn composition and decomposition of number 5. Before Yu actually gave extra mathematics questions to Chris to practice almost every day for 15 minutes, she read this set of Chinese picture books (see Figure 45) to him to inspire his interest in mathematics.



Figure 44. Yu's written translation of key words.



Figure 45. The number 5.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

People migrate from their countries of origin to new ones for reasons including economics, education, marriage, politics, and safety. Many immigrants face additional challenges, such as adopting new social lives, new cultures, new languages, and new environments in new countries. New language barriers present immediate challenges to arriving immigrants. Following years of emigration from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China to the United States, Mandarin Chinese has become the third most widely spoken mother tongue in the United States after English and Spanish (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). An understanding of the development of Chinese–English biliteracy in immigrant Chinese families is, therefore, a matter of considerable interest; yet the development of Chinese–English biliteracy has garnered little attention in educational research compared to English–Spanish biliteracy in the USA (G. Li, 2006a). Many countries have implemented bilingual education based on multiculturalism because maintenance of children’s native-language ability preserves their ethnic culture (Bayley et al., 1996; Cho, 2000; Guardado, 2002; L. L. Liu et al., 2009; G.-Q. Liu & Bianco, 2007; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Yang, 2007) and also facilitates second-language learning (Cummins 1991, 1992; Liang & Mohan, 2003; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Because parents are their children’s first teachers and because home environment plays a critical role (G. Li, 2006a; D. Zhang & Koda, 2011) in children’s academic competence,



studying immigrant Chinese parents' involvement and investment in home literacy practices to foster their children's Chinese–English biliteracy is important.

The purpose of this study was to provide a detailed description of Chinese families' involvement and investment in their children's acquisition of Chinese–English biliteracy. Specifically, this study was designed to understand the nature of selected Chinese parents' language learning experiences, beliefs, and home literacy practices in support of their children's acquisition of biliteracy. The findings reveal insights and literacy strategies for other families who face the challenges of biliteracy acquisition and are simultaneously potentially informative for educators as they partner with parents to assist in the development of children's biliteracy at home and in the school to gain the best outcomes for the children.

This chapter contains research findings and implications that emerged from a thematic analysis of data gleaned from five cases; the findings resulted in a model of parental involvement and investment in supporting their children's acquisition of Chinese–English biliteracy (see Figure 46). As shown in the model and in Chapter 4, key elements emerged concerning parents' roles in support of children's acquisition of biliteracy (Chinese–English); these include beliefs, values, and experiences as well as strategies for literacy (formal, informal, and environment). Examination of the model shows that these elements interrelate and are part of one organic system for these immigrant families as denoted by bidirectional arrows showing movement both ways between elements and the research topic. This level of findings and beginning analysis entailed dissecting intricate systems of beliefs and experiences resulting in the model;

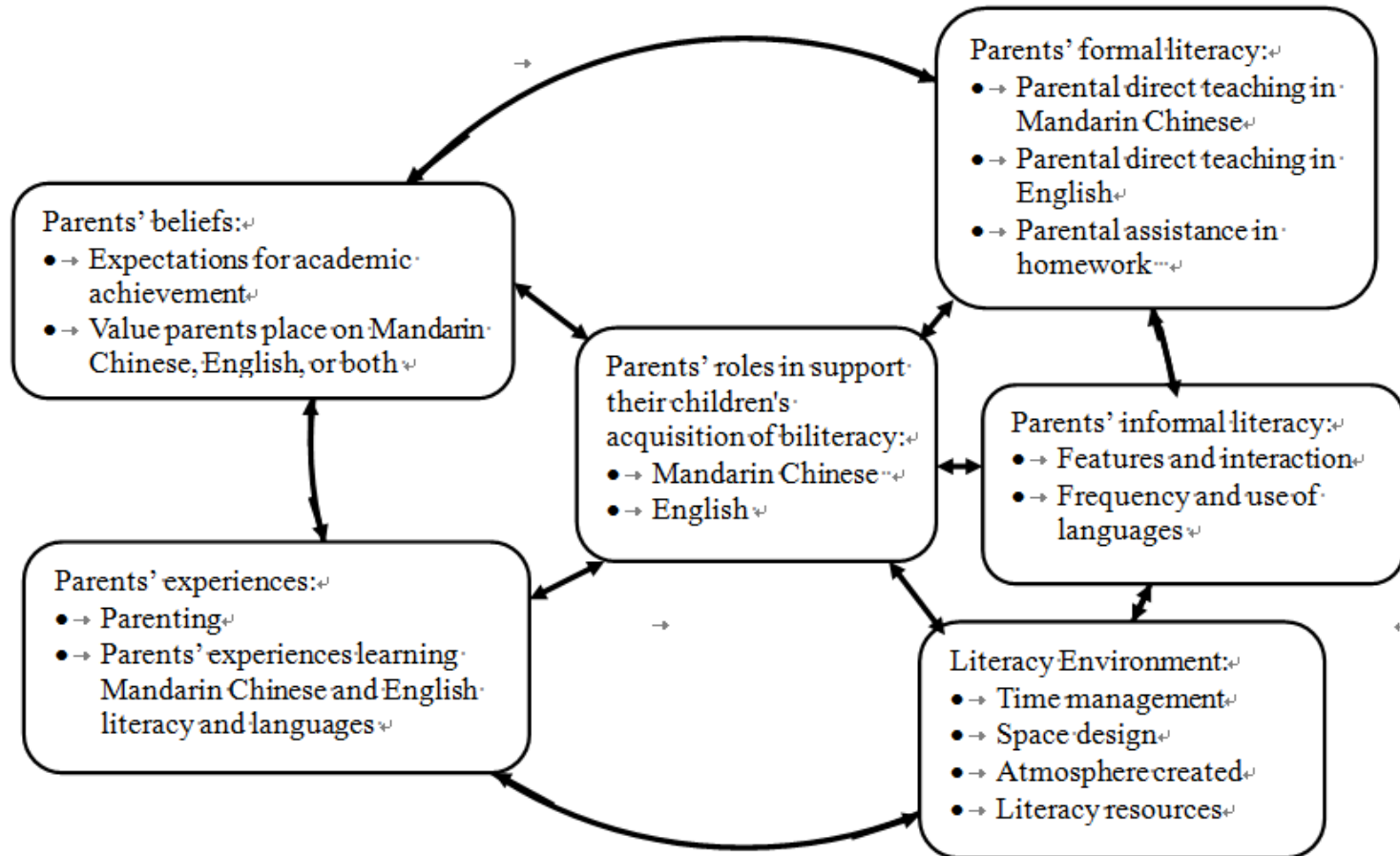


Figure 46. Model of parental involvement and investment in supporting children's acquisition of Chinese-English biliteracy.

however, in sharing the next level of findings, these systems were rejoined. The initial findings involving the five cases and the particulars of the model yielded the following findings:

1. Parenting styles among Chinese immigrant parents explain their strategies.
2. Parents have unique perspectives on the value of Mandarin Chinese or English or both
3. Chinese families living in the US practice home-based involvement to promote children's learning in school.
4. Parents' languages experiences impact efforts to enhance children's acquisition of biliteracy.
5. Social environment has more impact on the development of children's biliteracy than physical environment.
6. Diverse strategies implemented in informal and formal literacy practices are useful in predicting children's oral ability in Mandarin.
7. Dynamic relationship between beliefs and practices shapes the different roles parents play in Mandarin Chinese and English informal and formal literacy practices.

The chapter concludes with implications of the research.

### **Discussion of a Model for Understanding Immigrant Biliteracy**

#### **Parenting Styles Among Chinese Immigrant Parents Explain Their Strategies**

Parental expectations and involvement affect parenting practices that are positively associated with children's academic achievement. This finding is based on

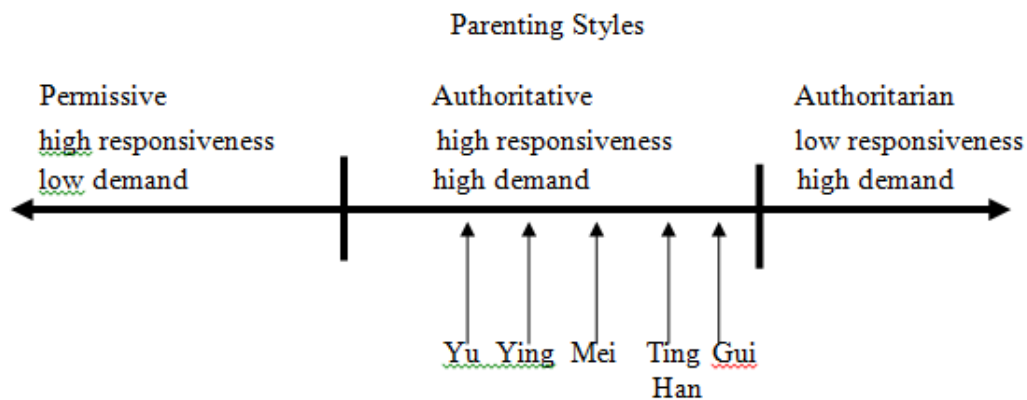
two aspects of Chinese immigrant parents' expectations for and involvement in their children's accomplishments. First, all participating parents highly valued education: Four families expressed high expectations and were willing to be highly involved in their children's education. Second, two parents wanted their children to become good people who would gradually assume their own personal responsibilities. This finding also supports extant research (Fan, 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001) on parental expectations regarding the child's ability to achieve academically. Reflective of the Vygotskian historical cultural framework, Chinese families have and articulate high expectations and aspirations for the education of their children. Because of the strong influence of Confucianism on Chinese family values, these expectations and aspirations are passed from generation to generation and reveal Chinese families' desire for a better life, including a life lived in a foreign country.

Baumrind's (1967, 1971) three types of parenting styles—authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive—each with two facets of parental responsiveness and demand informed this study.

1. Authoritarian parents exhibit low responsiveness to the child's needs and high demand; they attempt high levels of control over the child and expect absolute obedience from the child without explanation.
2. Authoritative parents exhibit both high responsiveness and high demand. They direct the child's activities with flexible and clear standards, encourage verbal communication with the child, and provide high levels of parental warmth and support.

3. Permissive parents exhibit high responsiveness and low demand. They allow the child to regulate his or her activities as they wish without requiring mature behavior; they provide abundant warmth and freedom.

Baumrind's (1967, 1971) work has been useful to educational researchers (Chao, 1994; Huang & Prochner, 2004; Kang & Moore, 2011), who have found that parenting styles affect children's academic achievement. While considering Baumrind's work in terms of the parent participants, I found that they all appeared to exhibit the "authoritative" parenting style; however, the positions within that style varied as illustrated in Figure 47.



*Figure 47.* Degree of difference in authoritative parenting styles.

This study stands in contrast to the research of Ang and Goh (2006) and Leung, Lau, and Lam (1998), who asserted that Chinese parenting styles resemble the authoritarian style most closely. Furthermore, Chao and Tseng (2002) found beneficial effects in authoritative parenting, a style practiced among families of European descent but not among families of Chinese descent.

Perhaps this study, which included Chinese immigrant parents as opposed to Chinese nonimmigrant parents, shows a melding of cultures and modification of styles. Ogbu (1981) indicated that most parents raise their children based on their cultural experience and personal beliefs. The five families in the current study self-assessed as authoritative, and the data verified their self-assessment. As shown in Figure 47, they imparted clear standards for their children's conduct in a nonintrusive or restrictive manner and monitored that conduct. Qualitative differences emerged in their parenting styles within the domains; thus, I placed them in different positions on the parenting continuum regarding biliteracy acquisition. I offer that these five families negotiate their role in supporting their children's bilingualism but do so in a bicultural world, which influences parenting style. I further argue that of all the domains, parental expectations appear to have the greatest influence on parenting styles.

The findings in this study demonstrate that parents with high expectations for and high involvement and high investment in their children's education, promote children's educational outcomes. All parent participants expressed a strong concern for their children's academic achievement, especially building language and literacy abilities as the prerequisite for a solid foundation in all subjects. Five of six parents stated "high expectations" for their children's academic achievement. Han, Ting, Gui, and Mei said they expect their children's report cards to contain straight As.

Han said, "I hope Debbie's report card has all As according to her effort and ability. We will help her as much as she needs and we can."

Ting said,

I have high expectation for Debbie because I invest time and am very involved in her learning. But now, we try to reflect our expectations and try to be flexible in setting goals for her according to her learning pace, naturally.

Gui indicated that her son is a straight A student and that her expectations for her daughter include straight As, too.

Mei said, “All As. I set a goal for him to forge ahead, and he can do it.”

Yu said, “I have high hopes for my sons; we want them to be high achievers.”

Ying was the only one who did not directly state high expectation, but she said, “The higher grade is better, but I will not push them.”

All participating parents highly valued education, and they invested to varying degrees to support their children’s educational outcomes. Parents were aware of their responsibilities and that they played crucial and active roles in guiding and scaffolding their children’s learning for their education. They directly or strongly implied high expectation for their children’s academic achievement. They hoped their children would gradually build abilities for their future academic advancement and career choices. Expectations for their children’s discipline and academic achievement directed toward future success determine the degree of difference in parenting styles in the authoritative parenting style.

First, Ting and Han, Gui, and Mei expressed high expectations for their children’s academic achievement indicated by their desire for straight As. Yu hoped Chris achieved above most of his classmates. Ying hoped Bob earned at least a B average, yet Bob

earned straight As during the time of my data collection. Second, they all value children's exploration of more academic resources and engagement in practices that build a foundation for their academic achievement. This is evidenced in Zhou's (1997) conclusion that Chinese parents typically try to do their best to involve themselves and invest in their children because of the belief that hard work, not simply intelligence, accomplishes or contributes to academic success. Gui valued academic resources, believing "the more the better." Ting and Han believed putting effort in the right content areas and managing time wisely would enhance Li's academic performance in the long run. Mei knew Hua well and believed that pushing him further would help him realize his potential. Ying believed regular extra practice would enhance Bob's reading comprehension. Yu encouraged Chris to read and study academic materials more. Third, two parents believed that to be well educated is to become good people. They tried to do their best to make an effort to fulfill their children's educational needs and believed their children were capable of doing better if parents encouraged and pushed them forward.

In the school-academics model Epstein (1995) defined *parenting* in terms of parents who fulfill their children's basic needs and also supervise, discipline, and support children as students in the home environment. With regard to their children's welfare all participant parents were both highly responsive and highly demanding. They directed the children's activities with clear standards, encouraged verbal communication with the child, and provided high levels of parental warmth and support; thus, their self-identified authoritative style was triangulated by the data.



This study reveals that all participant parents are very committed and apply strategies in raising and educating their children. For example, in supporting their children's acquisition of biliteracy, they all strategically prepared the home literacy environment and designed and implemented literacy practices. Each parent developed his or her own unique way to set up the home literacy environment and sustain both involvement and investment in the support of the children's education and acquisition of biliteracy. Resembling Baumrind's work, five participant families' different positions in Figure 47 were compared and determined by their beliefs and practices with regard to their children's acquisition of biliteracy during the time of this study. Ting and Han and also Gui not only highly valued their children's education but also strongly committed themselves to their children's learning. Ting and Han assisted Li with English homework every day and taught Mandarin Chinese lesson nearly every day. Gui assisted Debbie with her homework in English or other subjects, and she always helped Debbie review her Mandarin Chinese homework during the week before she attended Saturday Chinese School. Mei put all her effort into Hua's Mandarin Chinese lessons and let Hua independently manage his study and English in school. Ying's disadvantages forced her to support her children's English learning only passively. Because Chris was a second-grade student and did well in the school, Yu checked his homework every day and assisted him if he needed. Among four immigrant parents, Yu had low expectation and practices in support Chris's Mandarin Chinese acquisition. Yu's son quit Chinese school right after data collection was completed, and Ying's son quit Chinese school shortly thereafter. Gui failed to speak Mandarin with Debbie at home, but she still strongly

insisted that Debbie remain in Chinese school until Grade 9. In other word, parents' persistent beliefs about various on-going strategies result in positive association with their children's educational outcomes and achievement of biliteracy.

### **Parents Have Unique Perspectives on the Value of Mandarin Chinese or English or Both**

All participant parents valued both Mandarin Chinese and English regardless of their English literacy level or socioeconomic status. If, however, they could choose only one language, Chinese immigrant parents emphasized English over Chinese; and Chinese nonimmigrant parents emphasized Mandarin Chinese over English. Chinese parents' positive attitudes toward the Mandarin Chinese and English languages and associated cultures and supportive interaction with their children have been documented (Lao, 2004; X. Li, 1999). This positive attitude and the strong value placed on children's bilingual education also emerged in the findings of this study. Findings demonstrate that participant parents positively value both Mandarin Chinese and English. Ruiz (1984) identified three types of attitudes toward understanding language: language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource. Language ability represents a window that one can open to explore the world. English is currently the privileged global language, and Mandarin Chinese has the potential to become a global language (Wu, 2007). The following reasons indicate that all participant parents believe languages to be valuable resources (He & Xiao, 2008; J. S. Lee & Shin, 2008) that could be advantageous to their children in their pursuit of academic advancement and future careers.

The reasons parents support their children's learning of Mandarin Chinese are (a) cultural, that is, for the sake of Chinese identity, cultural values, and ethics; (b) family bonds, and (c) social connection with the Mandarin-speaking community.

All parents identified as Chinese and their native language as Mandarin Chinese. They viewed the language as a valuable asset through which their children could learn Chinese cultural values and ethics to understand their ancestry and identity. Culturally, Chinese people value close family relationships, and the Mandarin Chinese language is a major means of increasing family bonds, reinforcing family ties, and contributing to family cohesion. All parents in this study were first-generation Chinese immigrants, who strongly emphasized their relationship to their family and friends in Taiwan or China. Thus, their children needed to be able to speak Mandarin with relatives and friends when the parents regularly called or Skyped with their extended families. Children who greet their grandparents (who speak only Mandarin) in Mandarin are considered polite, but if they do not know the Mandarin language well, parents face a challenge in trying to socialize their children (Wong-Fillmore, 2000). Some of the families returned to Taiwan or China to visit once every year or every other year. When the families were in Taiwan or China, it was necessary and natural to speak Chinese to communicate with one another; parents stated that after the children started to use Mandarin Chinese, it was time for them to return to America. In addition, they acknowledged the instrumental value of learning Mandarin Chinese to secure future upward mobility as well as the current ability to communicate.

The reasons parents supported their children's learning English are (a) for academic achievement and social success and (b) for connection with the American and global society. All participant parents emphasized that the acquisition of English language and literacy was assumed to be essential for immigrant families' integration into American society (D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Except for one family who was to return to live in China, the rest of the immigrant parent participants strongly recognized the immediate need and impact of mastering English language and literacy because the acquisition of English is essential for the integration of children into American society. Parents deemed English language and literacy skills important for them in order to participate fully in public life (i.e., academics and school; social interactions with friends, teachers, and others; future careers). In the face of globalization, languages like Mandarin Chinese and English will become not only personal resources but also societal and national resources (Brecht & Ingold, 1998).

Two gaps occurred between parents' expectations and actual literacy practices: first, parents' expectations of what their children's level of Chinese competence entailed; and second, even though four immigrant parents valued English over Mandarin Chinese, in reality, only Mei put full effort into teaching Hua Mandarin Chinese literacy almost every day. She adamantly stated that if she did not teach her son Mandarin Chinese or support his learning, he would have no one else to turn to and no place to go for support. A previous study by Lao (2004) revealed the factor underlying the gap between parents' expectations and actual literacy practices: Parents' expectations of their children's level of Mandarin Chinese competence varied depending on the parents' own proficiency with

the language and the number of accessible Chinese literacy resources at home. Lao's finding is at odds with the findings of this study. In my study, parents' expectations of their children's level of Mandarin Chinese competency varied depending on time available to learn and to use Mandarin Chinese and the age of the child. All participant parents tried to provide materials as well as emotional and financial support while incorporating Mandarin Chinese and English languages into their daily lives and environment; they intended to raise their children as Chinese American who would be well-versed in both languages and cultures. Young children typically remain close with their parents and participate in community activities; for example, when they are young or in public elementary school, their academic tasks are not as challenging as they are in middle or high school. Thus, they have enough free time on weekends to attend Chinese school and socialize and engage in opportunities to learn and to use Mandarin Chinese. Once they grow up and move up the educational ladder in American schools, they need to exert greater effort in their academic tasks; at the same time Mandarin Chinese becomes increasingly challenging and difficult to learn. In particular, the Mandarin Chinese orthographic system may hinder children's motivation to learn Chinese language and acquire literacy (G. Li, 2006a).

When responding to what they thought was the most important language, four immigrant parents favored English over Mandarin Chinese because they lived in the English-dominant and larger U.S. society. Yu and Gui stated when their children were young, their friends who had older children shared their experiences and reminded them to teach the children Mandarin Chinese when they were young because once they entered

public school, they learned to read and write in the mainstream school language (English) with steadily increasing proficiency; and proficiency in heritage languages (Mandarin Chinese) would steadily decline or gradually undergo replacement by English. This points was made abundantly clear in the literature (Fishman, 1991, 2001; MacNamara, 1966; Oller & Eilers, 2002; Wong-Fillmore, 2000). All parents in this study spoke and taught their children Mandarin Chinese. Gui encouraged Debbie to attend Saturday Chinese school until Grade 9, the highest grade offered. Yu and Gui faced a dilemma regarding what language they should speak to their children. In particular, Gui felt a strong conflict because she wanted to speak Mandarin with her children at home, but often Debbie indicated that she did not understand, so Gui would unwillingly had to speak English to her. Influenced by Yu's work experience and the experiences of her friend's daughter at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (described in Chapter 4), Chris told Yu that he did not want to attend Sunday Chinese School; and Yu agreed even though Chris was only in the second grade at the time of this study. Yu explained that in the long run, mastering English well was more important than mastering Mandarin Chinese. Yu further explained that when Chris needed to learn or was interested in learning Mandarin Chinese, he could travel during summer vacations to study in China, where he might have better results than studying once a week for two hours in Sunday Chinese School. Mei promoted Hua's learning Mandarin Chinese as long as possible or at least until he built a solid foundation of Mandarin Chinese language and literacy. Ying had limited English ability, so Mandarin was the dominant language spoken at home. Ting

and Han admitted after they returned to live in China that Li's Mandarin would doubtless be better than her English.

### **Chinese Families Living in the US Practice Home-Based Involvement to Promote Children's Learning in School**

Many research studies have shown that parental involvement in children's education positively affects educational outcomes (Barnard, 2004; Epstein, 1995, 2001; Green et al., 2007; Ho, 2003; Jeynes, 2005; X. Li, 1999; Park, 2006; Ordonez-Jasis & Ortiz, 2006; Quan & Dolmage, 2006). Barnard (2004) studied parent involvement in elementary school and children's educational attainment; the components of parent involvement include parents' educational aspirations for their children, parent-child communication, the amount of home structure provided by parents, and parent participation in school activities. Researchers have identified two dimensions of parental involvement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001): school- and home-based involvement. Some research studies revealed that students' low academic outcomes are correlated to parents' low involvement in their children's schooling; results indicate that parents did not value or support their children's educational success (Compton-Lilly, 2000; Purcell-Gates, 1996) or that they believed teachers were more responsible than parents for teaching children (Weigel et al., 2006a).

The foregoing findings differed from Ho's (2003) conclusion, which along with the current study, showed home-based involvement to be more popular than school-based involvement in the Asian context because Asian parents valued or supported their children's educational success or they believed teachers were more "professional" than

parents with regard to teaching their children. Research in home–school studies conducted in China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan revealed Asian parents prefer to invest additional resources and time to assure their children’s academic achievement than participating and intervening in school teaching. From an Asian cultural perspective, school and home have different functions; the school is responsible for developing children’s academic and social skills, and parents are responsible for supporting the school’s role and providing a healthy emotional environment. Asian teachers view parents as primary educators who enhance their children’s schooling at home, and parents respect school as the teachers’ domain (Ho, 2003). In addition, the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) (2004) identified limited English language and literacy ability, economic disadvantage, and racial–ethnic minority background as the barriers for parental involvement in their children’s schooling. By comparison all participant parents in this study engaged in home-based involvement more than in the school-based involvement.

Ting and Han described schools in China, where parents were unwelcome in the classroom. After they arrived in the United States, they found their new country different from China, so they tried to be involved in Li’s school. Ying had limited English language and literacy, so she hesitated to become involved in her children’s schools. Yu was a full-time employee, and time was a barrier to involvement; but she was free for a few months when she was between jobs and able to involve herself at the school. Gui and Mei tried to become involved in the school as much as they could as housewives. All parents in the study spoke of involvement in schools, indicating to their children that their



parents cared about their learning in school and that the children felt happy and perhaps proud when their parents were involved in school. For example, Gui went to Debbie's school to share Chinese New Year; she prepared cultural materials and brought her Chinese cooking pot to the classroom. She shared a festival story and taught Chinese words and even helped students make dumplings while Debbie served as her assistant. After returning home that day, Debbie shared with Gui that her classmates had enjoyed her visit; and Gui felt Debbie was confident and also recognized the value of the ability to speak Mandarin. Gui's hard work was rewarded by Debbie's smile and her positive attitude toward the Mandarin Chinese language and literacy.

### **Parents' Languages Experiences Impact Efforts to Enhance Children's Acquisition of Biliteracy**

Parents' own literacy experiences and their literacy beliefs greatly affect the way parents shape the literacy environment and literacy practices in their homes (Heath, 1983; Hsin, 2011; G. Li, 2006a; X. Li, 1999; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; C. Zhang et al., 1998). All participant parents acquired similar language learning strategies in both Mandarin Chinese and English from schools in China or Taiwan. They learned from teachers and the school environment that studying hard with much practice in writing and memorizing in order to finish homework were the preparations necessary to do well on tests and earn high grades. Naturally, they used their language learning strategies when they promoted the development of their children's biliteracy. During parents' scaffolding their children's literacy practices, Chinese participant parents incorporated their positive learning experiences or useful strategies into their children's learning and used their

negative experiences as a lesson to remind children not to repeat their mistakes. Han emphasized the important of language environment and language input. Ting loved studying and reading, so it was important to her that Li built her reading habit into a love of reading. Ying, Gui, and Mei expressed their negative experience about their English teachers; they mentioned the neglect of disadvantage students and teaching English as a subject, minimizing the important of language as a communication tool. These were the practices which they avoided. After they lived in America and explored American school culture, they tried to integrate both cultures and strategies in facilitate their children's education and the development of their biliteracy.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory supports the relationship between language learning and the environment as well as the way environment affects the acquisition and development of language. From the sociocultural perspective, the practices of literacy involve not only an ability to read and write a designated language but also the reading, writing, and speaking that are embedded in social practices and cultural contexts; in other words literacy is a set of social practices and a cultural tool (G. Li, 2002; H. Li & Rao, 2000). Furthermore, Lantolf (2002) addressed language teaching and learning as a mediated process and viewed a mediated process from three general perspectives: "social mediation by experts and peers, self-mediation, and artifact mediation" (p. 105). According to this study informal literacy practices that focus on social interaction between parent and child or peers relate to their use of Mandarin Chinese or English. Therefore, of the three mediations, only social mediation and artifact mediation related to their Mandarin Chinese or English use have been discussed.

**Social mediation by experts and peers.** The development of thought is determined by language and by the sociocultural experience of the child (Vygotsky, 1962). Central to Vygotsky's (1978) perspective on the interaction between learning and development is that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the zone of proximal development (ZPD), defined as "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" (p. 86). According to Vygotsky parents, teachers, or experienced peers serve as guides, supporting the actions of the novice during social interaction. In this study parents engaged their children in the ZPD through instructional conversations, scaffolding them into Mandarin Chinese or English learning at home. I found that an only child enjoyed more parent-child social interaction promoting her or his acquisition of biliteracy than a child with siblings whose parents exerted similar efforts.

**Peer mediation.** From parents' disclosure and my own observation, when their children interact with sister sibling at home or other Chinese peers in the Chinese community, peer-to-peer dialogue may have effects similar to those of instructional conversation between teachers and a learner in classroom. Beside Li's communicating with her Mandarin-speaking peers in Mandarin most of the time unless she was in her American classroom and Hua's speaking Mandarin with his younger sister and brother because they only knew Mandarin, Hua spoke English with his Chinese peers in elementary school because they were fluent in English. Bob, Debbie, and Chris spoke

English with their brother or sister as well as their Chinese peers.

**Artifact mediation.** The various literacy materials that parent provided as artifact mediation included CDs, computers, and tasks. CD mediation enhanced the development of participant children's Mandarin or English. Public libraries provided computer-mediated communication for English language learning that facilitated the development of the children's English.

### **Social Environment Has More Impact on the Development of Children's Biliteracy Than Physical Environment**

In this finding, I discovered individual and contextual factors surrounding home literacy practices, specifically parents' involvement and investment in promoting their children's acquisition of Chinese–English biliteracy. I partitioned parents' home literacy practices in two domains: (a) the physical environment, comprising a visible layout or print materials and defined as the home literacy environment, that is, the designed space in which parents plan and schedule activities, a home atmosphere created to motivate children's study and provide various literacy resources to foster the acquisition of biliteracy; and (b) the social environment, in which parent–child interactions or shared family activities occur and which comprises two components: informal literacy practices that parents create, nourishing informal literacy activities through parent–child interaction and formal literacy practices in which parents use direct teaching to assist children with homework, subject matter, and concepts. The findings indicate parents put considerable effort into preparing the physical environment and engaging in the social environment to benefit their children's education and acquisition of biliteracy. This study has further

revealed that the social environment and parental educational background have more impact on children's biliteracy development than the physical environment and socioeconomic status.

G. Li (2006a) concluded that home is a crucial environment for success or failure in achieving biliteracy, asserting that parents need to promote the use of the heritage language by employing a variety of strategies to ensure their bilingual children's continued development in reading and writing their first language at home. Parents' use of their first language in providing their children a rich linguistic environment is important (Snow, 1990). Many researchers have focused on the relationship between home literacy environment and children's literacy outcomes. Their findings revealed factors including parents' literacy beliefs; parents' literacy-related behaviors; parent-, peer-, or sibling-child reading; and families' literacy resources (Farver, Xu, Lonigan & Eppe, 2013; Shi, 2013; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006b). The child's environment includes physical surroundings and the people in those surroundings (Vygotsky, 1978).

My qualitative research findings are wider and deeper. I found four factors in the home literacy environment that fostered focal children's acquisition of Chinese-English biliteracy: (a) time management, (b) space design, (c) home atmosphere created to stimulate children's study, and (d) the availability and use of literacy resources, including multimedia, books, and other published materials for the children. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the sociocultural dimensions of learning and development, stating that these affect individuals' cognitive processes, including speech, language, thinking, and other

higher level functioning because they are continuously embedded in a social and cultural context.

All four factors demonstrate Chinese parents' high expectation for children education, endless parental involvement and investment, and the value of family cohesion. Time management schedules from each participant family were obtained and reviewed; all parents planned a regular daily child-centered routine to which the family adapted. Commonalities show that they all scheduled academic tasks first, then extracurricular activities, and finally, free time on weekends when they interacted with the Chinese community and attended weekend Chinese school. During summer and winter vacation, most indicated they traveled or visited family in Taiwan or China. Parents and children were jointly involved and worked together in most of the activities and social interaction with the Chinese community. Asian parents usually support their children's efforts by providing a home environment conducive to studying (Ho, 2003; G. Li, 2002; Okagaki, 2001; C. Zhang et al., 1998). No matter whether they lived in a large home or small apartment, all participant parents provided a space with desk, chair, and bookshelf for the child's own use. When the children returned home from school, they had space to put their schoolbags. They knew the areas were prepared for parent-child interactions during literacy practices, and for them to do their homework alone. But some children preferred their own comfortable space instead of a desk. For example, Debbie had her own design cozy reading corner, Bob liked to read while he was in the bathroom, and Hua liked to read in the family room with other family members nearby.

With regard to home atmosphere, Mei had large family that included three generations under one roof; the rest of the families comprised parents living with only their children. Regardless of socioeconomic status or education level, all participant parents tried to create home atmospheres that were warm, loving, and pleasant for studying. Parents modeled self-regulation to be good role models for their children to emulate. For example, if children were studying, parents did not play games or watch TV; instead they did chores or read or wrote.

Lao (2004) indicated the language environment at home is determined by the number of Chinese and English books, the frequency of parents reading Chinese storybooks to their children, and the time parents spent reading for pleasure. In the current study literacy resources for focal children's use included various and numerous books, magazines, CD, DVD, and some popular literacy games at participant families' homes. Three participant mothers—Gui, Ting, and Ying—loved to buy books; therefore, their houses were full of Chinese and English books. Mei and Yu used to buy books, but the majority of books in their homes at the time of this study were borrowed from the school or public library. Gui and Ting bought several Chinese and English books when their children were young, including those with CDs. Ying bought mostly Chinese books for her children and herself. Parents and children visited the public library regularly and visited book stores periodically, especially during the summer. As the children grew up, Gui as well as the other parents thought that the public library provided numerous and various English literacy materials that met their children's needs in the form of current books or grade-appropriate materials more so than the small number of books they could

buy. Regardless of the quantity of Chinese literacy materials at home, the Mandarin Chinese abilities of four immigrant children were insufficient to motivate them to actively and independently read Chinese book alone. All children relied on parent-child shared reading when they read Chinese books with their mothers.

Each participant parent had his or her own perception and unique way of accessing or using high-tech equipment, and they all recognized the advantage of incorporating high-tech into academic learning and acquisition of biliteracy, including a computer with Internet, TV set, iPhone, and iPad. They worried that too much equipment would, however, be a strong enticement and possibly a distraction to their young children. They thus limited or altogether eliminated their use at home to decrease the likelihood of problems. For example, they allowed the use of a computer with Internet access when homework required an Internet search. Gui and Ying shared their computer with their children, so they knew how long the children used it and which websites they visited. Mei and Yu each had one computer for family use, and they placed the computer in the open so that they could easily observe children's computer use. Yu encouraged Chris' use of the computer for typing practice and word processing to promote both computer and writing skills when he was in the second grade. Li was still in a lower grade, where access to the computer was unnecessary, so Ting and Han had no worries about its tempting their child.

All participant families had TV sets, but they were not willing to purchase cable, not because it might be expensive but because they did not want themselves or their children to become too interested in the numerous TV channels and enjoy spending too



many hours in front of the TV. For them, the television set could be played with DVD movies borrowed from the library, or the family could play Wii sports or games together on family night; thus the television was used as a tool. Parents permitted their children to use high-tech equipment under their supervision. For example, in addition to using the computer for Skype to communicate with family in China or Taiwan, sometimes Gui and Ying used the computer to stream a favorite Chinese channel or Chinese movies, enhancing their children's familiarity with Mandarin Chinese language, literacy, and culture. Before the children built up their ability to self-regulate, parents tried to teach them wise use of high-tech equipment for academic purpose.

Many research studies in recent years have shown how social media impact language and literacy learning in the schools and in colleges. Skype is one of the techniques, yet very few have studied how Skype has impacted immigrant bilingual children's acquisition of Chinese-English biliteracy at home. This study reveals that Skype, easy, convenient, and inexpensive, is a very powerful tool to create a language environment to support children's Mandarin Chinese speaking and listening abilities, also to assure Chinese family cohesion over long distance. Skype has become very important and a most popular tool, easy for grandparents to operate as long as they have a WiFi at home. Gui purchased and brought two iPads already loaded with the Skype app to Taiwan for her husband's parents and her parents to use to communicate with them and children while they were in the United States. Grandparents can see and hear them during the entire conversation, so if Gui wanted to talk to her parents about her children, she could move to her their activities area to show her parents what they were doing.

Children can also talk to grandparents, who can see them working with materials so the elders can understand what are they talking about. This study indicates that Skype is very useful and tool easily accessible to share children's Mandarin Chinese environment online with relatives in Taiwan or China. Such adult-child verbal interaction and the ability to see one another promote the language skills of children in real time, facilitating their Mandarin Chinese ability and further enhancing their willingness to communicate and speak Mandarin to their grandparents.

### **Diverse Strategies Implemented in Informal and Formal Literacy Practices Are Useful in Predicting Children's Oral Ability in Mandarin**

Research evidence has shown the positive association between parental involvement, especially home-based involvement, and children's school performance (Park, 2006); social support from the parent community has been shown to be significantly related only to at-home involvement (McKay et al., 2003). Sénéchal and LeFevre's (2002) five-year longitudinal study with native speakers of English dealt with early home literacy experiences. They classified two kinds of parental involvement at home: (a) informal literacy practices, including shared book reading to promote children's vocabulary growth; and (b) formal literacy practices, including teaching children the sounds and names associated with letters, relating to their later literacy development.

Hess and Holloway (1984) noted five areas of home environment associated with the development of children's literacy as follows:

1. Value placed on literacy: Parents motivate children's reading by reading

themselves or engaging children in reading at home.

2. Press for achievement: Parents express their expectations for children's academic achievement by scaffolding their children's reading, learning process, and initiatives toward achievement.
3. Availability and instrumental use of reading materials: Parents provide a rich literacy environment with accessible materials to stimulate children's reading habits.
4. Reading with children: parents spend time with their children, reading to them or listening to the children read to promote their literacy skills and build close parent-child relationships.
5. Opportunities for verbal interaction: Parent-child conversation and oral language activities contribute to children's later literacy achievement. (pp. 189-191)

Consistent with Hess and Holloway's study and further documenting the Chinese family context, the findings of the current study defined informal literacy practices as those practices that parents created and nourished through parent-child interaction in which they interacted socially with their children.

Learning begins on the very first day of a child's life, long before the child enrolls in school (Vygotsky, 1978). In fact, Vygotsky (1986) viewed language learning as a dialectal process between the child and family in their environment. Ting and Han, Ying, and Mei, who helped maintain their children's fluency in Mandarin, did not let their children respond to them in English; and they spoke Mandarin to Chinese people other

than their parents, supporting Dopke's (1992) findings. Vygotsky (1994) argued that "if no appropriate ideal [language] form can be found in the environment, i.e., without any interaction with the final form, then this proper form will fail to develop properly in the child" (p. 349). Gui and Yu did not regularly communicate with children in Mandarin at home. In discussing the diverse formal and informal literacy practices provided by participant parents to enhance their children's development of Mandarin oral literacy, the families fell into two groups. Parents' self-assessments in Tables 8, 11, 14, 18, and 21 provide an overall picture of the Chinese families' home literacy practices in terms of frequency and types of literacy activities and other activities as well as parents' and children's Chinese or English language use at home or in the social community.

According to my subjective impressions, the children of Ting and Han, Ying, and Mei spoke Mandarin well as a result of the high frequency and duration of communication between parents and children in Mandarin at home or in the Chinese community; by contrast, the children of Gui and Yu did not speak Mandarin Chinese well as a result of the high frequency and duration of communication between parents and children in English at home or in the American community.

The primary function of speech is to have social contact and to communicate. Children are able to learn through verbal interaction with adults, and that was true for all of the families, particularly in the one with not only parents but also grandparents in the home speaking Mandarin to the children daily. Notably, the difference between the two groups was not motivation because all participant parents indicated their desire for their children to be well balanced in Mandarin Chinese and English language and literacy.

Their language learning experience in Taiwan or China combined with American experiences influenced the types of strategies these parents designed. All participant parents vigorously engaged in various and flexible strategies to foster their children's biliteracy in Mandarin Chinese and English.

What particular strategy parents implemented does not seem to play an important role; instead parents' persistent beliefs into various on-going strategies seemed to be critically important. For example, because of demands at school in China, Ting and Han taught Li Mandarin Chinese lessons intensively and continued while they were in the United States. Mei strongly believed that if Chinese immigrant parents did not support their children's learning of Mandarin Chinese at home, the question of where else or from whom the children would be able to learn Mandarin Chinese arose; therefore, she planned a rigorous schedule for Hua to learn and practice Mandarin Chinese every day for several years. Ying wanted her children to communicate with her in Mandarin not only because of her own limited English capability but more importantly because she also wanted them to master Mandarin Chinese.

By contrast, Gui put most of her effort into her two children's biliteracy and educational success. She assisted with or checked Debbie's homework almost every day. Many opportunities occurred when she scaffolded Debbie's homework problems or the concepts that she had to explain in English because she wanted to make sure Debbie really understood the homework or concept. On the negative side, Debbie was aware of her mother's English capability; thus, she insisted that she speak only English to her mother, and this resulted in a decrease in Chinese oral practice at home. Gui admitted

she regretted that she did not pretend her English ability was poor in front of her children; in hindsight she thought if she had hidden her English, then her children would have had no choice but to speak only Chinese to her. Gui recalled many of her friends deliberated this point and chose differently; the outcome was that those children's Chinese oral language was better than Debbie's even though they were of a similar age and had studied Chinese for the same length of time. Yu's own experiences and her friends' experiences influenced her decision to permit Chris to choose the language he wanted to speak, which was English.

In this regard participant parents faced three common challenges. The first challenge occurred when they shared their own language learning strategies with their children and asked them to adopt the strategies; some simply did not work for their children. For example, Mei learned Chinese and English vocabulary by rote memory. In her estimation, the more people memorized, the more they knew and when they needed the words, they would know how to use them. By contrast Hua attended an American school, and he had his own way to learn vocabulary. Another example is that most of the parents (Gui, Mei, and Yu) had similar experiences regarding the solving of mathematical problems. Chinese parents typically teach their children the quickest way to the right answer, but their children told the parent participants that was not the way the teacher taught in school.

The second challenge resulted from the children's distaste for practicing Chinese writing. Not only was the Chinese system more difficult than the English writing system, but Chinese parents had also learned to write Chinese vocabulary by rote practice and

required their children to do the same. They demanded a great deal of practice until the forms were correctly written. All parents respected school requirements, but the children did not always accept the parents' strategies; and most parents seemed to accept these differences. The children were allowed to try out their own ways to learn as long as those strategies enhanced their school performance.

The third challenge the parents self-evaluated their English features and determined that writing is the weakest ability among reading, writing, speaking, and listening; they all noted that they wanted to improve this situation the most. They also thought that writing was the main challenge to their children's English ability, too; therefore, Ting and Han and Gui put considerable efforts into scaffolding children's school writing tasks. They decided to focus on the improvement of their children's writing before they faced more difficult school writing projects. The parents' own language experience shows that they knew years of learning were required to obtain even basic writing ability.

In 1984, Cummins described two thresholds: basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). BICS, a precursor to CALP, is the language level used in ordinary conversation. CALP requires a higher level of cognitive language ability in order to achieve competence in oral or written performance. Cummins pointed out that ESL students need two years or more of English practice to build BICS and four to 10 years of in-depth practice to acquire CALP in order to reach age- or grade-appropriate academic proficiency in English. Language learning

has no short cut; even when parents apply effective strategies to support their children, language learning still takes a long time as Cummins's findings suggested.

Four of the immigrant families lived in the United State for at least 11 years, most for 21 years. Gui, who lived in America for 21years, said:

To survive in American society, it is very important to learn English well and master it for upward social mobility. I am not worried if they are not in mathematics classes for the gifted. But I would if their English reading and writing would not allow placement in advanced classes. The higher the grade they are in, the more difficult their English will be; and in the long term, we will not be able to help them with their learning of English. Also they cannot improve their English ability in as a short time as they can in mathematics.

I believe this statement reflects her own difficulties with English, and she tried her best to protect her children from similar difficulties.

All parents in this study were first-generation Chinese immigrants, who tried to foster good English learning results for their children through active involvement in both Chinese and English social environments. With regard to their Chinese and English social environments in the United States, the families in this study seemed to have much more Chinese social interaction than English social interaction. Participant parents were socially isolated in American society; therefore, their progress in English was also limited. In addition to teaching strategies and motivation to learn, the most important key points for effective language learning are (a) intensive practice in the target language in the environment where that language is spoken and (b) intensive and extensive language



input for the learner. For young children, teachers and parents play important roles to support children's rigorous practice of English in America society and Mandarin Chinese at home or in the Chinese community. Teachers also provide intensive and extensive English language input for their students, and parents provide intensive and extensive Mandarin Chinese language input for their children.

**Dynamic Relationship Between Beliefs and Practices Shapes the Different Roles Parents Play in Mandarin Chinese and English Informal and Formal Literacy Practices**

Green et al. (2007) studied parental home-based involvement that focused on the individual child's learning-related activities, such as helping with homework, reviewing for a test, and monitoring the child's progress. Central to Vygotsky's (1978) perspective on the ZPD, the role of adults is to determine where they can provide appropriate challenges to meet or to raise children's current level of learning and development. Adults should supplement appropriately to make the best use of ZPD to build the strengths the children already have and increase development while staying within the ZPD and make the learning challenging but not too frustrating. Thus, the sociocultural theoretical framework gleaned from Vygotsky's work was demonstrated throughout this research and proved to be a successful framework for interpretation.

Figure 46 illustrated the domains of participant parents' beliefs and experiences, home literacy environment, informal literacy practices, and formal literacy practices intertwined in a dynamic process that shaped the roles Chinese immigrant parents played in supporting their children's acquisition of Chinese–English biliteracy. All participant

parents had a strong desire to promote their children's education and acquisition of biliteracy, affirming the traditional primary focus of Chinese parents on their children. In the five focal families, all of the mothers were the primary caregivers for their children at home. They were involved and invested considerable time, money, and energy to raise and educate their children. In formal literacy practices, parents played different roles in scaffolding their children in learning Mandarin Chinese as opposed to English. For Mandarin Chinese scaffolding, the parents felt more confident in and capable of teaching their children Mandarin Chinese because it was their native language. For English scaffolding, parents felt less confident and more limited in their ability to help their children learn English because English was their second language. The various strategies the Chinese parents implemented in Mandarin Chinese as opposed to English defined the roles they enacted. The findings of this study showed that Chinese immigrant parents engage in common practices regardless of what role they played; they tried to stimulate their children's interest in learning Mandarin Chinese and English by setting up a home literacy environment and providing informal literacy practices, such as reading to children, sharing reading with their children, joining children while reading independently, interacting socially with Chinese community groups or speakers of English to provide opportunities for their children to gain practice in oral and written language.

#### **Parents' Role as Mandarin Chinese Language Teacher or Language Tutor.**

Two roles that parents play in promoting their children's acquisition of Mandarin Chinese language and literacy are language teacher and language tutor. The primary difference in

the two roles is that the language teacher directly teaches their children Mandarin Chinese at home and the language tutor helps children with Chinese homework at home and supports them in competitive events held at Chinese school. Ting, Han, and Mei acted as language teacher, instructing their children in a manner similar to that of the school teacher with a curriculum and lesson plan to follow. Ting, Han, and Mei conducted Chinese lessons almost every day following plans in the textbook, covering the content of the lesson, such learning new vocabulary, constructing sentences, reading and explaining the story in the lesson, and concluding with exercises. Gui, Ying, Mei, and Yu's children attended Chinese language school; Gui and Ying's children attended the same Saturday Chinese school, and Mei and Yu's children attended same Sunday Chinese school. Gui, Ying, and Mei became teachers at their children's Chinese schools. Ying taught Bob for two years, and Mei taught in Hua's classroom for several years. Mei taught formal lessons in Hua's classroom on Sundays, and on the other days she followed the daily schedule to work on Hua's Mandarin Chinese lesson thoroughly. Gui, Ying, and Yu were language tutors for their children, helping them with their Chinese homework during weekends at home; by comparison, Yu was less involved than Gui and Ying. The roles parents played determined the degree of literacy input they provided for their children's learning and resulted in different levels of impact on the children's language and literacy ability.

**Parents' Role as English Language Tutor or Language Observer.** Parents played two types of roles in supporting their children's acquisition of English language and literacy: language tutor and language observer. The primary difference here is that a

language tutor helped with English homework regularly at home and the language observer simply watched the children's progress in English. If the children needed help with homework or other subjects, parents provided it or found resources so that the children could solve their problems on their own while they continued to observe until the child solved the problem. Ting and Han, Gui, and Yu were language tutors, who actively checked or scaffolded their children's English homework regularly. Mei and Ying were language observers with different stories. Hua was in the fifth grade at the time of my study, and Mei promoted his English learning for years at both school and home since he had been in preschool. In fourth grade, his English ability reached an advanced level among his classmates. At that time Mei had two young children, and Hua had asthma. She also took Hua to swimming at least three times a week; therefore, Mei, who was extremely busy, let Hua take responsibility for his own school work. She continued to observe carefully and kept abreast of his school performance by looking at his report card, providing help if he asked for it. Ying was a language observer with limited English ability, so she demonstrated her own unique way of enacting her role. She found outside sources to compensate for her lack of ability to help her children read English, but she was capable of helping on some activities, she actively assisted her children. In addition, Bob shared ideas for his project, and their parent-child hand project was so well done that the teacher displayed it in the classroom.

The findings of this study demonstrate two important facts that explain the mismatch between the value that parents place on language (favoring English over Mandarin Chinese) and the roles they play; they actively engaged in Mandarin Chinese as

language teachers and language tutors but served only as language tutors and language observers in English. First, for visiting scholars who returned to China like Ting and Han, Mandarin Chinese was a mandate and English was needed. For the other four immigrant families who lived in America, English was a mandate and Mandarin Chinese was needed. Second, Mandarin Chinese was the native language of all participant parents, and English was their second language; therefore, all parents felt confident and capable of involving themselves more actively in their children's Mandarin Chinese than English.

The better, more efficient way to promote children's biliteracy in Chinese and English is similar to the way first language acquisition occurs, that is, through interaction with family members in daily life in a natural home locale and in the Chinese community. English language and literacy development as first language acquisition also occurs in a natural and subconscious process through interaction with speakers of English in daily life in school and in America society. In addition, parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, and perceived English language proficiency make a difference.

In the current study, all participant parents had diverse backgrounds and tried their best to promote their children's acquisition of biliteracy in their own unique ways to overcome the constraints of their backgrounds. For example, Ying's family may be described as a low education and low income family by standard definitions, but she played excellent strong role in the lives of her children in many ways; and Bob did well with her help and achieved good grades. All participant parents acted in primary roles, actively engaging in their children's acquisition of Mandarin Chinese language and literacy, and they acted in secondary roles in their children's acquisition of English

language and literacy because Chinese immigrant parents believed children education rely on mutual responsible on parents and teachers, they respected school teachers and believed they were more professional than themselves and more capable of teaching their children English language and literacy. In addition, the school had more resources and peer groups with whom to interact socially in English, unlike the home milieu. This might be one of the reasons, especially true in parental school-based involvement in the English context, that parents' motivation to become involved decreased as the children's grade levels (Grades 1–6) increased.

### **Implications**

In light of the findings of this study, three major implications for Chinese immigrant family's home literacy practices and future research emerged—first for practitioners, such as immigrant families, school principals, administrators, curriculum designers, and teachers; second for educational personnel, such as teacher educators; and third for future researchers. Important characteristics of Chinese immigrant families are relevant for practitioners, teacher educators, and future researchers to understand parents' beliefs about the home literacy practices they use to support their children's acquisition of Chinese–English biliteracy and academic achievement. They are as follows:

1. Chinese immigrant families highly value education, especially for their children education success.
2. Two Chinese immigrant parents have a strong desire to become involved and invest considerable money, time, and energy to see to their children's health and psychological well-being and to assure that they are educated to become

“good people.” Children are the core of family life.

3. Chinese immigrant families favor home-based involvement over school-based involvement.

Knowing Chinese immigrant parents’ beliefs about literacy is crucial.

1. Most participant parents are trilingual (local dialect, Mandarin Chinese, and English) and biliterate (Mandarin Chinese and English).
2. Chinese immigrant parents value Chinese–English language and literacy, and they have reasons to expect their children to become biliterate.
3. The language experiences and the literacy beliefs of Chinese immigrant parents greatly affect the home literacy environment and the literacy strategies they design.
4. Chinese immigrant parents should be aware of the benefits of persistent verbal communication with family and extended family members because Chinese oral language practice through parent–child social communication is cost-free, and it also enhances close family relationships.

### **Implications for Practice**

**Other immigrant families.** The findings of this study could be helpful to other immigrant parents also in the process of promoting their children’s biliteracy. They should compare and consider the varied backgrounds and different language systems first. Then, parents could reflect upon their own beliefs, values, and their language experiences to determine what they want for their children. The home literacy environment and diverse literacy strategies may or may not work for each child: Much depends on whether

or not the immigrant family has thought carefully about selecting and applying what they think would work best for the maintenance of their children's heritage language and the development of their English language and literacy. Socializing with some other immigrant families is beneficial for sharing and supporting one another. An important tip is that success comes from persistent practice. In addition, this research is beneficial to immigrant families by illuminating generalities. Each family has unique parenting styles, and this research both supports and challenges *The Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (Chua, 2011) for its inquiry into the complex process of parents and their children's acquisition of biliteracy.

**School personnel.** The findings of this study again call attention to the urgent and strong need for a home-school connection and parent-teacher cooperation. School personnel, particularly school principals, administrators, classroom teachers, ESL teachers or Chinese teachers, and curriculum designers involved with young bilingual children, must be aware of the importance of a positive school environment in providing a context in which children can see their native language as a valuable resource worth using and learning. The findings of this study indicate that time and levels of English language fluency were the primary barriers to parental involvement. This study does not include teachers' perceptions of the difficulties they face when they invite all students' parents to become involved at school; future researchers may investigate those difficulties. I believe school principals and curriculum designers play critical roles in building bridges between teachers and parents for the purposes of communication and cooperation for the benefit of their children. School principals' and teachers'



understanding that parents' efforts to promote Mandarin Chinese literacy at home may not have same impact because school literacy instruction can serve as a starting point to attract parents, especially Chinese immigrant parents, to school-based involvement.

Because of some minority parents' ethnic or cultural backgrounds, they may not fully acknowledge the hidden curriculum in a school system; therefore, in this study all participant parents appreciated parent–teacher conferences. They asked teachers for information about school literacy resources and activities that they could use for practice at home to enhance their children's reading and writing to connect home–school literacy practices. Curriculum designers should consider the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of students in order to design a curriculum satisfying their needs as well as help them see their native language as a valuable resource worth using and learning. They could also determine the needs of students' parents. Chinese language schools generally offer classes until Grade 9; therefore, offering Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language course would be very helpful to students wishing to continue acquisition of Mandarin Chinese language and literacy. If schools have resources, major languages, such as Mandarin Chinese, could be offered as a foreign language in the middle and high school to benefit Chinese bilingual children and further encourage them to take Advanced Placement Chinese.

### **Implications for Teacher Education**

More attention to multilingual and multicultural students in the global village is needed in contemporary education. Teachers have many students with diverse backgrounds and special needs in their classrooms; it follows that teacher educators must

be aware of students of diverse backgrounds and prepare quality teachers to broaden their world outlook with open minds and willingness to encourage such students' academic learning. The following perspectives are important for teacher educators to take into account as they prepare prospective teachers. First, prospective teachers require basic understanding of the students they are going to work with and be prepared remain flexible with students' needs and their learning paths. Second, because prospective teachers must deal with immigrant families, they require knowledge about multicultural and language learning, especially second-language acquisition for their students with multilinguistic and multicultural backgrounds. Prospective teachers are strongly encouraged to enroll in courses related to the acquisition of a second language, multiculturalism, and bilingual education. Teacher preparation programs must prepare prospective teachers with required competences to work with bilinguals because lacking linguistic knowledge might result in ineffective curriculum for students' second language learning. Third, teacher education curriculum design must be reviewed periodically to evaluate field experiences and student teaching experiences to see that they provide ample opportunities for prospective teachers to observe, teach, and interact with children. Last but not least, teacher educators should emphasize the value and benefits of parental involvement and prepare prospective teachers not only to understand and communicate with their students but also to communicate well with their families, especially to engage in social interaction with immigrant parents.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study has laid the groundwork for further investigation into Chinese immigrant families' support of their children's biliteracy through home literacy practices, but further investigation surrounding this topic study will be beneficial. Findings from future studies could increase current understanding of the factors impacting the successful development of biliteracy. I suggest that future researchers carry out additional studies about immigrant families from nations other than China, investigating, for example, how parents with diverse languages and cultures promote their children's acquisition of their heritage language as well as English language and literacy in the United States and whether or not a gap that may exist in beliefs about literacy held by immigrant parents and their children may result in difficulty in developing biliteracy.

Future researchers may examine the manner in which Chinese immigrant parents pass on the value of "heritage language as a resource" to their children and parent-child collaboration to facilitate children's achievement of balanced bilingualism. Researchers studying language learning theory related to biliteracy development may inquire into the way Chinese children develop Chinese-English biliteracy by investigating first language acquisition at home and in the school. The different writing systems of the two languages also influence the development biliteracy in Chinese and English; thus, researchers may question how immigrant parents can overcome disadvantages in writing English in order to enhance their children's ability to write in English. Because parents cannot single-handedly support their children's educational performance and biliteracy, both parents

and teachers must collaborate to connect literacy experiences in both the home and the school. In addition, outside resources and networking typically engender well-balanced bilingualism; thus, researchers may examine how immigrant parents and teachers collaborate to scaffold children's biliteracy and education success. Conducting a longitudinal study to follow up on how focal children's biliteracy developed during their middle and high schools would be helpful. Findings from the future research studies recommended above would not only contribute to the literature but also provide suggestions related to family literacy program that could benefit many families who need such knowledge to support their children's education and language learning.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of this study are as follows:

1. One limitation concerns the time spent collecting data. The 12 weeks devoted to studying five participating Chinese families were limiting.
2. Lacking a random sampling and using only five participating Chinese families as well as the qualitative methodology limited the generalizability of results.
3. The researcher is also Chinese, so researcher interpretations of the study might be somewhat biased. To help avoid subjective influence, the researcher adopted multiple data resources and triangulation in order to confirm the findings (Duff, 2007; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 1988, 1998).

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
TIME LINE: WEEKS 1-12

APPENDIX A

Data Collection	8/7– 8/13	8/14– 8/20	8/21– 8/27	8/28– 9/3	9/4– 9/10	9/11– 9/17	9/18– 9/24	9/25– 10/1	10/2– 10/8	10/9– 10/15	10/16 – 10/22	10/23 – 10/29
Interviews	✓		✓		✓							✓
Home Visits & Informal Observations	✓		✓		✓			✓				✓
Weekly Schedule Checklist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parent Audio Recordings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Documents & Artifacts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Field Notes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

TIME LINE: Weeks 1–12

**APPENDIX B**

**PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS**





## APPENDIX B

### PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

Dear Parents,

I would like to introduce myself to you. My name is Shu Hui Lin, and I am a graduate student completing a doctoral dissertation at the Kent State University College of Education, Health, and Human Services. I am conducting research on Chinese parents' perspectives of children's biliteracy development and how parents-child actions will support their children's acquisition of biliteracy through home literacy practices in the home. The purpose of this study is to explore what Chinese parents do to provide a home environment and activities that foster biliteracy to support your child/children and to gain biliteracy.

I would like to invite you to take part in this project. If you decide to do this, with your permission, I will schedule home visits and informal observations approximately five times and conduct four interviews lasting or approximately 1.5 to 2 hours each, at an acceptable time to you over a 12-week consecutive span. I will use a digital voice recorder to tape our interview conversation. I will photograph your home literacy environment. In addition, you can decide to help me by using a digital camcorder to

record your family's home biliteracy activities and social interaction. This work will help me to understand parents' roles and home biliteracy practice and their influence on their child/children's learning of biliteracy, specifically how the first language is preserved during the process. The researcher will use digital voice recordings and camcorder files as raw data to analyze. The results of this study will be used for my dissertation as well as at scholarly conferences and in journal articles. All digital voice recorder and camcorder files will be stored in a locked office and will not be used for distribution.

No risks or discomforts are involved in this study. I will protect the identities of you and your family by using pseudonyms in any writing or discussion of this project. You and your family have total freedom in participating in this project, and no one will hold it against you if you decide not to do it; furthermore, you can stop any time. If you want to know more about this research project, please call me at 330-678-8608 or email: [slin3@kent.edu](mailto:slin3@kent.edu) or my advisor Dr. Lash, at 330-672-0628 or email: [mlash@kent.edu](mailto:mlash@kent.edu). You will get a copy of this consent form. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330.672.2704. You will get a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Shu Hui Lin, Ph. D. Candidate.

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### Consent Statement

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the above guidelines and understand what I will have to do and I can stop any time. I will take part in this project.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will allow my discussion with the researcher to be voice recorded.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will allow the researcher to take photos in our home environment.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will allow samples of my child/children's relevant literacy documents and artifacts to be photocopied or photographed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the results of this study may be used for the researcher's dissertation, scholarly articles, and conference presentations.

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM FOR ASSENT SCRIPT



APPENDIX C

PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM FOR ASSENT SCRIPT

Project Title: Home Literacy Practices: How Chinese Families Support Their Children's Biliteracy Acquisition

Hi, [child's name].

My name is Shu Hui Lin, and I am trying to learn more about how your parents help you learn how to read and write in English and Chinese. I'm curious what you do at home-how you talk, things you look at, activities, and things that you practice with pencil and paper that help you learn English and Chinese.

I would like to visit you and your parents in your home and you can show me anything that might help me understand how you learn English and Chinese. I will take some photographs of you and your parents and of places in your house where you study and of anything you want to share with me on learning English and Chinese. Your parents say it is all right for me to do this, but if you don't want to participate, just tell me and I will stop and just work with your parents. Do you have any questions for me?

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR FAMILY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR FAMILY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

基本資料 (Background):

父親 Father: 年齡 (Age): \_\_\_\_\_ 母國 (Home country):

學歷 (Education): \_\_\_\_ 高中 / 專科 \_\_\_\_ 學士 \_\_\_\_ 碩士 \_\_\_\_ 博士

職業 (Occupation):

居住美國年數 (Number of years residing in US):

移居美國的原因 (Reasons for migrate to US):

父親的母語 (Father's native language):

其他使用語言 (Other spoken languages):

母親 Mother: 年齡 (Age): \_\_\_\_\_ 母國 (Home country):

學歷 (Education): \_\_\_\_ 高中 / 專科 \_\_\_\_ 學士 \_\_\_\_ 碩士 \_\_\_\_ 博士

職業 (Occupation):

居住美國年數 (Number of years residing in US):

移居美國的原因 (Reasons for migrate to US):

母親的母語 (Mother's native language):

其他使用語言 (Other spoken languages):

子女 Child/Children

子女數 (Number of children):

Child 1:性別(Gender): \_\_\_\_\_ 年齡(Age):

Child 2:性別(Gender): \_\_\_\_\_ 年齡(Age):

Child 3:性別(Gender): \_\_\_\_\_ 年齡(Age):

子女的母語(Children's native language):

其他使用語言(Other spoken languages):



APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PARTICIPANT'S BELIEFS  
AND PERCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

## APPENDIX E

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PARTICIPANT'S BELIEFS AND PERCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING 訪談問題有關參與者的信念和語言學習的觀感

- Q1: Please try to recall and describe your learning Mandarin experiences at home, at school, or at work in your home country. 在您的原居住國家，請試著回想並描述您的中文學習經驗在家庭，學校或出社會工作時。
- Q2: Please try to recall and describe where you learned English. Please describe your English learning experiences at home, in school, or at work in your home country. 請試著回想並描述您在那裡開始您的英文學習。在您的原居住國家，請描述您的英文學習經驗在家庭，學校或出社會工作時。
- Q3: Please evaluate your language fluency in English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). 請自評您的英語語言能力在聽、說、讀、寫等方面的流利程度。
- Q4: Please try to recall and describe your learning English experiences at home, in school, at work, or living in U.S.A. 居住在美國後，請描述您的英文學習經驗在家庭，學校或出社會工作時
- Q5: What are your expectations for your child's or children's academic achievement? 您對您孩子的學業成就的期待為何？
- Q6: Please describe your involvement in your child's or children's academic learning. 請描述您對您孩子的學業學習方面的投入/參與。

- Q7: Are you directly teaching your child or children at home? Please describe this as it relates to his or her academic performance? 在家中，您會直接**教導**您的孩子嗎，請描述此**教導**有關於孩子的學業表現的部份？
- Q8: Please describe what kind of parenting styles you are using in raising your child or children (authoritarian, permissive, or authoritative). 請描述您認為您養育孩子是屬於什麼樣的教養方式 (如：專制，放任，或權威)。
- Q9: Please describe how your language learning experiences shape your role as parents. 請描述您的語言學習經驗如何塑造您當父母的角色。
- Q10: Do you read in Mandarin or English daily? Do you write in Mandarin or English daily? Do you read bedtime stories to your child or children daily? Do you have parent-child reading interaction regularly at home? When and who does or do your child or children speak to in Mandarin or English? 您每天閱讀中文或英文的資料? 您每天寫中文或英文的資料? 您(曾)每天讀睡前故事給您的孩子嗎? 在家時，您們經常有親子閱讀的互動嗎? **何時**和**跟誰**說話，您的孩子會說中文或英文?
- Q11: What are your beliefs and expectations on the values of Mandarin or English or both for your child's or children's language learning and why? 就孩子中文、英文的語言學習，您的信念和期待，對中文、英文或中英文兩者的價值觀為何，為什麼?

APPENDIX F  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL  
FOR PARTICIPANT'S MANDARIN CHINESE LITERACY PRACTICE

## APPENDIX F

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### FOR PARTICIPANT'S MANDARIN CHINESE LITERACY PRACTICES

訪談問題有關參與者的中文聽說讀寫的活動/實踐

- Q1: How many years of formal education in Mandarin have your child or children received? Please evaluate your child's or children's language fluency in Mandarin (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Which area is his or her strength and which area needs assistance? Why? 您的孩子接受過幾年的"中文"正式教育? 請評量您孩子的中文聽說讀寫的流利程度。中文聽說讀寫方面的強項為何，那方面需要幫助，為什麼?
- Q2: Please describe your home environment in detail, such as time management, space design, and the atmosphere created in your home that stimulate your child's or children's Mandarin literacy learning. 請詳細描述您們的家中環境，例如：時間安排、空間排列設計、氣氛營造等等來鼓勵您的孩子的中文聽說讀寫能力的學習。
- Q3: Please describe your home literacy resources in detail. Will these resources promote your child's or children's Mandarin literacy learning? Please tell me about it. 請詳細描述您們家中的聽說讀寫學習資源，這些資源有否促進您的孩子的中文聽說讀寫能力的學習，請您告訴我。
- Q4: Please describe what kind of Mandarin-related activities or practices your child or children usually do independently at home. 請描述在家中，您的孩子經常自己獨自做/練習跟中文有關的聽說讀寫的活動是那些。

- Q5: Please describe what kind of Mandarin-related activities or practices you usually do with your child or children at home. 請描述在家中，您和您的孩子一起經常做/練習跟中文有關的聽說讀寫的活動是那些。
- Q6: Are you directly teaching your child or children Mandarin literacy? Please tell me about it? 您是否會直接教導小孩的中文的聽說讀寫學習，請您告訴我。
- Q7: Please describe how you promote your child or children's Mandarin literacy (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) through the use of home literacy practices. 請描述在家中，您如何透過那些聽說讀寫的活動來促進/鼓勵您的孩子的中文的聽說讀寫能力養成。
- Q8: What are the challenges that you face in supporting your child's or children's Mandarin learning? How are you dealing with these challenges? 在支持/促進您的孩子的中文聽說讀寫能力養成的過程中所遇到的挑戰有那些? 您如何克服這些挑戰?

APPENDIX G  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL  
FOR PARTICIPANT'S ENGLISH LITERACY PRACTICES

## APPENDIX G

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### FOR PARTICIPANT'S ENGLISH LITERACY PRACTICES

訪談問題有關參與者的英文聽說讀寫的活動/實踐

- Q1: How many years of formal education in English have your child or children received? Please evaluate your child's or children's language fluency in English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Which area is his or her strength and which area needs assistance? Why? 您的孩子接受過幾年的”英文”正式教育? 請評量您孩子的英文聽說讀寫的流利程度。英文聽說讀寫方面的強項為何，那方面需要幫助，為什麼?
- Q2: Please describe your home environment in detail, such as time management, space design, and created atmosphere in your home that stimulate your child's or children's English literacy learning. 請詳細描述您們的家中環境，例如：時間安排、空間排列設計、氣氛營造等等來鼓勵您的孩子的英文聽說讀寫能力的學習。
- Q3: Please describe your home resources in detail. Will these resources promote your child's or children's English literacy learning? Please tell me about it. 請詳細描述您們家中的聽說讀寫學習資源，這些資源有否促進您的孩子的英文聽說讀寫能力的學習，請您告訴我。
- Q4: Please describe what kind of English-related activities or practices your child or children usually do independently at home? 請描述在家中，您的孩子經常自己獨自做/練習跟英文有關的聽說讀寫的活動是那些。



- Q5: Please describe what kind of English-related activities or practices you usually do with your child or children at home? 請描述在家中，您和您的孩子一起經常做/練習跟英文有關的聽說讀寫的活動是那些。
- Q6: Please describe how you promote your child's or children's English literacy (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) through the use of home literacy practices. 請描述在家中，您如何透過那些聽說讀寫的活動來促進/鼓勵您的孩子的英文的聽說讀寫能力養成。
- Q7: Are you directly teaching your child or children English literacy? Please tell me about it? 您是否會直接教導小孩的英文的聽說讀寫學習，請您告訴我。
- Q8: What are the challenges that you face in supporting your child's or children's English learning? How are you dealing with the challenges? 在支持/促進您的孩子的英文聽說讀寫能力養成的過程中所遇到的挑戰有那些? 您如何克服這些挑戰?
- Q9: Please describe the process of promoting your child's or children's Chinese-English biliteracy and how this involvement influences child's or children's multicultural awareness. 請描述在支持/促進您的孩子的中英文雙語的聽說讀寫能力養成的過程中，這參與過程有否影響您孩子的多元文化意識。
- Q10: During the process of promoting your child's or children's literacy, do you find the support or information you need from the external environment and from where or whom does it come? 在支持/促進您的孩子的語言聽說讀寫能力養成的過程中，從外在環境，那裡或誰是您可以獲得支持或資訊的對象或地方。

APPENDIX H

WEEKLY SCHEDULE CHECKLIST

## APPENDIX H

Weekly Schedule Checklist ✓ (C=Chinese, E=English)

Activity	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E
Listening														
Speaking														
Reading														
Writing														
Homework														
Library														
Family time														
TV time														
PC game														
Free time														
Others														
Lesson														
Piano														
Sport														
Camp														
Swimming														
Outdoor														
Others														

APPENDIX I  
SCHEDULE FOR HOME VISITS, INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS,  
AND INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX I

SCHEDULE FOR HOME VISITS, INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS, AND INTERVIEWS

Case 1: Han, Ting, and Li's family			
Date	Activity	Time	Location
8/11/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Formal introduction of this research study, Q&amp;A discussion between participants and researcher</li> <li>➤ Provide family's folder: Parents consent form, assent script consent form, four interview questions protocols, Weeks 1–3: Weekly Schedule Checklist, one digital recorder with battery, and 20 blank protectors with Post-It<sup>®</sup> notes</li> <li>➤ First interview on family background information and both parents' (father's and mother's) beliefs and perceptions of language learning</li> <li>➤ First home visit and informal observation of home literacy environment; mainly investigate study space design, atmosphere created, and literacy resources accessible</li> </ul>	2:00–6:00 p.m.	House
8/24/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Second interview on father–child Mandarin literacy practices</li> <li>➤ Second home visit and informal observation of home literacy environment; mainly investigate atmosphere created and various literacy resources</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files.</li> <li>➤ Collect Weeks 1–3: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Picture taking of environment, literacy resources, and documents and artifacts</li> </ul>	9:00–10:30 a.m.	House
8/25/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Second interview on mother–child Mandarin literacy practices</li> <li>➤ Second home visit and informal observations of home literacy environment; mainly investigate atmosphere created and various literacy resources</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 4–5: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	10:00–11:10 a.m.	House

9/7/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Third interview on father–child English literacy practices</li> <li>➤ Third home visit and informal observation of home literacy environment; mainly investigate how various literacy resources are used during the home literacy practice</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files</li> <li>➤ Collect and discuss Weeks 4–5: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect literacy documents and artifacts.</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 6–9: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	3:30–5:30 p.m.	House
9/9/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Third interview on mother–child English literacy practices</li> </ul>	8:30–10:30 a.m.	House
9/30/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fourth home visit and informal observation of home literacy environment; mainly investigate literacy resources accessible</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files</li> <li>➤ Collect and discuss Weeks 6–9: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect literacy documents and artifacts</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 10–12: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	9:00–10:30 a.m.	House
10/6/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files</li> <li>➤ Collect and discuss Weeks 10–12: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect literacy documents and artifacts</li> </ul>	6:00–6:45 p.m.	Home
10/31/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Informal conversation</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files</li> <li>➤ Collect literacy documents and artifacts.</li> </ul>	6:00–6:30 p.m.	Home

Case2: Ying and Bob's family			
Date	Activity	Time	Location
8/9/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Formal introduction of this research study, Q&amp;A discussion between participants and researcher</li> <li>➤ Provide family's folder: Parents consent form, Assent script consent form, Four Interview questions protocols, Weeks 1–3: Weekly Schedule Checklist, one digital recorder with battery, and 20 blank protectors with Post-It<sup>®</sup> notes</li> <li>➤ First interview on family background information and parent's (mother's) beliefs and language learning perceptions</li> <li>➤ First home visit and informal observation of home literacy environment; mainly investigate study space design, atmosphere created, and literacy resources accessible</li> </ul>	3:00–6:15 p.m.	House
8/23/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Second interview on parent–child Mandarin literacy practices</li> <li>➤ Second home visit and informal observation of home literacy environment; mainly investigate atmosphere created, and various literacy resources</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files</li> <li>➤ Collect Weeks 1–3: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Picture taking of environment, mainly investigate literacy resources, and documents and artifacts</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 4–5: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	6:00–8:25 p.m.	House
9/8/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Third interview on parent–child English literacy practices</li> <li>➤ Third home visit and informal observation of home literacy environment; mainly investigate various literacy resources</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files.</li> <li>➤ Collect Weeks 4–5: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 6–9: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	9:00–11:30 a.m.	House

9/11/2011	➤ Informal conversation with mother regarding recent family activities	6:30–7:00 p.m.	Children Learning Class
10/8/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fourth home visit and informal observation; mainly collect literacy documents and artifacts, discuss parent–child social interaction daily.</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 10–12: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect Weeks 6–9: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files</li> <li>➤ Picture taking of reading and writing samples and books</li> </ul>	7:00–8:45 p.m.	Home
10/22/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Informal conversation</li> <li>➤ Collect Weeks 10–12: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files</li> <li>➤ Picture taking of reading and writing samples and books</li> </ul>	6:30–7:30 p.m.	Children Learning Class

Case 3: Gui and Debbie's family			
Date	Activity	Time	Location
8/8/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Formal introduction of this research study, Q&amp;A discussion between participants and researcher.</li> <li>➤ Provide family's folder: Parents consent form, assent script consent form, four interview questions protocol, Weeks 1–3: Weekly Schedule Checklist, one digital recorder with battery, and 20 blank protector with Post-It® notes</li> <li>➤ First interview on family background information and parent's (mother) beliefs and language learning perceptions</li> <li>➤ First home visit and informal observation of home literacy environment; mainly investigate study space design, atmosphere created, and literacy resources accessible</li> </ul>	3:30–7:00 p.m.	House



8/28/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Second interview on parent–child Mandarin literacy practices</li> <li>➤ Second home visits and informal observations on home literacy environment; mainly investigate atmosphere created, and various literacy resources.</li> <li>➤ Collect Weeks 1–3: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Picture taking on environment, Mandarin literacy resources, and documents &amp; artifacts.</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 4–5: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	9:15 a.m.– 12:30 p.m.	House
9/11/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Third interview on parent–child English literacy practices</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 6–9: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	4:00– 6:30 p.m.	Children Learning Class
10/8/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Observation mother–daughter Mandarin home work interaction</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 10–12: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect Mandarin and English literacy resources and artifacts documents</li> </ul>	4:30– 6:45 p.m.	Children Learning Class
10/30/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Informal conversation</li> <li>➤ Collect Weeks 4–12: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files</li> <li>➤ Collect photos of environment, Mandarin literacy resources, and documents and artifacts</li> </ul>	4:30– 5:30 p.m.	Public Library

Case 4: Mei and Hua's family			
Date	Activity	Time	Location
8/12/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Formal introduction of this research study, Q&amp;A discussion between participants and researcher</li> <li>➤ Provide family's folder: Parents consent form, assent script consent form, data collection timeline, four interview questions protocol, Weeks 1–3: Weekly Schedule Checklist, one digital recorder with battery, and 20 blank protectors with Post-It® notes</li> </ul>	10:15– 11:30 a.m.	Library

	➤ First interview on family background information and parent's (mother's) beliefs and language learning perceptions		
8/16/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ First home observation on mother-child Mandarin literacy practice</li> <li>➤ First home visit on home literacy environment; mainly investigate study space design, atmosphere created, and literacy resources accessible</li> <li>➤ Picture taking of environment, literacy resources, and documents and artifacts</li> </ul>	10:15 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	House
8/23/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Second interview on parent-child Mandarin literacy practices</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 4–5: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	10:15 – 11:30 a.m.	Library
9/6/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Third interview on parent-child English literacy practices</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 6–9: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	10:15–11:30 a.m.	Library
9/4/2011	➤ First observation of Mandarin literacy teaching	1:30–2:30 p.m.	Church
9/25/2011	➤ Informal conversation about recent family activities	12:00–2:30 p.m.	Church
9/28/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Second home observation of mother-child Mandarin literacy practice</li> <li>➤ Second home visit on home literacy environment; mainly investigate literacy resources accessible</li> <li>➤ Picture taking of environment, literacy resources, and documents and artifacts.</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 10–12: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect Weeks 4–9: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect Mandarin writing samples</li> </ul>	4:00–6:00 p.m.	House
10/16/2011	➤ Second observation of Mandarin literacy teaching	1:35–2:40 p.m.	Church

10/30/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Informal conversation</li> <li>➤ Collect Weeks 10–12: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files</li> </ul>	1:00– 1:30p.m.	Church
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Case 5: Yu and Chris' s family			
Date	Activity	Time	Location
8/15/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Formal introduction of this research study, Q&amp;A discussion between participants and researcher</li> <li>➤ Provide family's folder: Parents consent form, assent script consent form, four interview questions protocols, Weeks 1–3: Weekly Schedule Checklist, one digital recorder with battery, and 20 blank protector with Post-It<sup>®</sup> notes</li> <li>➤ First interview on family background information and parent's (mother's) beliefs and language learning perceptions</li> <li>➤ First home visits and informal observations on home literacy environment; mainly investigate study space design, atmosphere created, and literacy resources accessible</li> </ul>	1:30–4:00 p.m.	House
8/22/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Second interview on parent–child Mandarin literacy practices</li> <li>➤ Second home visit and informal observation of home literacy environment; mainly investigate atmosphere created and various literacy resources</li> <li>➤ Collect and discuss Weeks 1–3: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Picture taking of environment, Mandarin literacy resources, and documents and artifacts.</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 4–5: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	10:15 a.m.– 12:30 p.m.	House
9/4/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Informal conversation with mother regarding recent family activities</li> </ul>	12:00– 1:30 p.m.	Church

9/6/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Third interview on parent–child English literacy practices</li> <li>➤ Third home visit and informal observation on home literacy environment; mainly investigate atmosphere created, and various literacy resources</li> <li>➤ Picture taking of English literacy resources,</li> <li>➤ Collect and discuss Weeks 4–5: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files</li> <li>➤ Collect literacy documents and artifacts.</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 6–9: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	12:30 p.m.–3:00 p.m.	House
9/25/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Informal conversation about recent family activities</li> </ul>	12:00–1:30 p.m.	Church
10/8/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fourth home visit and informal observation on home literacy environment; mainly investigate various literacy resources</li> <li>➤ Picture taking of English and literacy resources, and reading and writing samples</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files.</li> <li>➤ Provide Weeks 10–12: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	2:00–3:00 p.m.	House
10/16/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Informal conversation about recent family activities</li> <li>➤ Collect and discuss Weeks 6–9: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> </ul>	12:00–1:30 p.m.	Church
10/29/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Informal conversation about recent family activities</li> <li>➤ Collect and discuss Weeks 10–12: Weekly Schedule Checklist</li> <li>➤ Collect parent–child social interaction and literacy practices digital recording files</li> </ul>	1:30–2:30 p.m.	House

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