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**CHINESE IMMIGRANT PARENTS AS HOME TEACHERS:
MAINTAINING AND DEVELOPING
CHILDREN'S HERITAGE LANGUAGE IN
NEW ZEALAND**

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated Chinese immigrant parents as home teachers maintaining and developing children's heritage language in New Zealand. The case study approach was employed to enable rich information to be obtained. Data was collected from eight recent Chinese immigrant families and their children by means of non-participant observations and interviews. From my research, I found Chinese immigrant parents defined bilingualism as both their children's first and second language. I also found that these immigrants who immigrated to New Zealand under the Points System were highly educated in China and maintained a strong subconscious belief in the Confucian ideas. As the descendants of Confucianism, Chinese immigrant parents have positive attitudes towards their children's bilingualism and highly value education. They set up a home Chinese teaching and learning context so they can pass on the Chinese language and culture. A major finding of this study is that children have a positive attitude towards their heritage language maintenance and development, even though there is a strong influence from the reality of living in an English dominated country and receiving English formal education. The main reason for this outstanding result seen in these children's bilingual development is because of their parents' great efforts to offer teaching in Chinese at home. The results are illustrated as a tree to demonstrate that the traditional Chinese Confucian ideas, and the impact of Chinese parents' perceptions of bilingualism and reality in New Zealand. The Confucian ideas are shown as the roots of the tree that support and nurture the expectations of Chinese parents' perceptions. The trunk illustrates the contribution from the parents as home teachers. The three main branches stand for parents' opinions, and the outcome of the children's attitudes is presented by the leaves surrounding the branches.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate parents' perceptions of and their contributions as home teachers towards their children's bilingual development. In this research, I shall examine the shift in Chinese families from being passive recipients of school services to active decision-makers and teaching experts of their children at home. "A child's family represents the most influential context of his/her life, and exerts its influence more regularly, more exclusively, and earlier in a child's life than do any other life contexts" (Toman, 1993:5). Delgado-Gaitan (1990, cited in Young & Tran, 1999) finds that there is a great need for parents to become involved in their children's literacy development. Parents can show support for school activities, collaborate with the school in directing school activities, and provide a home learning context that supports literacy.

The parents involved in the study expect their children to learn English at school and become bilingual in Chinese and English as soon as possible. In pursuing this goal, they are often willing to take responsibility for teaching their children Chinese at home. Being Chinese, I understand that most parents may have very high expectations for their children. Apart from English as the dominant language, however, for the young Chinese immigrant children involved in this study, bilingualism depends on the way their parents encourage and teach them reading and writing in the Chinese language. Cummins (1981:35) states:

The first decision that must be made by parents, ..., is whether or not they want their children to become bilingual and, if so, what degree of bilingualism do they want their children to develop. For example, do they want their children to develop full literacy skills in L1 [first language], or is the maintenance of speaking and listening skills sufficient?

Parents, therefore, play a very important teaching role in educating their children to become bilingual. Thus, parents are the major focus in this proposed study.

Teaching and learning the Chinese language is an extremely complicated task since Chinese is not an alphabetical language. The written Chinese characters originate from picturing the shapes of real things; they consist of simple strokes and dots, perpendiculars and horizontals with modification guided by rules, which associate the position in which they are to appear. The written Chinese characters have no contribution to the pronunciation except the meanings. For example 猫 (cat), 狗 (dog), and 猪 (pig), contain the same left radical, which indicates that the meanings of these characters are all relative to animals. But the guessing of meanings is not always possible because of the evolution and development of the Chinese written system. It is unlike the English language, which is letter-sound related and can be phonetically decoded (Guppy & Hughes, 1999). Pinyin (拼音) is the phonetic assistance for pronunciation to help sounding out the written Chinese characters. Pinyin is the national phonetic alphabet that has been adopted and taught in People's Republic of China since 1958 (Clyne, Jenkins, Chen, Tsokalidou & Wallner, 1995). Children are usually taught Pinyin as the starting point for the learning of Chinese written characters.

Mandarin, referred to as Putonghua, (普通话) (this means: the common language) is accepted as the modern standard language in China, Taiwan and in many Chinese communities in South East Asia (Ngan, 1987). There are 56 national minority groups who speak their own minority language in China. *Han*, the majority national group in China, the official designation for the Chinese language, is spoken by 95% of the population in China, and is itself divided into nine major sub language groupings: *Mandarin*, *Xiang*, *Gan*, *Huizhou*, *Wu*, *Minnan*, *Minbei*, *Hakka* and *Yue* (Cantonese) (Homel & Palij, 1987). However, “because of the variety of languages in China, everyone is required to speak the common language. The policy is not to replace one’s own dialect but to become bilingual in one’s own language and the common language which is now Mandarin [Putonghua]” (Mei 1984:78, cited in Homel & Palij, 1987:23). Therefore bilingualism is not a new concept to many Chinese and actually is part of their life. If they are not from areas of Beijing where Mandarin has been the official language since 1911, even *Han* Chinese could be bilingual (speaking their own dialect

and Mandarin) (Homel & Palij, 1987). In China, bilingualism is regarded as the mastering of the different spoken sub-languages - Mandarin and dialects. The written Chinese system remains the same no matter which area people come from. Therefore, in this thesis, *Chinese* refers to the written language of participants, and *Mandarin* as their spoken language.

The parents involved in this study, who are all from Mainland China, not only speak fluent Mandarin, but also English since most of them immigrated to New Zealand under the Points System introduced in 1995. This means that they have been highly educated in China and have certain years working experience in their own professional field. In China, since 1975, English language was introduced, as the compulsory second language up to the whole middle school (equal to Year 7/8 Intermediate School of New Zealand), so these parents have some English language proficiency before coming to New Zealand. For the Chinese immigrant parents involved in this study, bilingualism is part of their life whether they live in China or New Zealand. The concept of *bilingualism* within this study is relevant to the two official languages - Chinese and English. Grosjean (1989, cited in Brisk, 1998) defines a bilingual as a person who has developed competence in two or more languages to the extent required by his/her needs and those of the context (see section 2.1).

The parents involved in this study grew up under the leadership of the Communist Party, which became the formal leader of People's Republic of China in 1949. The Culture Revolution in 1965 was part of their Chinese life experience. During the ten years of the Culture Revolution, Confucius was a major focus of a refocusing on Chinese history and values. This gave a chance to the current generation of these parents involved to have more understanding and more familiarity with this first philosopher in Chinese history. It is worth stating that Confucius did not originate Confucianism, but he is the key figure in the later formation, development and consolidation of the Confucian tradition (Liu 1998). His ideas have influenced more people than any other person in the Chinese history.

Confucianism is not a religion limited to a particular culture, race or nationality (Tu, Hejtmánek and Wachman, 1992). It has some similarity to other beliefs in popular Buddhism, and Taoism. Confucian teachings have become not only a legacy for the Chinese but also his ideas are treasured by the whole world (Liu, 1998). The Confucian traditional philosophy has shaped the ways of thinking of the Chinese people for over 2500 years and exerted a profound influence in East Asia. The amazing thing is that the Confucian ideas have survived many vicissitudes and are still vigorously alive today. Confucianism may be regarded as a language of moral community flowing from a universal moral value (Tu, Hejtmánek and Wachman, 1992).

The Chinese immigrant parents involved in this study, therefore, also grew up in a traditional Confucian society that emphasizes concepts such as family values, diligence, and education (Liu, 1998). So these Chinese parents put great effort into helping their children achieve their personal goals, of which one is to be bilingual as soon as possible. Parents in this investigation would like to take responsibility for teaching their children's Chinese at home in order to maintain and develop their children's heritage language and culture.

Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) finds that immigrant parents usually want their children to learn well the majority language of their new country, especially to ensure that their children have better educational and economic prospects than they had. This desire seems to be universal in the immigrant families; however, many parents will also naturally want their children to learn their own heritage language well. Children from linguistic minorities are often expected to become bilingual from a strong external pressure such as the family pressure; even though their own heritage language usually has limited official utilization (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). Many Chinese immigrant parents in New Zealand have this similar goal for their children: to maintain and develop their heritage language - the Chinese language - and to *master* English.

Owing to the impact of the Western influences, and in order to survive in New Zealand, Chinese parents may have no choices but to require their children to master English

first. They also expect their children to maintain and develop the Chinese language as part of their identity of being Chinese. In the past few decades, English has become the dominant language for Chinese children although their parents' first language is Cantonese if they immigrated to New Zealand from GuangDong province, which is located in the far south of China. According to Ngan's (1987) survey, the majority of third and fourth generation Chinese in New Zealand do not speak and write in the Chinese language. This occurs even though their parents put great efforts into maintaining Cantonese for their children, including inviting the Chinese language teachers from Mainland China, and run some weekend Chinese language classes supported by local churches (Ngan, 1987).

The difference between the previous research and my investigation is that I shall explore what actually happens in the area of bilingual development within recent arrival Chinese immigrant families and their young children. At the ages of about 5-6 years old, Chinese children are often ready for formal schooling. The children involved in this study usually have well developed listening, speaking, and basic counting skills in the Chinese language in accordance with their chronological age, but no English at all. It can be a turning point in their lives because they will go to schools in New Zealand where English is the dominant language. It is interesting to explore how these young Chinese immigrant children grow up in different cultural contexts, and fulfil their parents' expectations to become bilingual in Chinese and English in about 3-5 years, under the condition of receiving English formal schooling, and their parents as home teachers in the Chinese language.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this study is to explore Chinese immigrant parents as home teachers maintaining and developing their children's heritage language in New Zealand in order to fulfil their expectations of becoming bilingual. This chapter will look at the literature related to bilingualism. It will start with the key definitions of bilingualism and will follow Cummins' bilingual theories, which are mainly summarised by Baker (1996). A brief description is related to types of bilingual education. Next I shall look at theories about language development along with the context for cognitive and academic development provided by bilingualism. I shall also briefly examine the literature on codeswitching because this is often how new learning, e.g. new vocabulary, is being introduced in either language. Then I will examine the social and cultural learning context where the bilingualism takes place. Finally, this literature review will look at some literature relevant to parents who play teaching roles at home in an informal teaching and learning context.

2.1 KEY DEFINITIONS OF BILINGUALISM

Liddicoat (1991:1) states: "It is not easy to formulate a generally accepted definition of bilingualism. Bilingualism means different things to different people". Many definitions are employed to describe the various degrees of language ability of bilingualism. In this section, some key definitions regarded as relevant to young Chinese immigrant children are introduced. They are as follows: incipient bilingualism or native-like bilingualism; receptive and productive bilingualism; natural and cultural bilingualism; coordinate and balanced bilingualism.

Bilingualism can be treated as a continuum that varies among individuals along a variety of dimensions (Macnamara 1969, cited in Hoffmann 1991). In Baker's (1996) opinion, bilingualism is various in strength and style in terms of language abilities. Diebold's (1964, cited in Baker, 1996) definition of incipient bilingualism appears to be at one end of the bilingual continuum. It illustrates the minimal competence of bilingualism required in order to be categorized as a bilingual. At the other end of the continuum is a classic definition of bilingualism used to describe the native-like control of two or more languages (Bloomfield, 1961). This definition seems very ambiguous on the criterion of 'native-like', and also is too extreme at the other end of the bilingual continuum. These two definitions of incipient bilingualism and native-like bilingualism are either too inclusive or too exclusive. Liddicoat (1991) summarizes that bilingualism may be defined as having some abilities to use two or even more languages, but there are degrees of mastering languages. At one extreme of the bilingual continuum, there are people who have just begun to acquire a second language. At the other extreme, there are people who have native-like control over two languages. But Grosjean (1985, cited in Baker, 1996) argues that the comparison of bilingual and monolingual does not compare *like with like* as bilingualism involves varied fluency in two languages.

Bilingual people are usually able to use two languages for study, work and everyday conversation (Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education, circa 1990). MacNamara (1967a, cited in Hamers & Blanc, 1989:6) proposes: "A bilingual is anyone who possesses a minimal competence in one of the four language skills, i.e. listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing a language other than his mother tongue". There are two types of bilingualism: receptive (passive) bilingualism and productive (active) bilingualism. Receptive bilingualism is used in relation to a person who is able to *understand* a second language, in either its spoken or written form. Productive bilingualism implies the *ability* to speak as well as *understand* the languages, to write and read them (Hoffmann, 1991; Baker, 1996). In the further meaning of bilingual ability, the term of balanced bilingual used by Lambert, Havelka and Gardner, (1959, cited in Hoffmann, 1991) refers to individuals

who are fully competent in both languages. In the same vein, Baker (1996) has a very similar definition of a balanced bilingual, referring to someone who is approximately equally fluent in two languages across various contexts.

Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) distinguishes natural bilingualism and cultural bilingualism. Natural bilingualism refers to an individual who has learnt two languages without formal educational teaching. The child learns both languages from his/her everyday life as the means of communication when s/he is relatively young. Cultural bilingualism largely coincides with school bilingualism, but the term is more often used to refer to adults who learn a foreign language for reasons of work, travel, and so on (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). For the young Chinese immigrant children involved in this study, bilingualism seems to form naturally in their daily lives with a strong cultural expectation. These children are exposed to English culturally through schooling and the world around them in New Zealand; in response to this, their parents may also add a cultural dimension to teach Chinese at home in order to pass on their cultural heritage. In this research, bilingualism could, therefore, be regarded as a combination of natural and cultural bilingualism.

The coordinate bilingual is one who learns one language from birth and learns the second language later in life in contexts different from those of the first language (Palij & Homel, 1987). Baker (1996) named it sequential childhood bilingualism. In this study, the young Chinese immigrant children have been learning Chinese from their birth in China, and have been taught English since the start of their formal schooling in New Zealand. Brown (2000) states that children who learn a second language in two separate contexts are called coordinate bilingual because they have two meaning systems for each language to operate. Thus, the children involved in this study could be categorized as coordinate bilinguals, in this case, Chinese and English.

I am interested in the way these children become bilingual (I have made no attempt to determine who is the best bilingual). It is perhaps an expectation of these children that they become productive bilinguals to have the ability of reading and writing or

balanced bilinguals as individuals who are fully competent in both languages. The young Chinese immigrant children involved in this study may have a great chance to become productive bilingual and balanced bilingual if their parents are involved in home literacy Chinese language development, besides their formal schooling in New Zealand. Baker (1996:148) stated: "Several studies have suggested that the further the child moves towards balanced bilingualism, the greater the likelihood of cognitive advantages".

I am also aware, however, that previous research shows that a bilingual tends to be dominant in one of their languages, rather than balanced. Fishman (1971, cited in Baker, 1996) argues that any bilingual will rarely be equally competent across all situations. Since most bilinguals tend to be more fluent or generally more proficient in one language, they will have a stronger or dominant language and a weaker one. Baker (1996) has a similar finding that bilinguals tend to be dominant in one of their languages and in all or some of their language abilities. Different bilinguals have distinct uses for, as well as various levels of, competence in each language. It would be interesting to find out what happens after these young Chinese immigrant children have lived in New Zealand up to five years.

In this section, the classic definitions of incipient and native-like bilingualism were briefly introduced. Because of the particular feature of this research, definitions of bilingualism for these young Chinese immigrant children fit into natural and cultural bilingualism, and coordinate bilingual. This study is going to examine if these children will grow up into productive bilinguals and balanced bilinguals up to five years of residence in New Zealand under the support from their parents.

2.2 TYPES OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingual education is often defined as two languages used in the school (Edwards, 1984, cited in Baker, 1988). Three major types of bilingual education will be

introduced in the following section: transitional bilingual education, maintenance bilingual education, and the enrichment model of bilingual education (Baker, 1996; Freeman, 1998).

In transitional bilingual education, the child's first language is only an interim medium for school instruction. It aims to enable children who speak English as their second language to transit quickly to the all English academic mainstream by achieving fluency in the majority language (Freeman, 1998). In maintenance education, both languages may be used in school; the aim is to ensure the child has good competence in both languages (Baker, 1988). It encourages language minority students to maintain their native language because concepts and skills learned in the first language transfer to the second language. This type of program also builds self-esteem and enhances achievement (Hakuta & Bould, 1987, cited in Lessow-Hurley, 2000). The enrichment model encompasses all of those bilingual education programs, which encourage the development of minority languages on the individual and collective levels both at school and in the community (Hornberger, 1991, cited in Freeman, 1998). Even though bilingual education, as discussed above, is mainly conducted in the formal school settings, it clearly shows that there is a link between these bilingual programs and children's heritage language. The general assumption is that learning of the English language might build on the basis of children's native heritage language.

Transitional bilingual education can be addressed in two ways. It can be either immersion bilingual education or submersion bilingual education. Immersion or submersion bilingual education contains a graphic analogy with the swimming pool (Baker, 1988). In an immersion bilingual education, children are homogeneous in their initial level in the second language. Children are allowed to use their home language until confidence grows and they are ready to switch to the second language. The St. Lambert experiment marks the start of immersion education with carefully controlled and well analysed curriculum teaching programs (Baker, 1988). The immersion programs in Canada consist of native English-speaking students learning French mostly or partly through the medium of French at school; therefore, they ideally became

bilingual in French and English. The evidence from the studies suggests that immersion children learn French at no cost to their English (Baker, 1988). A submersion programme means that no home language is allowed to be used in school, and the entire curriculum is taught in the dominant language. The child is merged with native speakers in order to adopt the dominant language in the classroom. Success will depend on how the child copes in the mainstream classroom. The child who does not cope well will sink to the bottom of the pool.

To summarise the points from the formal bilingual education above, there is a certain link to the cases of my research. The young Chinese immigrant children in this investigation go to school to be immersed with English native speakers and they actually receive transitional immersion bilingual education from schools of New Zealand. One study suggests that cultural ties increase when the individuals are away from their homeland (Jin and Cortazzi, 1993, cited in Haworth, 1996). Because these Chinese parents are away from their homeland, China, they might feel that it is their responsibility to pass on their own heritage language and culture to the younger generation. The context of Chinese teaching and learning might be formed at home if parents do not like to see their children forgetting the Chinese language. Therefore, the unique characteristic of my research is that, in this particular context, Chinese immigrant parents might undertake the role of being home teachers to immerse their children in the *immersion bilingual education* - informal Chinese learning at home besides formal English schooling. The difference of my study from those in the literature on formal bilingual education is that the young Chinese immigrant children have two languages existing in two separate life contexts (home and school) instead of happening in the school setting *only*. It will be interesting and valuable to discover how and why Chinese immigrant parents maintain and develop children's heritage language at home in New Zealand.

In this section, three major types of formal bilingual education are introduced while this study focuses on the informal home teaching and learning context, but there *were* some comparisons, which could be drawn from formal bilingual education discussed above in

order to picture *immersion bilingual education* for the cases involved in this investigation.

2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF BILINGUALISM IN DIFFERING CONTEXTS

In this section, the evolution of understanding bilingualism will be briefly discussed and associated with some important theories and examined in the light of cognitive/academic language development in differing contexts. Finally, the importance of parents' involvement with bilingualism and codeswitching will be examined.

2.3.1 *The Early Studies of Bilingualism*

Since there are always arguments about whether bilingualism has a positive or a negative impact on children's cognitive/academic language development, this section will start with a very brief introduction of the early studies of bilingualism.

The earliest studies that examined the relationship of cognitive/academic functioning language development to bilingualism were conducted during the 1920s (Saer, 1923; Smith, 1923; Davies & Hughes, 1927, cited in Palij & Homel, 1987). These studies and the others found that bilingual children did more poorly in school relative to their monolingual peers. The result of being bilingual appeared to be that bilingualism was a retarding factor in language development in various ways, especially on verbal or nonverbal intelligence measurements. This view dominated the bilingual research over the next 40 years. Some major reviews of the research by Darcy (1953), Weinreich (1953), and Jensen (1962) (cited in Palij & Homel, 1987) all reported negative consequences of bilingualism in childhood.

The initial research of bilingual cognitive development shows bilinguals to be inferior to monolinguals. This is a naive theory of bilingualism representing the two languages as existing together in a balance. This can be illustrated as a weighing scale, with the second language increasing at the expense of the first language (Baker, 1996). An alternative naive picture theory attached to this early research is that of two language balloons, which Cummins (1980a, cited in Baker, 1996) refers to as the *Separate Underlying Proficiency Model of Bilingualism*. This means that two languages operate separately without any interlinks, in other words, without any transfer between them. The reason is that there is only a restricted amount of *space* for languages in people's brain. If the ability in one language increases, the other balloon has to be shrunk to fit into the restricted amount of *room* in the brain.

These balance and balloon picture theories of bilingualism were held by many people initially from 1920s to 1960s (Homel, Palij & Aaronson, 1987) to enable them to explain the phenomenon of why bilingual children did poorly and were cognitively inferior, compared to their monolingual peers. It is worth noting here that *Separate Underlying Proficiency Model* of bilingualism is in contrast to *Common Underlying Proficiency Model*, which will be discussed in the section 2.3.3.

2.3.2 *A Turning Point in Understanding Bilingualism*

In this section, an important milestone established by Peal and Lambert (1962) in understanding bilingualism will be described.

The turning point was an unexpected one as Peal and Lambert's (1962) study aimed to find the remedy for the negative influence of bilingualism. Their original intention was to seek remedial programs for the negative performance of bilingualism. Instead of what they expected, the result showed that bilingual children performed significantly better than their monolingual peers did, such as in the measurement of verbal intelligence. Subsequent studies have tended to prove the results of Peal and Lambert

(1962) in field studies and experimental studies (Palij & Homel, 1987). A major field study was the well-known language immersion program of second language acquisition called the St. Lambert experimental school program (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). One of the important findings was that the bilingual children could readily transfer a skill learned in one language and enable its use in the other language. It was significant because it showed that cognitive skills did not depend upon the language in which the skill was acquired (Palij & Homel, 1987). In Peal and Lambert's (1962:20) study conclusion they state:

The picture that emerges of the French-English bilingual in Montreal is that of a youngster whose wider experiences in two cultures have given him advantages that a monolingual does not enjoy. Intellectually his experience with two language systems seems to have left him with a mental flexibility, a superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified set of mental abilities, in the sense that the patterns of abilities developed by bilinguals were more heterogeneous. It is not possible to state whether the more intelligent child became bilingual or whether bilingualism aided his intellectual development, but there is no question about the fact that he is superior intellectually. In contrast, the monolingual appears to have a more unitary structure of intelligence which he must use for all types of intellectual tasks.

Several researchers (e.g., Ben-Zeev, 1972, 1977a; Cummins, 1978; Cummins & Mulcahy, 1978; Okoh, 1980; Mohanty & Babu, 1983; Babu, 1984; Pattnaik & Mohanty, 1984, cited in Hamers & Blanc, 1989) found the same result as Peal and Lambert (1962) did; that is, bilingual children were superior to monolingual children in cognitive/academic language skills. They also mentioned in a number of studies when bilingual and monolingual are equated for cognitive functioning, the former might possess better in a variety of verbal tasks, such as analytical processing of verbal input, verbal creativity etc. Kessler and Quinn (1982, 1987, cited in Hamers & Blanc, 1989) reported that bilingual children performed better on problem-solving tasks than their monolingual counterparts; they interpret these results as evidence of greater metalinguistic competence and better-developed creative processes.

2.3.3 *The Common Underlying Proficiency Model of Bilingualism*

Since Peal and Lambert's (1962) study found that concepts and skills could be transferred once children have been taught in either language, there is one theory, called The *Common Underlying Proficiency Model* from Cummins (1980a, 1981a, cited in Baker, 1996) to explain this phenomenon.

Research (Baker, 1996) found, for example, that teaching a child to multiply numbers in Spanish or to use a dictionary in English easily transfers to multiplication or dictionary use in the other language. A child does not have to be re-taught what s/he had been taught, such as multiplication in English (Baker, 1996). Cummins (1989) states that conceptual knowledge developed in one language helps to make input in the other language comprehensible. There is also evidence that this transfer of skills is global, that the entire conceptual-operational domains or schema can cross languages. Nevertheless, this transfer does depend on first language literacy and proficiency (Cook, 2001). This phenomenon leads to an alternative idea called The *Common Underlying Proficiency Model* (Cummins, op cit) or The Think Tank model (Cummins, 1981).

Cummins' (op cit) *Common Underlying Proficiency Model* of bilingualism can be illustrated by two icebergs, and is named The Iceberg Analogy by Baker (1996). The two icebergs stand for two languages that are separated above the surface visibly. Underneath the surface, the icebergs are fused to represent that two languages function together. This area of fusion is called the Central Operating System. In the same vein, Cummins (1981:29) suggests, that in the Think Tank Model, "there is only one Think Tank which formulates thoughts that are expressed in both L1 [first language] and L2 [second language] as well as comprehending other people's thoughts that are expressed in either L1 or L2". Holmes (1984) finds that the linguistic and conceptual knowledge that a child builds up functions in both languages, not just one, in the child's language experience. Baker (1996) has very similar findings to those of Holmes (1984).

2.3.4 *The Thresholds Theory and Contexts of Language Learning*

The Thresholds Theory (Cummins 1976; Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas 1977, cited in Baker, 1996) will be used to describe the various language levels of bilingualism. It also has different contexts of language learning, which will be discussed in the following section.

Cummins' (1976) and Toukomaa and Skutnabb-Kangas' (1977, cited in Baker, 1996) Thresholds Theory summarizes the relationship between cognition and the degree of bilingualism and is illustrated by a house with three floors. On each side of the house, a language ladder is placed indicating the cognitive language development of a bilingual child. Each floor or threshold is a level of language competence of a bilingual. On the first floor of the house, language competence in both languages is insufficient, especially compared with the child's age group. Baker (1996) suggests that when there is a low level of competence in both languages, children are likely to suffer negative cognitive effects; this may be what was seen in the early studies. At the middle level or the second floor of the house, one language competence will be in children's age-appropriate level but not both, and this is unlikely to have any significant positive or negative differences compared with a monolingual. At the top level or the third level, children achieve approximate balanced bilingualism in both languages and positive cognitive advantages of bilingualism may appear.

Cummins (1976a, cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981) suggests that the level of competence attained by a bilingual child in L1 and L2 may function as an intervening variable, mediating the effects of the child's bilingual experience and contributing to cognitive growth. Cummins (op cit) sees that both bilingualism and monolingualism are instruments and tools, which a child uses to operate upon the context. The bilingual instrument, of course, is more complex and more difficult to master, but, once mastered, it may also have greater potential than the unilingual instrument for promoting cognitive growth. Many researchers (Peal & Lambert 1962; Cummins, 1977, cited in Mouw & Xie, 1999) suggest that bilingualism affects academic

achievement and a net of socio-economic factors through its positive influence on childhood cognitive development.

Scovel (2001:45) finds: "The most important linguistic factor affecting any second language learner is the interference of the mother tongue with the new language". Interference arises only when the language structures are different. When previously acquired linguistic and conceptual knowledge facilitates a new language learning task, positive transfer will occur. Negative transfer occurs when previous knowledge disrupts the second language or new learning task (Brown, 2000). The Thresholds Theory also explains this linguistic interference by interpreting the different thresholds where a child's bilingual ability is and, therefore, having the different cognitive effects. In this investigation, this means that the first language (Chinese) helps Chinese children when two languages (Chinese and English) have elements in common and hinders them when they differ. Ben-Zeev (1977a, cited in Hamers & Blanc, 1989:52) suggests:

It seems that the bilingual child develops a strategy for analyzing the linguistic input that enables him to overcome the potential interference arising from a bilingual learning environment, such as 1) a greater capacity for language analysis; 2) sensitivity to feedback cues from surface linguistic structure or verbal and situational context; 3) maximization of structural differences between languages, and 4) neutralization of structure within a language environment. It is suggested that these four mechanisms will generalize to the information-processing tasks and will benefit the overall cognitive growth of the child.

The young Chinese immigrant children might be at the second floor of The Thresholds Theory as they might have their age-appropriate competence in the Chinese language when they start their formal schooling in New Zealand. Krashen (1981) makes a distinction between acquisition and learning; language acquisition is language picked up subconsciously from the social environment (cited in Lessow-Hurley, 2000). As MacNamara (1972, cited in Krashen, 1987) points out, the child does not acquire grammar first, and then use it in understanding; a child understands first, and this helps him/her acquire language. When the child understands the language, then he will learn to use it in the social environment. Baker (2000:17) also claims: "It is possible to learn

and speak a language fluently yet not really understand, fully experience or fully participate in the culture that goes with a particular language”.

Because these young Chinese children are unable to understand English fully, they heavily rely on what happens in a real life context of school. Cummins (1984a, 1984b cited in Baker 1996) expresses this in terms of Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Context Embedded language use. BICS is used as a base to achieve academic language development. BICS and Context Embedded language use occur in real contextual situations. In Skutnabb-Kangas' (1981:111) term: “Everyday things in concrete” indicates everything is real that children can actually see and touch. Pretend play with some real props can help language development accompanied with body language, facial expressions, clues and instant feedback. These also help children to understand and pick up the meanings of language. Research shows that teaching strategies offer help; such as nonverbal pauses, gestures, changes in volume and manner of delivery, simplification of syntax, repetition, expansion, use of visual aids and realia, and comprehension checks (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

Where higher order and abstract thinking is required, language is disembedded from a meaningful, supportive context and is referred to as context reduced. Ramirez (1995) explains that Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) involves the ability to manipulate or reflect upon features of language (reading and writing) independently of extralinguistic supports such as the use of gestures or situational cues. Context-reduced or decontextualized language occurs when information is provided through little other than the spoken language. Even though all normal healthy children learn to speak their mother language fluently without difficulty, the great distinction is in the difference on children's linguistic performance and cognitive/academic language development. An individual can speak one of his/her two languages fluently in concrete everyday situations, but this says nothing about his/her ability to use language in a cognitive way in cognitively demanding situations where contextual cues are not of much help (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981).

Krashen (1991) states that children in school classes acquire a great deal of academic language as well as subject matter knowledge (cited in Krashen, 1996). Krashen and Biber (1988) report that children with limited proficiency in English from *literate homes* make the transition from Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skill (BICS) to Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) very quickly and perform well. The reason is parents' involvement and literacy, including subject matter teaching in the first language at home. Since most of school language is context reduced or decontextualized (Holmes, 1984), children who rely on contextual cues to understand language have to develop their Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). In this investigation, it means that Chinese immigrant children might have to make the transition from BICS to CALP quickly in order to follow the school pace and fulfil their parents' expectation to become bilingual.

In summary of this section, a child's learning depends on what input comes from the social context. If young Chinese immigrant children grow up in a bilingual way, they might be successful in achieving the third level of The Thresholds Theory (Cummins, 1976; Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977, cited in Baker, 1996), which means that children have age-appropriate competence in both languages and this has positive cognitive advantages. The young Chinese children may aim to achieve this third level and to do this they have to cope with more academic English language, called cognitive/academic language proficiency, in context-reduced classrooms first. At home it might be up to their parents to teach them the Chinese language if parents would expect their children to become fully competent bilinguals. Baker (2000) states that fluent bilingual speakers have an advantage because they have two codes for every concept, which leads to greater cognitive flexibility and better abstract reasoning power. Thus, parental involvement in the home learning context can be crucial in teaching different subjects such as reading, mathematics and intelligence games in their heritage language, and may give the children long-term cognitive advantages. It would be interesting to find out the learning outcome under this particular condition (formal schooling and informal Chinese learning at home) of this research, as Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) points out that the benefit for minority language children is that they hear and

learn two languages provided by native speakers who offer an excellent language model to surround them each day.

2.3.5 *Codeswitching*

Codeswitching is found all over the world (Cook, 2001). It can be regarded as a very handy and important translation tool, arming bilingual children to learn more as it involves borrowing concepts or vocabularies from either language, so that children are able to learn new concepts and vocabularies in both languages, and it will be introduced in the following section.

Research (Brown, 2000) shows that bilinguals have a unique ability to shift languages: “Most bilinguals engage in codeswitching (the act of inserting words, phrases, or even longer stretches of one language into the other language) especially when communicating with another bilingual” (Brown, 2000:67). This happens in the Chinese community when children play with their peers or talk to their parents. It is one way to improve both their languages via interaction with capable peers or adults. Butzkamm (1998) finds that codeswitching is an integral part of the speech of bilinguals, such as a child who, on encountering difficulties with vocabulary, asks for the foreign language equivalent by giving the expression in the mother tongue. Genishi (1989, cited in Brisk, 1998) states that bilingual children develop the ability to codeswitch and use this to enrich communication.

According to Vygotsky: (1962:110, cited in Hamers & Blanc, 1989:47) “Being able to express the same thought in different languages will enable the child to see his language as one particular system among many, to view its phenomena under more general categories, and this leads to awareness of his linguistic operations”. This could be one of the reasons why children code switch between languages. It also enables children to pick up language and talk to the right person in the right context. Brown (2000) finds that it is crucial to separate contexts for the use of two languages and he

also states, “children generally do not have problems with ‘mixing up languages’, regardless of the separateness of contexts for use of the languages” (Brown, 2000:67).

In this section, the evolution of bilingualism was briefly presented with some important theories to associate the interpretations of the cognitive bilingual development, which showed these linguistic phenomena were always woven together. Codeswitching, as one of learning tools for bilingual children to learn new concepts from either language, was introduced in this section.

2.4 FACTORS EFFECTING BILINGUAL DEVELOPMENT

There are various factors influencing children’s bilingual development, such as the length of residence in a new country, which is linked to the length of language exposure, the age of arrival, the attitude towards their heritage language and the motivation for maintaining the language.

2.4.1 *Language Exposure as a Factor in Bilingual Development*

Adequate exposure to a language is essential for language acquisition even though the child will not be able to experience everything simultaneously in both languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). The importance of language exposure will be discussed in detail.

For immigrants, length of residence in the country of immigration is a key variable in L2 (second language) acquisition particularly for the first five years exposure to the natural L2 environment (Cummins, 1991, cited in Collier, 1998). Even though five years is a short amount of time, research (Collier, 1998) shows that immigrants steadily progress in L2 language learning. Holmes (1984) finds it is important that minority

group children continue to get sufficient exposure to the language not used in school because the cognitive knowledge can then be transferred between languages. Parents in this study might be able to play an important teaching role at home to expose their children to the heritage language in order to achieve their children becoming bilingual.

Cummins (cited in Hamers & Blanc, 1989) suggests that the level of competence in L2 is partly a function of the competence developed in L1 at the start of exposure to L2. When certain language functions are sufficiently developed in L1, it is likely that massive exposure to L2 will lead to a good competence in L2 without detriment to competence in L1. A high level of competence in L1 is certainly related to a high level of competence in L2. The Thresholds Theory (Cummins, 1976; Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977, cited in Baker, 1996) is the demonstration and explanation of this result. If children are at low level of proficiency in English with difficulties coping in the classroom, the proficiency and cognitive/academic heritage language might be able to play an important role. Parents constantly teach and expose their children to the heritage language at home, and this should help children's performance in the classroom. Baker (1996) finds that the exposure to and development of proficiency in the home heritage language can result in superior performance in transitional bilingual education and vice versa; e.g. if children are at a low level in both languages, it will have a negative result. The Thresholds Theory (Cummins, 1976; Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977, cited in Baker, 1996) also shows that, in this situation, children could not cope well with schoolwork because they did not develop cognitive/academic proficiency required in either language.

Holmstrand (1979, cited in Hamers & Blanc, 1989) demonstrates the evidence to support Cummins' postulation, which works in both directions, that language training in one language might be helpful for attaining a higher level of competence in the other language. According to Cummins' (1984a, cited in Hamers & Blanc, 1989) suggestions that literacy skills which children have been taught at home are not just developing those skills in children's first language, but also improving a deeper conceptual and linguistic competence that is strongly related to the development of

general literacy and academic skills in all languages. The *Common Underlying Proficiency Model of Bilingualism* implies, therefore, that experience with either language can promote development of language cognitive skills, given proper motivation and exposure to both languages.

Krashen and Terrel (1983) indicate that time exposure is an important factor in language acquisition, since concepts can be transferred, so the time exposure in either language should benefit children's bilingual cognitive development (cited in Villas-Boas, 1998).

2.4.2 *Age as a Factor in Bilingual Development*

There is much research about age as an important factor in bilingual development. In this investigation, a particular age group of children is selected and will be discussed in detail.

In this study, the age of immigrant children is around five years old. Research (Krashen, Long & Scarcella, 1979, cited in Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991) found that older is faster, but younger is better. Wells (1986:241) claims:

By the time the child goes to school, the child has made substantial progress towards mastering the resources of the spoken language and can draw upon those resources appropriately to achieve a wide range of interactional objectives in the familiar contexts of everyday activities.

The time of this young age (about five years old) for Chinese immigrant children involved in this investigation could be a turning point in their life as they shift from China to New Zealand to start their formal education. Eggen & Kauchak (1994) states that a miracle occurs in the time from birth to five years of age; born with a limited ability to communicate, the young child enters kindergarten with an impressive command of the language spoken at home. The young Chinese immigrant children involved are ready for formal schooling after they finish their kindergarten in China at

ages of 5-6. They usually have well-developed oral language and basic counting skills in Chinese. In this research they will start their formal schooling in an English dominant country - New Zealand, not in China.

As Chinese parents grew up in a traditional Confucian society, they might highly value education and put great effort into helping their children to achieve their personal goals, of which one is to become bilingual as soon as possible. They probably would like to take responsibility for teaching Chinese at home in order to maintain their children's heritage language and culture. My study explores what actually happens in their life, and how and why parents put their expectations into action to maintain and develop their children's Chinese learning. This makes my research fascinating because some of the young Chinese immigrant children might master English and adapt to a new culture rapidly in a few years, I would like to explore what happens to their own heritage language - the Chinese language. The learning context, the attitudes and the motivation of maintaining the Chinese language might mainly depend on their parents who play a decisive role in their young children's bilingual growth. That is the reason this study aims to focus on *Chinese parents* as home teachers to maintain and develop the Chinese language because their children are too young to make a decision about becoming bilingual.

2.4.3 Attitude and Identity as Factors in Bilingual Development

Attitudes always play a role in people's life and certainly play a crucial role in children's bilingual development in terms of the attitude towards their culture and language, which form their identity. The attitude and identity are related to additive and subtractive bilingualism will be discussed in this section as well.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) find in several studies that children's attitudes reflect their parents' attitudes directly. The language passes on the cultural tradition of the group and thereby gives the individual an identity separate from the second language

grouping. Hoffmann (1991) finds that attitudes are more observable in the context of societal multilingualism as it demonstrates children's language and culture identity, and this plays a crucial role in motivation of children to become bilingual or multilingual.

Since one's identity is very much bound up with the language one speaks, Schumann (1977) considers that attitude to the second language learning contributes to the social distance between two cultural groups (cited in Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). Even though the young Chinese immigrant children were brought up in the Chinese culture, their life situation has been changed after settling in New Zealand. The attitude of peers can also affect children's acquisition of language, either in L1 or L2. It will be very important to find out what happens in these young Chinese immigrant children's lives in New Zealand. This study will help this task.

Homel, Palij and Aaronson (1987) claim that children who experience additive bilingualism usually acquire both languages in an atmosphere wherein both languages are considered to be equally socially relevant. There is no pressure to learn or give up either language. Lambert (1974, 1977, cited in Hamers & Blanc, 1989) also summarizes the distinction between an additive and a subtractive bilingual. In an additive bilingual development, both languages and both cultures bring complementary positive elements to the child's overall language development. This situation is found when both the community and the family attribute positive values to the two languages; the learning of an L2 (second language) will not threaten to replace L1 (first language).

In contrast, subtractive bilingualism means when the two languages are competing rather than complementary; this occurs because children reject their own cultural values in favor of the dominant language. In this case, the more input from second language will tend to replace more of the children's first language. It will influence children's language development and personality, and will affect the maintenance of their own culture and language. Lambert (1975, 1984, cited in Collier, 1998:108) refers to "the lack of societal support for a minority language, with gradual loss of L1, as subtractive

bilingualism. Subtractive bilingual (who lose L1) perform less well on many cognitive and academic measures than bilingual (who acquire L2, and maintain L1)".

Thornton (2002) states that the way the child comes to represent the world is a clear reflection of the philosophy of the culture within which he/she grows up, so it will be interesting to explore what happens to the young Chinese immigrant children, who have lived in New Zealand up to five years, and to examine whether the parents' effort leads to achieve additive or subtractive bilingualism for their children.

2.5 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PROCESSES IN DEVELOPMENT BILINGUALISM

In this section, social and cultural processes will be fully discussed, not only because Bruner (1966, cited in Hamers & Blanc, 1989) finds that social and cultural environment plays a major role in the child's growth, but also because it is in this context that bilingualism would be developed. At the end of this discussion, the specific home context of the children in social and cultural processes will be introduced.

2.5.1 *Broad Ideas on Social and Cultural Processes*

In this section, Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Krashen's (1981) Hypothesis *i + 1*, which applied in most educational settings whether at home or at school, will be mainly discussed.

Language development stands for the conception and dignity of mankind as speech makes us human and literacy makes us civilized (Olson, 1977, cited in Wells, 1986). From the infant's first interaction with his/her mother, language development permeates almost all human activity. This indicates that the cognitive dimension is a natural and

subconscious process that occurs developmentally from birth to the end of schooling and beyond (McLaughlin, 1988). Language is a social tool for children to discover the world and express their feelings, thoughts and emotions (Wells, 1991), and it is also the basis of children's mental cognitive/academic development. Vygotsky (1978) states that language develops as a means of social communication first (inter), is later internalized (intra) which becomes a crucial tool in the shaping of cognitive processes relevant for the elaboration of the abstract symbolic system which will enable the child to organize his thoughts.

As humans are social beings, we need languages to communicate with each other including communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds. Wells (1986) claims that languages can be learned through social interaction. This social interaction helps to create many opportunities for children to acquire language and to know what to say, to whom, when, and where in different social and cultural contexts. Social interactions with peers, siblings, and more skilful adults, e.g. parents, teachers and professional adults, enable children to develop their potential language ability.

Vygotsky's (1978, cited in Scovel, 2001:20) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) states: "This 'zone' represents the difference between an individual child's level of linguistic and cognitive development, and the potential level of development as shaped via interaction with adults or peers". This means that a child develops and reaches his/her potential level of development by scaffolding with skilled peers and adults. Scaffolding is assistance that allows children to complete tasks they are not able to compete independently (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1996, cited in Eggen & Kauchak 1994). This is independent of the time it takes, as children learn differently in different situations and at different speeds. In Vygotsky's (1978:90, cited in Geert, 1994:353) words:

Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement.

“Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)” (Rieber, 1997:xi). This illustrates the process of internalization of the child’s language development. It illustrates that any kind of educational process (whether it involves parents or teachers) must be based on the children’s individual activity. The art of education should involve nothing more than guiding and monitoring this teaching activity (Vygotsky, 1997). From this point of view, parents at home, and adults in the Chinese community act in similar roles to teachers as the directors of the social learning context and the guides in the interaction between the educational process and the children.

Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD is based on social experience and language development. Social experience shapes the way learners think about and interpret the world: such as Vygotsky’s (1978) problem solving dyads. This problem solving activity could be scaffolded between a capable adult (parent or teacher) or any skilled peer and a child. One of the most common forms of scaffolding is modeling. By demonstrating how to solve problems, parents and teachers provide children with concrete examples of experts at work. Scaffolding helps children move through the Zone of Proximal Development by enabling them to eventually complete tasks independently. Effective scaffolding is responsive to children’s needs and it adjusts instructional requirements to their level of performance (Rosenshine & Meister, 1992, cited in Eggen & Kauchak 1994). What the child learns from this collaborative activity will be processed and be part of his/her experiences. Once these learning experiences are internalized, the child can carry out this problem solving by himself/herself independently.

Vygotsky’s (1978) view is that human beings’ fundamental nature is social; social interaction mediates one’s language learning and development. Thus, in order to take advantage of this fact, parents’ and teachers’ responsibility is to create a context that provides mutual guidance in the ZPD (Takahashi, 1998). Successful language learning then requires comprehensible input. Since parents know their children best, they can provide an appropriate comprehensive Chinese linguistic input based on their child’s

Chinese language proficiency. Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis can thus also be applied to parents' and teachers' strategies. Krashen's (1981, cited in Brown, 2000) Input Hypothesis refers to the acquisition of language that is slightly beyond the current language competence of a child. This language is understood but still challenges the child to make progress. The input a child understands should contain $i + 1$, not beyond this or over this level, where i is comprehensible input and I is the additional teaching and learning.

To be successful, Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis requires that children take time to pick up the extra language input naturally. Researchers (cited in Shresta, 1998) claim that formal classroom instruction filled with comprehensible input adds learning. Parents certainly can create this kind of learning experience at home. If parents can build a peaceful, stress free and happy learning context for their children that can help to reduce children's anxiety level, it might increase and motivate children's enthusiasm for learning at home. It would be very important for parents to be aware that children need to keep anxiety in a very low level so as to learn more. It also means that parents should consciously provide this additional learning in order to challenge their children.

No matter Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD or Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis, they all emphasize to develop children's potential ability through the social interactions with capable parents and teachers. It would be important for parents and teachers to constantly help children to develop their potential ability by designating a challenge additive learning in the ZPD so that children can reach their full language development.

2.5.2 *Social and Cultural Processes at Home Context*

The home context is certainly a part of social and cultural life. It is particularly important for immigrant children who might experience some difficulties of language, emotions and schoolwork at the start of settling in a new country.

Peng & Wright (1994) say that most Chinese parents who have high expectations for their children spend their family time tutoring their children, a) reading to children regularly or listening to them read aloud; b) taking children to the library; c) having informal conversations with children to talk about their the school day; d) watching specific programs with children and then discussing the shows; e) supervising and assisting children in completing homework tasks, such as providing children with spelling practice activities and mathematic drills. Cummins (1981) suggests, that if parents want their children to acquire their heritage language, they should use the language with their children maximally, thus, motivating them to use the language. This helps to build a positive relationship and intimate attachment between family members. It also contributes to a positive attitude towards these children's future lives because their parents play a central role in education and language learning (Hickey, 1999).

Homework is especially important for immigrant children, who at one time or another may have some difficulties because of language barriers (Villas-Boas, 1998). Parents could try to create a low anxiety context at home for their children to overcome these difficulties. Working within a one to one situation, parents can easily plan and work in Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD and Krashen's (1981) *i + I* comprehensible hypothesis. Both of these emphasize the importance of receptive skills and social interactions. Although comprehensible input is a necessary condition for second language acquisition, effective prerequisites may also influence intake. Parental attitudes not only help to promote a positive attitude to maintenance of their own heritage language, but also help develop children's self-confidence and self-identity. From the cultural perspective, parents as tutors encompass social values and practice intimately tied to the children's mother tongue (Mouw & Xie, 1999). In other words, "how parents impart their culture to their children enables them to become the kind of men and women the parents want them to be" (Fillmore, 1991:343).

In most minority language communities, there is an uneven balance of minority language speakers and non-speakers. The crucial issue is often who is influencing who

and where (Baker, 1992)? It has been found that bilinguals who speak Chinese in social settings are more positively rated in the social emotional area than the same bilingual speaking English (Yang & Bond, 1980). In this study, the young Chinese immigrant children may be immersed in mainstream classes in schools of New Zealand. They may be also immersed in their heritage language - the Chinese language at home and in the Chinese community with their parents and friends. It will be valuable to discover how they grow in a bilingual and bicultural situation. This study, therefore, examines the following research questions (see section 3.2):

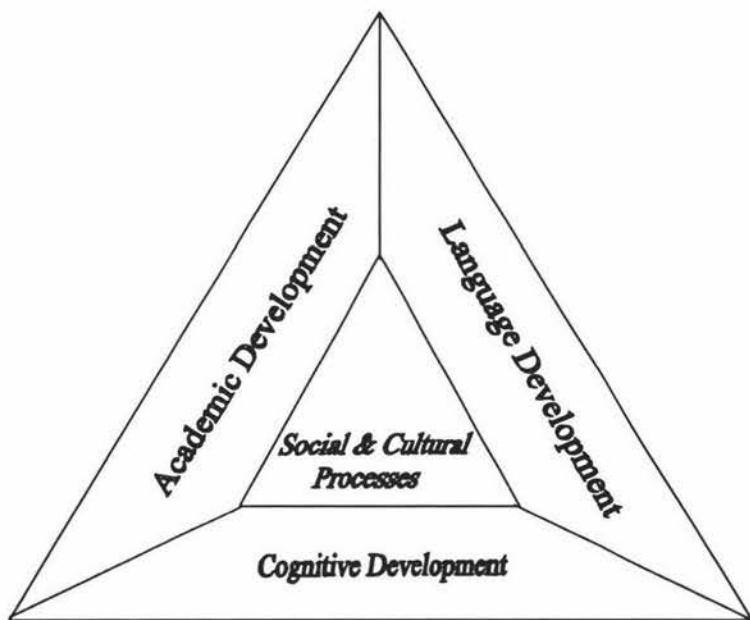
- 1) What perceptions towards their children's bilingualism did Chinese immigrant parents have when they arrived in New Zealand?
- 2) Did parents' perceptions change in an English dominant country between three to five years?
- 3) How did Chinese immigrant parents contribute to their children's bilingualism?
- 4) What were the factors that young Chinese immigrant children felt supportive or interference with their bilingual success?

2.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the definitions of bilingualism and types of bilingual education were described. The evolution of understanding cognitive bilingual development was reviewed with some important theories. The following figure from Thomas and Collier's (1997, cited in Collier, 1998) Prism Model could help to draw a coherent picture for this literature review as it pulled together a range of social and cultural processes including language development, cognitive development, and academic development which often wove together into theories to represent bilingual

development. Vygotsky (1962, cited in Hamers & Blanc 1989) stated that language development played an essential role in cognitive development; at least from the time the child has attained a certain level of language competence. Language development was also the basis of children's mental cognitive/academic development in the social and cultural processes. Hamers and Blanc (1989) found that language development associated with cognitive/academic language development could not be envisaged outside the social and cultural learning context where it took place. They were rooted in the children's social interaction with others in his/her social network and who present him/her with a model of language and culture.

Figure 2.1: Language Acquisition: The Prism Model



(Adapted from Thomas & Collier, 1997, cited in Collier, 1998)

For children using a minority language, parents' positive attitude, encouragement and motivation played crucial roles in the way for their children to become bilingual. Park and Swartz (2001) suggested that parental attitudes not only determined the success of becoming bilingual, they were also predictors of children's academic success. Parents

in this study might have to be involved as home teachers and to create a language learning context in order to maintain and develop their children's heritage language based on daily communicative interactions. Therefore, parental involvement in this investigation may be shown have a decisive role in their young children's long journey to become bilingual. The Chinese immigrant parents were likely to take responsibility to teach their children the Chinese language at home. It not only fulfilled their expectations but also perhaps benefited their children's future life through being bilingual.

The purpose of this study is to examine the Chinese immigrant parents as home teachers maintaining and developing their children's heritage language in New Zealand, as there has been very little research in this area to fill this gap. Even though there are many theories and much research to demonstrate the positive impact of bilingualism through bilingual education, which likely happens in formal school settings, there has been relatively little on home learning of languages, especially in terms of maintaining and developing children's heritage language. The literature shows no studies regarding Chinese immigrant parents who might involve themselves in a teaching role in an informal setting, such as the home context, in order to assist their children to become bilingual, so this study will make an important contribution.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methods employed for this study. It focuses on the research design of the investigation, and the procedures used to obtain the information. In the first part, I shall explain why the case study approach used is the most suitable design to answer my research questions. I shall go on to examine the use of non-participant observations and interviews as the major techniques within the case study design. Thirdly, there will be a brief introduction and explanation of the way in which participants in this study were recruited. Finally, the ethical considerations involved in the study will be discussed, and the way in which the data were analysed will be reviewed.

3.1 THE RESEARCH APPROACH

In this section, the use of case studies as the research approach is described with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses on the theoretical aspects.

There are many types of qualitative approaches in sociological and educational research. Mertens (1998) identifies case studies as one of the widely used methods. Case studies, as qualitative research, provide an opportunity to deeply understand real situations in naturally occurring contexts. Case studies allow the researcher to “get close to the data” (Filstead, 1970:6, cited in Brenner, Brown & Canter, 1985:148). Merriam (1998:19) describes case studies in the following way:

A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcome, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research.

The focus of case studies in education is to obtain insight and interpret underlying meanings in the real world. The real social life world includes naturally occurring

emotions, motivations, symbols and their meaning associated with evolving lives of individuals and groups (Burg, 2001).

Case studies also present a holistic process and uncover the interaction of significant characteristic factors of a phenomenon. Stake (1995:36) defines qualitative case studies as “intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or social unit”. He indicates that case studies are intended to provide a holistic description of certain phenomenon so that the researcher can intensively analyse a phenomenon. The limitation of case studies is that the generalizations drawn from one case or a few cases may be applied to other cases only at great risk of misapplication and misinterpretation. This risk of error is in assuming that other cases will somehow have likenesses and differences, from which can be drawn the same conclusion. Case studies sometimes are described as “a catch-all category” of research, which involve neither survey research using questionnaires nor statistical analysis (Merriam, 1998:18). This can cause the lack of precision, flexibility and adaptability in the research results. In fact, the case study approach has evolved as a particular method to scientific inquiry, which is widely used in sociology, history, psychology and education (Merriam, 1998), because of its particular strength in uncovering events as discussed above.

Qualitative case studies in this research are intended to be descriptive and interpretive in ways discussed by Burns (1994) and Stake (1995). The descriptive aspect is aimed at giving a description of the phenomenon and focusing on what an interaction contains (Thomas, 1998). The intention of the description is to inform outsiders of the nature of the situation under investigation. The interpretive aspect of the study is intended to develop explanations of cultural expectations from the participants’ perception. It focuses on what those phenomena and events are felt mean to the participants. Case studies are seen as “a step to action” (Bassey, 1999:23), so the researcher can interpret and uncover the hidden meanings, and be guided in further research.

This study used qualitative case studies of eight Chinese immigrant families who arrived in New Zealand three to five years ago. The reason that case studies was chosen as this approach is that it is designed particularly for examining situations in which it is impossible to separate the phenomenon’s variables from their contexts, as Yin (1994) discussed. My research interest was in the role of parents as home teachers

assisting with the development of their children's bilingualism. This might occur in situations such as the Chinese language learning at home and formal schooling in English. Therefore, this investigation focused on discovering how parents taught their children Chinese at home while the children learned English in school, and my position in the study was that of a native Chinese adult, a researcher and also a Massey University student (see the fourth point on section 3.5). The minor focus of this study looked at how the young Chinese immigrant children take advantage of this home teaching and learning in their bilingual growth. Thus, the case study was considered to be the best approach for conducting research in the natural setting - the home context where people are engaged in action and interaction involving bilingual language development, which was central to my research interests.

3.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The situation with each Chinese immigrant family is often as follows: parents who have been highly educated in China and are at about the middle age with a child of about five years old who has basically been able to clearly express himself/herself in the Chinese language. After their arrival, these Chinese immigrant children without English background will start their formal schooling in New Zealand. My key interest is how these young Chinese immigrant children become bilingual after they had been settled in New Zealand just three to five years.

In this section, research questions are fully discussed, taking each question in order. "The case study is the preferred strategy when 'how', 'why' or 'what' questions are being asked, or when the investigator has little control over events, or when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context" (Burns, 1994:313). In pursuing my key interest, the following questions were developed, based on a case study approach.

- 1) *What perceptions towards their children's bilingualism did Chinese immigrant parents have when they arrived in New Zealand?*

The Chinese parents might highly value education and put great effort into helping their children achieve their personal goals, one of which was likely to be becoming bilingual as soon as possible. They might, therefore, take responsibility for teaching their children Chinese at home in order to maintain their heritage language and culture besides their formal schooling. I wished to explore what actually happens in their real life; whether, how and why Chinese immigrant parents put their expectations into action to maintain and develop their children's Chinese learning. The focus was on the first three to five years of their residence in New Zealand.

- 2) *Did parents' perceptions change in an English dominant country between three to five years?*

These parents might have some changes in their perceptions of maintaining their heritage language after living a few years in an English dominant society - New Zealand. What were the reasons for these changes and in what ways had these changes occurred?

- 3) *How did Chinese immigrant parents contribute to their children's bilingualism?*

Young Chinese immigrant children without an English-speaking background and almost no ability to communicate had to start their formal schooling in New Zealand where English is the dominant language. How these young Chinese immigrant children become bilingual was the question of my central research interest. As seen in the literature review, bilingualism has a positive impact on children's cognitive language development; however, those research results are based on formal school bilingual education (Baker, 1996). My research is to explore how young Chinese immigrant children become bilingual in an informal situation - learning the Chinese language at home while they receive formal schooling in the English language in New Zealand.

- 4) *What were the factors that young Chinese immigrant children felt supportive or interference with their bilingual success?*

The first major aim of this study was to explore how Chinese parents perceive and contribute to their children become bilingual over the 3-5 years of their residence in New Zealand. The second aim was to investigate the factors that influence young Chinese immigrant children to becoming bilingual. Sometimes children's choices could be influenced by their peers instead of recommendations from parents and teachers (Krashen, 1993). What were the factors that these Chinese children felt supportive or interference with in the growth of their bilingualism?

The research questions were prepared in two versions: Chinese and English. I intended to ask these questions in Mandarin and pursue points of interest that might come up in the answers so as to get as good a picture as possible of the factors relating to the issues central to each question.

3.3 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Generally, qualitative case studies employ observations and interviews to seek a comprehensive perspective in order to produce rich description and to probe the deep implications and meanings of the research. Patton (1990) states that while interviews provide people's direct quotations of their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge, in contrast, observations record the detailed description of people's activities, behaviours and actions from an observer's perspective. Therefore, a combination of these instruments has been chosen for this study: non-participant observations, parents' interviews with each family and a group interview for children. Together these provide a comprehensive view of the Chinese language development situation in which the children are immersed at home. A pilot study was also carried out to fine-tune these techniques. In the following section, the pilot study, non-participant observations, parents' interviews and the group children's interview are described.

3.3.1 *The Pilot Study*

The first part of this research was the conduct of a pilot study at the beginning of February 2002. A pilot study might be chosen in order to clarify the research questions on the criteria for selecting the cases (Yin, 1994). It is important to note, “a pilot study is not a pre-test” (Yin, 1994:74). One pilot study was carried out in an early stage of this investigation in the form of a trial of the parents’ questionnaires, to practise the appropriateness of the language, format and length. The chosen family was from Taiwan and, therefore, had a similar cultural background to potential participants. The child was about 7 years old and had completed one year of formal schooling in Taiwan prior to arriving in New Zealand. I chose them because of the difficulty of finding enough families who immigrated to New Zealand from Mainland China. Thus, by using a Taiwanese family in the pilot, I conserved the available Chinese families for my real interviews.

One of the other purposes of doing a pilot study was to ask the interviewees for feedback and comments, a strategy suggested by Gillham (2000). The pilot study was used more formatively and assisted the researcher in developing relevant lines of questions and in clarifying the research design (Yin, 1994). While I proceeded in the pilot interview, the parents kept mentioning that they felt there ought to be a little Chinese teaching within school education because they thought it was too hard to teach the Chinese language informally at home. They felt that it would be better to create a positive learning context outside home so the child could see the importance of learning Chinese. For example, some schools offer more options of languages including the Chinese language. For this research, I had only anticipated asking the parents whether they had expectations that schools would offer extra assistance in the English language. However, following these comments, the major change I made was that I decided to ask the families about expectations for both the English and Chinese languages (see the question 6c in Appendices 7.1 and 7.2).

3.3.2 *Non-Participant Observations*

Observation is one of the major means of data collection in qualitative research, especially if an activity, event, or situation can be observed firsthand (Merriam, 1998). Patton (1990) stresses that observation can lead to deeper understanding because it provides a knowledge of the natural context in which events occur, and may enable the researcher to see things that participants themselves are not aware of, or that they are unwilling to discuss.

As a non-participant, the researcher is to be a bystander who plays no role in the witnessed events; the main job is to describe what is being observed, including the setting, the people, activities, events, and apparent feelings as a general picture of what is on the surface, gradually focusing on those elements which are related to the research aims and recording them in detail (Patton, 1990). The advantage of non-participant observation is being an outsider who will notice things that have become routine to the participants themselves, things that may lead to understanding the context. Thomas (1998) stated the remoteness of non-participant observation might also increase the possibility that the subjects' behaviour will be typical. Merriam (1998) found the disadvantage is that the presence of the researcher cannot help but affect the interaction of the participants, and it may lead to the distortion of the situation of being observed.

Formal observations of individual family (father, mother and a child) during Chinese teaching and learning took place in each family's natural home context for approximately 60 minutes, at a time and a place of their choice. The observations focused on the interactions between parents and children based on their daily communication (e.g., which language was used to teach their child schoolwork and how did they teach the child Chinese?). Eight observations were conducted over two weeks. After each observation, the notes were rewritten formally.

All actual non-participant observations took place in each family's home setting on weekday evenings, as chosen by parents. Usually parents liked to use the evenings, especially after supper, when they felt more relaxed and had more time for their family. It was the time parents could sit down and talk with their children, including checking their schoolwork or Chinese teaching and learning as part of their regular daily

activities during weekdays. All my observations were between about 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. on weekdays. During the non-participant observation, I moved around as quietly as I could so as to avoid unnecessary disturbance. I also quietly jotted down some notes to record the major interactions between family members who were directly involved in the teaching activity. As Thomas (1998) mentioned, the more remote the connection between observers and their subjects, the less likely the observers will influence the incidents they are witnessing. Most families were obviously aware of my presence during the first 20 minutes, and then gradually they started to focus on teaching and learning, as I adopted the technique of being “a fly on the wall” (Harker, 2001). However, at times the families did not treat me as “a fly on the wall”, but explained to me what they were doing (see section 6.2). After I arrived home, working notes were rewritten immediately after the observation was completed while the events remained fresh in my mind.

3.3.3 *Interviews*

Interviews are probably the most common data collection technique in qualitative case studies (Merriam, 1998). Patton (1990, cited in Merriam, 1998) says the strength of the face-to-face interview is the *richness* of the communication, so that the researcher can find out what is in and on someone else’s mind. Interviewing is meant to develop a view of something between people (Brenner, Brown & Canter, 1985). The main purpose of an interview is to obtain information that the researcher wants to find out about other people’s thoughts. Patton (1990:196) explains:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of the observer. We cannot observe how people have organised the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective.

Accessing other people’s perspectives is very important in understanding the perceptions of the Chinese immigrant parents in this study. Interviews in this research are intended to probe the *voice* of the inside perspective of parents, and to bring hidden

meanings and beliefs to the surface. "It is not unusual for some respondents to fashion their replies to suit what they guess will please the interviewer" (Thomas, 1998:135). For this research, open-ended questions were adopted mainly to avoid this happening (Thomas 1998).

Generally, there are three types of interviews: highly structured, semi-structured, and unstructured or informal interviews (Merriam, 1998; Martens, 1998). Highly structured interview is usually employed as an oral form of survey since the wording of the questions and the order of the questions is predetermined. Unstructured interview is like a conversation, in which questions are open-ended, and the procedures and the length are very flexible and informal. The semi-structured interview format, which was the one employed in this study, is that research questions are prepared in advance but are open-ended, and the responses' influences lead the researcher to follow up questions, which develop during the process. Gillham (2000) suggests that the semi-structured interview is employed when the researcher knows in general terms what they wish to find out but cannot anticipate the complex set of factors and influences that may be involved for a range of situations and people.

The Parents' Interview

After finishing all non-participant observations, I held an interview with parents, at a time and a place of their choice. The parents were asked and given copies of the questions in English and Chinese (see Appendices 7.1 and 7.2), so they could have a choice of languages. The interviews were audio taped and took approximately 60 minutes. As a bilingual person, I was interested in how these Chinese immigrant families maintained our own language and passed on our cultural heritage to our younger generation. It was important to look at how parents helped their children to adjust and balance a bicultural life in order to become bilingual at such a young age in an English dominant country - New Zealand, and this, as has been discussed, was central to the interview questions.

Tape recorders were used with the permission of the interviewees. The researcher should be aware of the ethical issues, which mean to respect democracy, truth and

people (Merriam, 1998). The disadvantage of tape-recording was that the researcher might cease to listen carefully to the subjects' talk. Thus, some note taking was used to supplement the tape recording. Brenner, Brown and Canter (1985) also supported this strategy.

The actual parents' interviews were held in each individual home setting on weekday evenings. Before I started to conduct my formal interview, we exchanged greetings and chatted about some current events in Mandarin. As Chinese, we always greet each other by asking about what we have had for dinner especially in the evenings, as we believe that food is very important to the healthy living. Therefore, instead of greeting and asking how you are, we usually ask about what we have eaten before we start our business topic. It shows that we really care about each other, as food can bring some friendly chats. Chinese tea is always to be served as one of our hospitality characteristics, and this usually helps to set the friendly tone for any following events. Even though it is time-consuming, it is necessary for friendly social interaction in a Chinese context. This is not only good manners but also central to the research in that it helps to build a mutual trust and good relationship upon which interviewing depends.

The aim of the study was briefly repeated with each participant at the start of each interview and I also regularly reinforced the rights of participants verbally and confirmed their permission for the audiotaping. The purpose of this was to refresh the memory of the rights of participants and to ensure their understanding of ethical issues related to the research. All the participants agreed to be audio taped. As the interviews occurred in Mandarin, all the participants, including me, the researcher, chose to read the questions in the Chinese language (see Appendix 7.2). The interview process took place over a period of two months.

The Children's Group Interview

After finishing the eight family interviews, a group of children composed of members from these eight families was interviewed with one parent volunteer present nearby. This voluntary adult had not been involved during the group interview and had been selected from recommendations made by the eight interviewed families. The criteria

for this person required was someone trusted by all the parents involved in this study, to look after their children. The children were given the questions in English and Chinese (see Appendices 8.1 and 8.2) so they could have a choice. This group interview was to be audio taped and would take about 40 minutes.

No one was required to take part in an audiotaped interview against his/her will. A minimum of six children was required for this group interview. A form in Chinese and English called 'Individual Consent Form for Group Agreement' (see Appendices 5.1 and 5.2) was completed, giving me the permission for audiotaping. I gave the children a couple minutes to read and sign before the group interview started, as the age of these children involved was between 8 to 11 years old. Therefore, they should be able to read in either language, which they preferred. The audiotapes were very important for this study, even though they could not record every single detail during the interview, such as body language and face gestures. I kept track of these by keeping an eye on the tape counter while taking notes during the interview.

It was hoped to preserve the anonymity of the participants within the research group, even though this children's group interview took place with children coming from the participating families. However, the participants were also made aware that there was always the risk that they would be identified because of the small size of the Chinese community (see the fifth point on section 3.5)

After finishing the children's group interview, I showed the children how to play a traditional Chinese mathematics game – Tangram. As Chinese culture is a gift-giving culture, I decided to give this educational game package (with over fifty different patterns) to thank the children and their families for the information they were giving to me.

For the children's group interview, I chose to speak in Mandarin, as I would like to demonstrate the status of the Chinese language. As the parents stated and I noticed, when Chinese children play together they communicate totally in English. Also, once they had been told to express their ideas in Mandarin, it would take a while before they would start talking in Mandarin. This happened in the children's group interview of this study (see detailed discussion in the following two paragraphs).

Arranging the children's group interview went well, but I was not able to get permission from the children to audiotape at the time of processing the group interview, even though I got permission from all children and all their parents for audiotaping this children's group interview by mail before I started to conduct my research. Six of the eight children attended the group interview. One child moved overseas with his parents two weeks before the group interview. Another child had something to do at the time of the group interview. Even though I spoke in Mandarin, and the children responded in Mandarin, they preferred to have the copy of the questions in English (see Appendix 8.1). Very occasionally some children answered in English but they quickly switched back into Mandarin as they noticed that we kept speaking in Mandarin.

These children might appear to feel more comfortable speaking in English, but Mandarin was mainly spoken by them with their parents at home. The Chinese language, however, consists of many dialects in the oral forms related to the areas where speakers were from. The standard oral language is the Mandarin, which is taught in formal schooling in China. Sometimes Chinese people find it hard to understand each other's Mandarin if it carries a strong accent from the various dialects. Therefore, in this investigation, children might be at the various levels of speaking Mandarin in terms of fluency, thus they might feel more confident to speak in English which is not only the language they speak most of the time instead of Mandarin, but also might be in another sense a *common* language to them. Considering the children's different age and the various length of their residence in New Zealand, their English levels also are at different levels. It meant that whichever language I chose to use involved some limitations in being fully understood. Therefore, I decided to speak Mandarin since this research was about their Chinese language learning.

Apart from the explanations of speaking Mandarin to children, the reasons of choosing to speak in Mandarin for the parents' interviews were different. According to Brenner, Brown & Canter's (1985) suggestion, there should be no problems of understanding about questions and answers between interviewers and respondents. As I am a native Chinese, it was, therefore, more convenient for these immigrant parents to express themselves deeply, freely and widely in Mandarin. This ensured there would not be any language barriers between us. I asked parents to provide their opinions and to

describe the methods used to teach their children Chinese at home. I prepared some open-ended questions in order to stimulate wide-ranging responses that would allow me to explore each issue as fully as possible.

3.4 PARTICIPANTS

The target population of participants were in the North Island of New Zealand. Ember and Ember (2001) considered that a population could be any set of units or cases such as families, households, communities, societies, counties and so on. It was necessary to find enough participants for this particular research in order to collect rich information. In the following section, I shall introduce the research techniques and the background knowledge about my participants.

3.4.1 *Recruitment of Participants*

Two types of research techniques were used to select the participants in this investigation: snowball sampling and naturalistic sampling:

The snowball sampling technique:

Kalton and Anderson (1986 cited in Young, 2000:37) describe the snowball sampling technique as:

A sample selection technique used to sample from rare populations where no sampling frame exists. Snowballing relies on the fact that members of this rare population know each other and is used, for example, to sample rare ethnic minorities, religious groups, and people with disabilities (Kalton and Anderson, 1986 cited in Wong, 1997:17).

Snowball sampling is a strategy in which the successive participants or group might be recommended by the previous individuals or group. Participants' referrals are the basis for selecting potential participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). Because of the difficulty of finding families, the snowball sampling technique was adopted. It was

hoped that the participants would know friends or their friends' friends who were in a similar situation to them. In this case, I would come closer to obtain a research group, which met my original criteria.

Naturalistic sample:

There was no attempt to measure the contributions made by the parents, and I had no intention of investigating who was the *best* bilingual child. This allowed the use of naturalistic sampling. That meant when I had enough families to be involved, the selection of participants was stopped naturally. Once I received the phone calls and emails from the potential participants, I contacted them via telephone and an informal meeting was arranged between us. Those who contacted me after I had got enough subjects received a letter of thanks, or a phone call if I did not have their postal addresses.

Originally my intended research criteria for selecting participants were:

- Immigrant families from Mainland China who had come to NZ three to five years ago with a child of about five years old.
- The child should be eight or ten years old NOW.
- The parents should be actively teaching their children the Chinese language at home.

The difficult thing was that these kinds of the immigrant families had often moved around the country or shifted to other countries. This made it even harder to find enough local families to be interviewed. Therefore, I had to expand the criteria to include young Chinese immigrant children who were between four and seven years old when they arrived in NZ. In addition, the length of time living in New Zealand was widened to include some families who had lived here about two years or more than five years. However, in all cases the parents had still played a crucial role in helping and teaching their children to be bilingual at an early age. This fulfilled the purpose of my research to investigate the parents' perceptions of and contributions to their children's bilingualism.

As the major purpose of this study was to focus on the parents' perceptions of and their contributions as home teachers in order to maintain and develop their children's heritage language, it was expected that I would be able to establish close rapport with these families. The situation was hopefully enhanced by mutual trust arising from a shared cultural background and similar life experiences both in China and in New Zealand in order to gain information as naturally, truthfully and spontaneously as possible. Obtaining people's perceptions of reality expressed in their actions and expressed as feelings, thoughts, and beliefs verbally or nonverbally, would benefit the researcher and assist me to construct a view of their realities (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). I used more open-ended questions in the hope that it would lead the subjects to exercise some control over the direction of the research questions. The reason was, as Gudykunst and Kim (1984) found, that Asian people are known for the indirect nature of their communication and the tendency to say what will please the interviewer is quite strong.

As a Chinese immigrant person, I fully understood how hard it was in a new country. Although we thought we were ready, we were not able to prepare for everything that we had to face. While these immigrant parents struggled to adjust the new life in New Zealand, some parents might have unintentionally paid less attention to their children's bilingual education even though it may be one of their reasons moving to New Zealand. As the parents' English abilities improved by learning and becoming part of the communities of New Zealand, some immigrant families might find more time to think about language, and start to put more effort into their children's bilingual education at home, e.g., teaching Chinese. Therefore, I also widened my criteria on *actively* teaching Chinese at home in order to include parents who had an intention to teach their children Chinese but had not yet done much.

3.4.2 The Subjects

In the following section, I will provide some background knowledge of the eight immigrant families who were involved in this study. Only eight families contacted me during the period of selection. There were 22 participants involved, including 16 adults

in the 8 family interviews and 6 children for a children's group interview. Most of the parent participants were full time university students pursuing higher qualifications; four out of sixteen adults had part-time jobs. The age of the children was from 8 years old to 11 years old.

Family One had lived in New Zealand about eight years. Their daughter joined them about five years ago when she was about five years old, having stayed in China with her grandparents. While this girl was in China, her grandparents taught her the Chinese language at home as they were teachers before they retired. Her grandparents considered she could read some simple things such as the TV Guide, as she always chose the programs she would like to watch and highlighted them for herself when she was four years old. She never went to kindergarten as she always had baby sitters with her. Her parents commented that she loved reading all sorts of books.

Family Two arrived in New Zealand five and half years ago with their four-year-old son. Their son went to kindergarten for about one and half years in China. He could play games, recite nursery rhymes and songs, but he could not read and write in Chinese. He could clearly retell the stories told by his kindergarten teacher and had no problems with his daily communication in Mandarin.

Family Three settled in New Zealand about five years ago with a six-year-old daughter who had attended Chinese kindergarten part time for two years. From five years old, she went to kindergarten full time for one year in China before her arrival in New Zealand. She loved drawing, and could retell stories in Mandarin very well. She could sing songs and count well in Mandarin. This girl is now eleven years old and has a three-year-old sister, born in New Zealand, who can also speak reasonably well in Mandarin (This baby girl had not been included in this study).

Family Four had lived in New Zealand for four years, moving when their daughter was just over four years old. She went to kindergarten for about eight or nine months in China. She could read a few Chinese characters and expressed herself in Mandarin very well. Her parents commented that her Chinese language comprehension skills had developed well as she liked to ask explanations for her questions and was able to repeat them very well in Mandarin.

Family Five had also lived in New Zealand for four years, arriving when their son was about 5 years old. Their son went to kindergarten in China for two years. He had been taught how to write in Chinese and he could read 20 or 30 Chinese characters. His parents commented that he could express himself very well by using many adjectives and had a mature grasp of the Chinese language.

Family Six settled in New Zealand three and half years ago when their daughter was about seven years old. This child finished Grade One at Primary School in China. Because the school she went to had a new reformed teaching method, it had required her to master over two thousand Chinese written characters within her first primary grade (equals Year One in New Zealand schools). She could read and write these two thousand Chinese written characters very well before she arrived in New Zealand. She was a very quiet girl, she did not like talking either in Mandarin or English, but she loved painting and she could draw very well, especially animals.

Family Seven arrived in New Zealand two years ago with a six and half year old son. He had attended kindergarten for three years and half a year of Grade One of primary school in China. He could write a few hundred Chinese written characters. He could also manage basic addition and subtraction in Chinese. He could clearly retell his life experiences stories in Mandarin. His parents commented that he was very mobile and liked sports.

Family Eight arrived in New Zealand nearly two years ago with their six-year-old daughter. She went to kindergarten for 3 years in China. She could read about two or three hundred Chinese characters and she could write about a hundred words in Chinese. She also knew Pinyin well.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues are always considered seriously in any type of research activities as the results of the interactions between the researchers and the participants, because of the potentiality to damage or at least disturb the subjects' personal life. Therefore, there

were a number of ethical issues to be considered during this whole investigation as in any study involving human subjects. The ethical considerations of this research were guided by the *Code of Ethical Conduct for Research and Teaching Involving Human Subject from Massey University*. The subjects have the right to suffer no harm, including no social embarrassment or criticism, as a result of opinions they express in an interview (Thomas, 1998). In order to achieve this, the following steps were adopted:

Firstly, a letter in both English and Chinese (see Appendices 1.1 and 1.2) was passed to potential participants by Churches, the local Chinese Association, the Chinese Students' Association, Chinese communities, English Learning Centres and the local Home Tutoring Centre. The purpose was to remove the pressure on possible participants to take part by using a third party to pass on the letters. I was concerned to alleviate any stress on people who might hesitate to take part, as they knew me personally or were friends of mine. If the potential subjects were interested, they contacted me via a phone or an email offered in the letter. After I received the phone calls or emails back from the potential participants who showed their willingness to be in the research, I organised an informal meeting with them via the phone in order to share further information about the study, and provide an information sheet and consent forms in English and Chinese (see Appendices from 2.1 to 4.2). The information sheet indicated the purpose of the research, the participants' rights, and university approval of this research.

Secondly, at an informal meeting for the pre-observation interview, I explained the purpose of the research and answered any questions that the participants had. I also highlighted their rights, such as the participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any time, and to refuse to answer any questions. I had a talk with each child in his/her parents' presence. I explained to the child the purpose of this study and their rights, and answered any questions the child had. I left the child with choice by not expecting her/him to sign the consent form until some time after the meeting. I especially emphasized to the parents that the child had a right to choose whether to participate. The purpose of the children's group interview was explained to both the parents and the children as an attempt to find out about Chinese immigrant children's experiences in

New Zealand and to explore their attitudes about becoming bilingual after living in New Zealand between three and five years.

I gave the potential subjects an information sheet and consent forms so that they could think about participating and make a decision later. The consent forms would be returned to me in a stamped self-addressed envelope. Eight informal meetings were conducted over one week. After each meeting, I wrote some notes as background knowledge on each individual family as my preliminary research data (see Appendices 6.1 and 6.2). Thus, I became familiar with each family, which helped to prepare for the following non-participant observations and the interviews.

Thirdly, after I got all consent forms with the signatures of parents and their children back, I started my formal interviews. At each interview, I briefly reviewed the purposes of my research and confirmed the participants' permission for the audiotaping. The rights of the participants were regularly reiterated at times during the procedure of the interview. These were clearly written on the information sheet and consent forms, but I always reinforced them and made clear that I meant them. In particular that: 1) they could decline to participate at any time, 2) they could refuse to answer any particular questions, 3) they were free to ask any questions about the study at any time during their participation, 4) they were also free to stop the tape recording at any time during the processing of the interview, and that 5) I would provide for confidentiality by using pseudonym names to protect the identity of participants.

Fourthly, there was a certain conflict in the multiple roles I held within this research context. These included being a native Chinese, a researcher and a Massey University student. As a native Chinese adult who had the same cultural background and similar life experience as my participants, it was perhaps easier for me to build the mutual trust and understanding as there should not be any misunderstanding and misinterpretation. This also helped my subjects to express freely and deeply their opinions and feelings in our mother language - Mandarin. But this *cultural intimacy* may lead the research away from the objectivity, which was valued in this study. Thomas (1998:142) identified this tendency in which "researchers' hearts may come to control their heads". I tried to keep a balance between my natural empathy as a native Chinese, and my role as a researcher and a Massey University student. I, therefore, had to adjust my personal

position constantly. I have tried throughout to remind myself that this research should reflect to as great degree as possible what the world really is like for these parents instead of what I wish the world were like.

Fifthly, after collecting all data, and during the procedure of my translation and transcription, I asked each family for a pseudonym that they might like me to use. They all gave me permission to choose a name that was convenient for organising my research data. I was very aware that I had to avoid using the same real surnames of all the participants so they could not be identified in the small Chinese community. Thus, under section 3.4.2, I numbered each family instead of giving them the pseudonym last names, which appeared in the result and discussion chapters. To protect the children's identity from their parents and the Chinese community, I chose very common children's first names according to the custom of the Chinese culture.

Sixthly, triangulation in any study is an important procedure for ensuring that the translations and transcriptions of the data and ideas were valid and reliable. Triangulation refers to a variety of research data collection methods and to the crosschecking between these in order to ensure the accuracy of expressions or ideas that arose during data examination (Edwards, 1993). Burns (1994) stated that triangulation contributes to verification and validation of qualitative analysis. Validity and reliability of this study were considered seriously. Validity was the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the subjects and the researcher. The reliability referred to consistency or stability in measurement (Ember & Ember, 2001). The researcher and participants should agree with each other on the description of events, and especially on the meanings of the depicted events (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997). Therefore, the translations from Chinese into English and transcriptions from audiotapes were given to the subjects in order to give them an opportunity to clarify what they had said, and amend any misinterpretation or any parts they did not feel comfortable about being made public. It was also one way to avoid my personal biases and to ensure the validity and reliability of this study. As all parent participants were fluent bilinguals, they have had the ability to clarify their ideas if they did not feel satisfied with the way I had translated and transcribed for them. Because this thesis is presented in English, I asked my subjects to check the drafts in English. As I had been trained and graduated with an English Literature Degree and a Diploma

in Chinese Literature from China, I was quite confident of the quality of my translations but this needed to be checked by the subjects; all my translations and transcriptions were sent to each family for their final checking and they were all satisfied at this stage. As an aside, however, I felt having listened to, translated and transcribed all the interviews data, I had a very thorough knowledge of the material.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, the way in which data was analysed is explained.

The purpose of qualitative research is to explore how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world (Creswell, 1994). The idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select information that will best answer the research questions (Creswell, 1994). Therefore, the following steps in my data analysis were adopted:

Firstly, I kept reviewing the purpose of my study when I analysed my data collection. I marked the notes and made comments in the margins of my data.

Secondly, I wrote a separate memorandum for reflections, tentative themes, ideas and things to pursue that are derived from my first set of data and this accompanies the entire data analysis.

Thirdly, I coded these tentative themes in different colours on the transcriptions so I could identify them while I carried on to analyse the next set of data. I then collated the tentative categories of answers to my research questions by putting them into the different coloured folders and saved these on different coloured disks, even though I did not have a clear idea what would be discovered. The final product was shaped by the data collected and emerged during the analysis process (Merriam, 1998).

Fourthly, when I had completed the analysis for five of the eight family cases, I made a list of all my tentative topics. I clustered together similar topics and added new

tentative topics. For example, some parents kept comparing two educational systems so as to find good strategies for their home Chinese teaching.

Fifthly, I went back to all my data and re-categorized them into my tentative topics, and then I reduced my total list of tentative topics by grouping topics that related to each other. For example, some final topics were: Parents' understandings of bilingualism and parents' teaching strategies at home. This allowed to have a close discussion about the reasons why parents chose the strategies they preferred (see chapter four and chapter five).

Finally, I hoped that I could derive a theory from my data - a theory that applied to this specific aspect of educational practice about developing children's bilingualism. This theory would emerge from examination of the data. By developing my theory from the information of this study, the resulting theory would have "a specificity and usefulness to practice often lacking in theories that cover more global concerns" (Merriam, 1998:17). Thus, I hoped to be able to identify some valuable insights and perhaps draw some useful conclusions regarding the development of bilingualism among young Chinese immigrant children in New Zealand.

3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented an overview of my research approaches with a detailed explanation of the techniques used. It also described the pilot study and the procedure of pre-observation interviews, non-participant observations, parents' interviews and the children's group interview, which were used to gather data within this study. Throughout the design of this investigation, I have emphasized the importance of ethical issues. Finally, I also explained the triangulation of data in order to ensure the validity and reliability of my translations and transcriptions.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to represent the findings of this research, which are considered in nine sections. Within each of these sections, examples that were common to a number of participants and which typify the study are used to illustrate and represent the views of the participants. Since the main focus of this study is Chinese parents as home teachers maintaining and developing children's heritage language - the Chinese language, their attitudes and understandings on their children's bilingualism are described in depth. Parents' interpretation of their teaching and learning philosophy, including their teaching methods and the ways of setting up those teaching approaches, are reviewed. Finally, children's attitudes towards the Chinese learning are presented.

4.1 PARENTS' UNDERSTADINGS OF BILINGUALISM

The families I interviewed all believed that bilingualism had many advantages; therefore, they expected their children to become bilingual. They put great effort into achieving this goal including the decision to be home teachers on behalf of their children in order to support their development in two languages. In this section, parents' understandings of bilingualism will be divided into three parts. The first part is relevant to the definitions of bilingualism made by parents. The second part is how the human being's brain works for a bilingual. The third part is the interpretation from the parents of how bilingualism benefits children's language development.

Firstly, All the parents had their own definition of or description of what a bilingual was, as illustrated by the comments:

The degree of mastering two languages is various. If you could use two languages for communication, and if you could write simple messages in the other language, you could be regarded as a bilingual (Zhou family).

Parents considered that bilingualism meant two languages and it would be ideal if children could master the two languages equally well, but claimed this as impossible because the learning context surrounding the children was English. As the dominant language, English was the one, children used the most; thus, their children's English language development would be better than their Chinese language. Some parents were realistic as follows:

We expect our daughter to master two languages including listening, speaking, reading and writing. But we think it is impossible for her to have the same language ability as the children who live in China (Hong family).

Most of the parents believed that it was impossible that children could learn two languages equally well:

It is very possible that our daughter will have one language well developed because of the learning context, which limits her opportunities to speak in Mandarin. Therefore her English should be outstanding (Chai family).

Secondly, Some parents firmly believed that children could be bilingual or even multilingual. They also tried to explain how the brain functioned within children's language development:

From the potential of human being's brain, learning one more language should not be a problem. People have many potential abilities in the language learning. Once a person realizes that s/he wants to speak in any languages, her/his brain will naturally open to that language and function automatically. It does not need any adjustments between languages. It just naturally operates in that language. Children could learn many languages if the right learning condition and learning context are provided (Cui family).

Mr. and Mrs. Liang also considered that bilingualism would benefit their daughter's language and thinking development compared to monolingual speakers:

According to scientific research, a human being only uses small part of its brain and leaves large part undeveloped. When children learn two languages, it means that they use two spaces in their brain so as to learn the two languages, which helps to develop, extend and benefit children's language and thinking development (Liang family).

In contrast, some parents were concerned that if children learn two or more languages, it would impair their major language learning - English. It was mentioned that there

were some bilingual classes using Maori and English in some schools of New Zealand. The Hong family was surprised by this:

Is it? In that learning context, would learning Maori language affect children's English language development? It would be better for Chinese children if they could have this kind of language learning opportunity. But I am not sure that children could learn two languages at their young age (Hong family).

Thirdly, parents also tried to understand the procedure of their children's language learning. The parents from two families reckoned that their children learnt English by understanding messages from the pictures at the very beginning of their schooling in New Zealand because their children loved drawing. Parents thought that children's understanding of those messages from pictures was actually the knowledge from their prior Chinese language. They also assumed that the teachers who gave extra English language tutorials must teach their children by relating language exercises to the pictures children had painted, so that their children could learn the English language at school (Chai & Wei families).

Some parents believed that their children's prior life experiences in the Chinese language were the basis for English language learning. It helped their children to learn another language quickly, especially when children were in the right language learning context such as English learning in the classrooms and school playgrounds. Some parents thought because of their previous knowledge in the Chinese language, children could find the relevant concepts in both languages. This enabled children to express themselves in either language:

Because of prior knowledge in the Chinese language, our daughter knows how to express herself in Mandarin, and then she learns how to relate to English language learning and vice versa (Wei family).

Most parents also felt that if children did not have similar levels of knowledge in both Chinese and English languages, they would not be able to translate from one language to the other:

If our daughter did not have the concept in the Chinese language, she did not know how to translate it into Mandarin even though she had been taught some concepts in school, for example, the cold color and warm color. She had to speak to us in English and had no idea in Chinese. After we taught her how to say the cold color and warm color in Mandarin, she could apply this in either language. If she has this

knowledge about cold color and warm color in the Chinese language, it would help her to make sense when she learnt this concept in English at school (Wei family).

This uneven language development would lead children to have one dominant language and one weaker language. With time, children learning more new concepts in English at school would have difficulties finding the relevant words to express themselves in Chinese, as they had not been taught the same vocabulary in Chinese even though children had the knowledge of the concepts:

The more children learnt, the more children would think in English. Our daughter tends to think in English instead of in Chinese. But we think that less knowledge in the Chinese language will not affect her English language development (Wei family).

Some parents thought that culture was the basis of language. They felt it was impossible for people to understand a culture without understanding that language. They found it hard to mix into New Zealand society because of their lack of understanding of the culture:

For example, during many conversations, we could not understand the cultural and contextual meanings even though we understand every single word in each sentence. The reason is that we do not have the background knowledge of that culture (Deng family).

This indicated that parents hoped that bilingualism would bring a broader range of language development to children and also culturally diverse knowledge since language and culture could not be separated.

In this section, parents showed their understandings of bilingualism in several different ways, which will be discussed in section 5.2. Parents would like their children to master two languages equally well, but they realized that it is always not easy in an English dominant country, which illustrated that parents believed learning context had a strong influence on their children's bilingual development (see section 4.6). However, from their explanations, parents hoped their children learn English and also learn Chinese so as to become bilingual.

4.2 PARENTS' TEACHING STRATEGIES AT HOME

Most importantly, all parents created a Chinese teaching and learning context at home. Parents kept their own life style by maintaining a traditional Chinese living environment at home such as not only through eating or cooking methods and utensils, but also through reading books and using Chinese decoration, etc. Parents thought that their children learnt English and followed the school pace well, so they did not worry about their English language; instead they took the responsibility to teach the Chinese language as home teachers. The parents' teaching style clearly demonstrated their personal beliefs and presented the ways they had been brought up in the traditional Chinese culture. This section is divided into two parts: parental teaching styles and teaching strategies for the Chinese language, as parents' teaching strategies are also based on their parental teaching styles at home.

There were some totally different parental teaching styles among the Chinese immigrant families involved in this study. Some parents would require their children to learn Chinese at home as one of children's commitment. Most parents thought that their children understood the reasons behind the requirement of learning Chinese. Because of their young age, children were not psychologically mature in terms of self-control, but this did not mean children did not understand the reason of being required to learn Chinese. Many parents believed that learning could not be enjoyable all the time, and were prepared to impose their language teaching:

We expect our son to learn Chinese, as this is his learning task and a duty that he has to finish. He has to learn Chinese every day. For the first time he could say "no"; the second time he could feel unhappy about it; the third time he would think that is all right until, he forms a natural habit. Now learning Chinese is one of his learning tasks and he is used to learn by himself without reminding. He knows that it is time to do some Chinese learning because he finishes watching his TV and having his snacks. He does have one more task needed to be finished, and that is to read a piece of written article in the Chinese language each day. However, he would find one article in Chinese to read and write as his daily learning task (Cui family).

Some parents thought that there was some conflict between their parental expectations at home and the school education:

Anything that we require our daughter to do, she usually would do it. This formed as her habits when she was at Grade One in Primary School

in China. If the teacher asked her to do something, she would do it. Now it is different in New Zealand. The teachers in New Zealand encourage her to do what she likes. Of course she is happy to do what she would like to do. Therefore, she does not behave as before, doing what we ask her, but she is still able to listen to our suggestions (Hong family).

Some of the parents would negotiate with their children about the learning programs either in English or in Chinese for weekdays, weekends and school holidays:

My daughter sometimes speaks to us in English. I ask her to speak in Mandarin, and she will do it. I think that is because we never try to force her of doing anything. She does not have any rebellious behaviour or thinking. We negotiate with her about anything relevant to her learning programs, such as Chinese learning or even English learning, especially on weekdays, weekends and school holidays (Zhou family).

Some parents considered the real situation was that their children lived in two cultures now. Parents as Chinese wanted to keep Chinese things, maintaining a Chinese life style and celebrating traditional Chinese festivals. Their children tended to be more accepting of Western culture:

We do not insist on asking our daughter to do what we would like her to do because she is an eleven-year-old girl now (Chai family).

Some parents adopted the strategy of praising their children a lot so that children felt good about learning Chinese:

Mainly we apply the strategy of encouragement, for example, he is very smart compared to some children, because he can understand two languages. We always praise him more than we should and let him feel better by saying that he is an expert at something, such as he is good at mathematics and Chinese language (Song family).

Parents had a variety of ideas on how to teach their children Chinese at home, their teaching strategies will be reported as follows, firstly, it focuses on teaching strategies of listening and speaking, and secondly, teaching strategies with regard to reading and writing.

Firstly, all of the parents maintained their conversation with their children in Mandarin through their daily life at home, including their communication on inquiring and tutoring children's schoolwork. In the sense of teaching listening and speaking

Mandarin, not many families realized that they should teach their children how to listen and speak, as they believed that their children already knew by learning through daily communication. Three of the eight families actually applied some good strategies for teaching listening and speaking in Chinese.

One family spent their time reading stories to their son and they expected that, through this, their son would be engaged to learn the Chinese language:

I [the father] borrowed a famous classic novel named 水浒传 '*All Men Are Brothers*' and read every story for our son in Mandarin last year. Our son translated one story into English at school one day. He retold one of the stories to his classmates: "Do you know we had a giant monster in ancient China who can pull up a big tree from its roots?" I thought our son properly chatted with his classmates about 中国功夫 (*Chinese Gongfu*). I only hope that my introduction of these famous Chinese stories or history will raise his interest in Chinese culture and language for our son (Cui family).

The Zhou family continuously read all sorts of stories from books, newspapers and encyclopaedias to their daughter in Mandarin since they arrived in New Zealand. The girl from this family preferred listening to the interesting famous ancient stories. The way of teaching spoken language - Mandarin in this family - was that everyone took a turn to tell stories, and it happened quite often during weekdays and weekends. It was a good way to help this girl express her ideas in Mandarin in an appropriate way. Last year the mother taught her daughter Pinyin. Now this eight-year-old girl could read a little assisted by Pinyin but it was still impossible for her to read and write in the Chinese language independently. Thus, while her aural and oral language skill was developing, reading and writing skills were not quite as developed.

Some parents hoped, by keeping speaking to their children in Mandarin at home, that they could enrich their children's Chinese vocabulary in the sense of rich scientific technological terms instead of basic life everyday words:

We prefer to introduce scientific terms in our daily conversations as much as we can at home. For example, the word 椅子 (chair) has the same function and meaning in both languages. Similar words like these are the vocabularies we tend to teach our son. Some words particularly used in China will not be introduced to him, such as *the central government* (党中央) or *Beijing Opera* (京剧) (Cui family).

Mrs. Cui felt that at this stage she was not concerned about teaching the written Chinese characters. Mr. and Mrs. Cui did not expect too much of their son at his young age (about 9 years old) while he received his formal schooling in New Zealand. They were happy that at least their son could communicate fluently in daily conversations with them in Mandarin.

Most parents appreciated that books in English were published in various types in accordance with the children's reading needs, such as big picture books. They could not find picture books or chapter books in the Chinese language; however, they thought it would not be easy to find these kinds of big picture books, even in China. Thus, instead of looking for picture books, parents found DVD and TV were useful which benefited their children's listening and speaking Mandarin:

It would be better for children to have some interesting storybooks or some cartoons to read and to watch, but we did not bring any of learning material from China except the Chinese standard textbooks at the primary school level. Children find the textbooks are very boring; it would be more interesting to learn Chinese by watching cartoons or reading storybooks. This would help to improve their listening, speaking, reading and writing (Wei family).

One family believed that their daughter could still understand Mandarin; the reason must be because she loved to watch TV shows in Mandarin. She rarely spoke to her parents in Mandarin even though her parents talked to her in Mandarin all the time:

There are some interesting TV shows and films in Mandarin, including entertainment programs such as 春节联欢晚会 '*The Eve of Chinese Festival*', 西游记 '*Journey to the West*'. She will sit there and watch them thousands of times, and never feel bored. Her favorite TV show is 还珠格格 '*The Returned Princess*'. She particularly likes to see programs for children's amusement, not adults' shows (Chai family).

Some parents were fond of DVD or TV shows spoken in Mandarin, as they could have a break from their teaching responsibilities while the programs were on, and their children could still increase their knowledge:

Now we tend to borrow some DVD or cartoons in Mandarin for our son, because when he watches these programs, we do not need to talk Mandarin to him. Children do like watching any types of cartoons. His favourite book is called 西游记 '*Journey to the West*' (Cui family).

A majority of the parents believed that the most effective way to teach Chinese was to make learning like playing and to have some enjoyable experiences. At this stage, all parents agreed that watching cartoons or some TV shows was the best way to assist their children's listening skills. One family also found that using children's questions would be the other good teaching strategy in teaching oral Chinese language:

Perhaps the best way is using our daughter's questions to explain to her the essence Chinese knowledge, such as the 24 seasonal divisions in our moon calendar and how they work. That would raise her curiosity of learning something in Chinese (Chai family).

Secondly, all parents believed that children's education needed careful design and deep contemplation even though most of them did not have a plan; they chose to use the *Standard Textbooks of Nine Years Compulsory Elementary Education* from Mainland of China. In addition, all parents considered that they should teach listening and speaking constantly as these were the basic learning skills for any languages.

Most parents thought that it was better to teach more vocabulary through oral language, which children could practise in conversation, rather than to teach their children reading and writing in Chinese that they would forget unless they used them constantly. However, all the families have engaged in teaching their children reading and writing in a variety of degrees according to their children's individual level.

Some children had at least half an hour spent on their Chinese learning daily. Children generally spend more time to learn Chinese during the weekends and school holidays:

We arrange homework in details each day. Usually this kind of reading and writing in the Chinese language should only last half an hour. Because our daughter does not concentrate on learning, after she finishes her written practice for about half of a page, she decorates the other half of the page with pictures. It usually takes her another half an hour for her picture decoration (Chai family).

All the parents were very busy, some of them were full-time students, and some parents had jobs at the weekends. They all stated that they tried to insist on teaching their children when time was available. For example, when they were not busy, they would accompany their children in order to learn together. When they were busy, they would arrange homework in Chinese:

We usually have our schedule in detail including which Chinese characters our daughter will practice, which piece of music she will play, etc. for each day (Liang family).

A problem was often that parents did not find enough time to assist on their children's Chinese learning, particularly when children really needed help. Since the Chinese written system originally developed from pictorials, children could guess the meanings from the shapes or the radicals that sometimes stood for a certain meaning, although their guessing could be wrong because of the usage in different contexts. Children could not pronounce the written Chinese characters without the assistance from Pinyin. Pinyin is a system to assist, used at the beginning of reading and writing the Chinese language. In China, after children finished their first year of formal school (equal Year One in New Zealand primary schools), there would be less and less Pinyin provided in the reading articles, because children have gradually mastered the basic common written Chinese characters.

Most of the families emphasized the teaching of Pinyin, as it is a useful system to start to learn the Chinese language and it will benefit children to be independent learners. Once children master Pinyin, they can learn new characters themselves by the assistance from the Chinese dictionary:

I [the father] am very surprised by our daughter who knows all new written characters at her early age (about 4 years old). It seems there are no new characters for her because she can read them all. I actually wonder why, and then I find our daughter use the assistance of Pinyin because she feels hard to read when I cover the Pinyin. I think she actually read Pinyin instead of reading the written characters. Since that I decide to give her the textbooks without Pinyin to read. Therefore she can actually learn the written Chinese characters (Liang family).

Alternately, one family realized that the Pinyin as the reading assistance was useful at the beginning, but it did not help in the further study, especially when children faced the issue of guessing the meaning of the written characters:

I [the mother] find that our daughter likes listening to the readings from the 儿童百科全书 '*Series of Encyclopaedia for Children*'. At the beginning I could manage to read to her, but when I get busy our daughter cannot read independently without our help, therefore she loses her interest. It is a pity that both of us have to give up (Chai family).

There was then a general sense that parents' busy lives prevented them from assisting children's Chinese language at crucial times. This left the children guessing, often wrongly, and parents felt frustration that arose as a result which compounded the difficulties they faced in maintaining and developing children's interest in Chinese learning.

In four of the eight families, parents believed that their children learnt how to write in Chinese by remembering the pictorial strokes. Parents called this 图形模式, literally, *model of pictorial*. By this parents meant that their children could not remember every stroke of the characters but they remembered each character as a whole like a picture. Children only remembered the overall shape of what the characters looked like. It was similar to the Whole Language Approach advocated by many educators for the teaching of English. Children might, however, think that the word's spelling looked correct but they would not be able to spell them exactly right:

It is possible that the 图形模式, 'model of pictorial', has been used greatly. It is hard for children to separate each stroke of the characters and then remember them. For example, our daughter remembers the character '上' (up), and then she figures out how to remember the new character of '下' (down) by turning the character '上' (up) up side down. She relies on the shapes of characters. She does not write one stroke by the other stroke, she divides the whole character into parts according to the shapes instead of strokes. Our daughter have been taught the character '鸟' (black) which is used to describe the black color of clouds in the sky. She learns another character '鸟' (a bird) with the addition of one little dot up in the middle of this character '鸟' (black). Initially our daughter sounded out this character as the same as the character '鸟', (black) and she ignored the little dot because the rest of the whole shape of the character is exactly the same. We explained to her the difference was that this character '鸟' (a bird) had an added dot. It looks like the eye of a bird since Chinese characters originate from the pictography. Because of this, we think that our daughter actually only remembers the whole shape and has applied the concept of the 'model of pictorial' (Wei family).

Parents from three of the eight families thought that their children had no ideas of the structure of Chinese characters, and they simply copied the strokes of Chinese characters as though they were drawing pictures:

My son regards Chinese writing as sort of drawing pictures. He follows the shapes of characters to copy, as he has no sense of writing Chinese characters. If I number the strokes, he would follow the orders of

strokes. If I do not number for him, he may copy written characters from bottom to top, or from right to left, which is the wrong direction for Chinese writing, in addition he is a left hand writer (Deng family).

Three families found that setting writing tasks in the Chinese language, and frequently checking, was an effective teaching method that worked well for their children:

We require our son to read one article from the Chinese standard textbook each week. He has to recite and write down one paragraph of that article by heart each day. We think the way of our teaching is by *checking* our son's Chinese learning. This *checking* is a task for him, which leads him to learn, to ask if he does not understand, and to memorize if he does not remember (Cui family).

Some families found that repetition of what children had learnt was a good way to help them remember how to write in the Chinese language. Their children were encouraged to keep writing emails or fax messages back to their relatives or friends in China:

Our son and his cousins in China always email or fax each other. It is a good way for our son to learn how to read and write in the Chinese language. The most useful way for us is to ask our son to write his reading and writing few times until he remembers them (Song family).

Two families thought that copying the text several times did not work very well because:

Our daughter could read and write all the articles in the second textbook last year. The reason for giving up this teaching method is because our daughter will forget anyway by not practising her written Chinese characters in real life (Chai family).

One family required their daughter to learn two Chinese characters or a phrase each day. The hard part came on the sixth day when this nine-year-old girl had to write some sentences with the ten Chinese characters or phrases that she had learnt for the week. The father from this family commented:

Our daughter uses this way to learn Chinese. It will be the same for us as adults to learn English. If we could insist on this way to teach our children, they would not be able to miss out listening, speaking, reading and writing (Liang family).

Parents also kept adjusting their attitudes towards their teaching strategies and adopting different ideas and methods so as to find the best approaches:

We probably show our impatience when our daughter cannot express herself well in Mandarin instead of trying to encourage and teach her

how to describe what she wants to say. Sometimes we blame her for not speaking Mandarin in an appropriate way (Chai family).

Some parents felt they needed to maintain consistent patterns in supporting their children's Chinese language education especially in the home context:

If we pay less attention, the children will waste a few days of their Chinese learning because they are not going to learn it voluntarily. Time passes very quickly. One or two months might be gone without our notice (Liang family).

In summary, all parents in this study tried their best to teach their children listening, speaking, reading and writing in the Chinese language. All parents consciously looked for the best effective teaching method to increase children's interests to learn Chinese. They identified a variety of teaching methods, such as reading classic novels, watching educational cartoons, and retelling a story in turn for aural and oral Chinese language - Mandarin; copying, repetition and checking for learning written Chinese characters. All parents emphasised spoken language, as they believed that was the basis for children's literacy development. Even though parents stated that they did not require their children to develop reading and writing Chinese, all of them actually have been involved to teach their children written Chinese characters. The parents' effort was the result of children who *are* at the various range levels of Chinese literacy development.

4.3 REASONS FOR CHINESE TEACHING AND LEARNING

In this section, there were a number of reasons given by families for teaching and learning the Chinese language, including the expectations from children's grandparents and children's own life experiences.

Firstly, because they were Chinese, most parents firmly believed that their children should learn Chinese language in order to understand their own culture. Also all their relatives and friends were in China, including the children's grandparents, cousins and friends:

Although we are Chinese, if we do not teach our children Chinese, if our children do not know the Chinese language, we would not feel that we are Chinese. I [the father] think that the importance of learning Chinese relates to the people's nationality (Wei family).

Secondly, learning Chinese was to fulfil the hopes of the children's grandparents, who believed that the cultural roots of their grandchildren were in China:

Both sides of our parents keep telling us "Remember, please do not let our children forget how to speak our Chinese language" (Liang family).

Another family raised a similar point to help their daughter to realize the importance of learning Chinese:

When we contact the grandparents of our daughter, we speak in Mandarin. Sometimes, we tell our daughter "See, if you don't know Mandarin, how can you communicate with your grandparents? You will not understand what they are talking about and they will not understand you either" (Wei family).

Thirdly, some parents believed that they had an advantage in teaching their children the Chinese language. While parents taught their children the Chinese language, they were also able to teach children Chinese culture, and the deep meanings of the language and usages in various cultural contexts:

Our teaching of Chinese is not limited to the surface meaning of the characters, but extends to the underlying meaning of the characters and the context of cultural background. Sometimes, the meaning of some Chinese words would vary to associate with the different contexts (Deng family).

Fourthly, most of the parents thought there was no special event that had particularly motivated the Chinese language learning because it was normal for their children to learn and communicate in Chinese. There were two exceptions to this pattern:

Our son's friend's mother told us this story. Our son took some picture books including the book of the famous 唐诗 'Tang Dynasty poem' to his school. He showed the books, which were in Chinese and translated the stories into English for his classmates. Our son felt proud and very happy doing this because he thought this event showed it was important to know how to read in the Chinese language (Cui family).

One family described their son's embarrassment when they went back to visit China, because his Chinese peer friends had much wider topics to chat about. It was usually very different from the events, which his parents talked about. Their son would try his best but found it hard to understand his Chinese peer friends' topics so as to get himself involved in their conversations:

Each time we go back to China, our son feels embarrassed because he does not fully understand the Chinese language. For example, we went to get him a pair of glasses. We told him to have one as ‘备用’ (get one more as a spare one). He could not understand the meaning of ‘备用’ and asked me [the mother] to explain. At that time, we had to explain to him in English, and our son felt very embarrassed about not understanding the Chinese language. The most embarrassing thing for him is that he finds it hard to understand his Chinese peer friends' conversations (Song family).

The other families wished that something would happen to motivate their children to be interested in learning Chinese. They felt it was a pity that no such a thing had happened, so that they had to impose Chinese learning on their children. Some families stated that occasionally they found some interesting stories to arouse their children's curiosity, such as ‘司马光砸缸’ (SiMaGuang Breaks the Water Cistern), ‘曹冲称象’ (CaoChong Weighs an Elephant) etc. These were some of the most enjoyable times in teaching their children.

Finally, children's own experiences helped them to realize the importance of learning Chinese. Six of the eight families had grandparents who had visited them in New Zealand. When children's grandparents were in New Zealand, it gave them the opportunities to practise their Mandarin even if they found it hard. Sometimes, children had difficulty expressing themselves without help from their parents. Parents thought that their children could see the reasons why they needed to learn how to speak Mandarin, as they could not expect older people to learn English in order to be able to communicate with them:

When his grandparents were here, it was very good for his language practice. If he wanted to communicate with his grandparents, he would have to try different ways to express himself clearly (Song family).

In summarizing the points above, some parents felt that their children could see the importance of learning Chinese, because most of the children obey them and learn Chinese at home. The example was that the sons from Song and Cui families did not argue or felt unhappy to do more homework in Chinese after their own life experiences about the Chinese language. Parents also tried to design how to make Chinese learning enjoyable for both of them by teaching children some interesting facts from Chinese

history and giving children more advantages to learn Chinese, as parents are native Chinese speakers who can teach more in depth with the Chinese language and culture.

4.4 PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS ABOUT ORGANISED CHILDREN'S CHINESE CLASSES

In this section, parents' expectations on how to organize children's Chinese classes or teaching programs will be presented in detail with explanations.

Six of the eight families found it difficult to teach their children Chinese at home; they would appreciate to have some Chinese classes provided in the local area. Some parents thought that it was not reasonable to ask schools to run Chinese language teaching because some children were Chinese:

We believe that is our own choice whether to maintain our mother tongue or not (Liang family).

Some parents thought that it was a pity that there were many schools here where many Chinese children attending had no Chinese language teaching and learning. They also had some very clear ideas about how to set up Chinese classes:

I do hope there are some Chinese classes around, at least in the local area. It would need a trained teacher, regardless if s/he taught primary or secondary schools. S/he should have a standard pronunciation, interest in teaching and have some teaching experiences. S/he could get all the Chinese children together and tutor them in different small classes at different levels in order to meet their various ages. It could be after school programs or at the weekends. It could be in their school time where all Chinese children get together (Zhou family).

Some parents thought that it would be ideal if the Chinese language would be offered as a language option in all intermediate schools of New Zealand, or in classes at the weekends:

It would be nice if there were some classes at weekends or after school programs. Our son is more willing to do schoolwork from the teachers than from us. He also feels that it is useful to learn something from school (Cui family).

Other comments added a further expectation for parents, even though this kind of informal weekend or after school Chinese classes should be taught by a well trained Chinese teacher:

We prefer to go to tutorial classes that have trained teachers and teach our children systematically. Even though our mother tongue is the Chinese language, teaching Chinese is different from knowing how to use Chinese (Song family).

While keen on this idea in principle, parents were concerned that the classes be good enough or worthwhile for sending their children:

It depends on the quality of their Chinese teaching because a good quality teaching would arouse children's interests and, therefore, children would put an effort to learn (Deng family).

In this view, one family thought they would not encourage their daughter to go to Chinese classes. They preferred to teach their daughter at home because they thought that the starting point for the Chinese learning run by schools would be too easy for their daughter (Wei family).

The reality is, however, that there are no Chinese classes in the local area and most parents find it hard to teach their children systematically. They all reported that they had the unrealistic idea of sending their children back to China in order to learn Chinese where it is the dominant language. But the thing was whether parents could make the decision to go back China for work or not. If parents prepared to go China for work, their children would have more chance to learn reading and writing well in the Chinese language. On the other hand, parents would then worry about their children's English language.

One of the eight families had taken their son back to visit China two times, and even sent their son to a Chinese school for over a month. Now parents believed that their son realized the importance of learning Chinese well because he did not argue with his mother any more about learning Chinese at home. He started to do his Chinese homework, which was to write eight lines (half of a A4 page) of Chinese characters each day. Actually, his parents found he enjoyed his Chinese learning since he tried to apply what his parents had taught him in their daily conversation, in addition he did not

like to experience embarrassment by not understanding his peer friends' chats in Mandarin.

In summarizing this section, all of the parents wished they could find a way to demonstrate the importance of learning Chinese. Therefore, parents had high expectations about organised children's Chinese language classes. It also illustrated that parents would like to receive some help outside of their home for teaching and learning the heritage language.

4.5 PARENTS' OPINIONS ON TWO EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

In this section, parents' opinions on education will be presented, especially the two comparative educational systems - the Chinese and the Western. As Chinese parents, they always paid particular attention to their children's education. They monitored their children's progress on both languages, English and Chinese.

The way Chinese parents in this study understood the educational system in New Zealand was to compare it with the educational system in China. They valued the general principle of learning through playing (the depth meaning in the Western pedagogy is to *teach children with high interest or developing high levels of motivation in learning*), which is in the contrast to the Chinese traditional rote learning. Parents believed that the New Zealand educational system was more effective, especially in teaching life experiences and hands on activities:

I [the father] think that *teaching through playing* is the highest peak of teaching. Because we do not have the time, methods and resources, it is pity that we cannot teach our son by providing him an enjoyment learning experience instead of the requirements of learning the Chinese language. We also believe that some Chinese teaching methods, according to children's characteristics, are as good as some teaching approaches used in New Zealand. In China, the reality is that children have large amounts of homework. I think that it is convenience for us to teach our son while he has no homework from his school in New Zealand, so he can have the energy to learn more at home, e.g. learning the Chinese language (Cui family).

Further comments emerged. Parents preferred that children were being taught how to be lifelong learners since they understood that how much they learnt would be renewed soon in the age of global economy technology:

In New Zealand, schools teach children how to learn, and it is very different from the way of Chinese teaching. Chinese prefer children to practise more and more, and to be familiar with all different types of questions, especially in science and mathematics. Once children face a certain type of science and mathematics questions, they will know the choices for solving those kinds of problems (Chai family).

Some parents thought that the New Zealand educational system highlighted the development of interests during the primary and intermediate level; however, they worried that the depth and width of each subject might be weak. It seemed that children had touched many different subjects areas, but the level of understanding was perhaps on the very surface.

These parents wanted to see a combination of the two educational systems and pick the best of both worlds (Chinese and Western). They made the following comments:

I always wonder if it is good or bad for those children who live in China now to have much more homework with a heavy bag of books each day? Children who live in New Zealand have a very stress free learning context. I wish that children could have a reasonable amount of learning, but not the heavy learning task like Chinese schools, and not the superficial learning of New Zealand schools (Zhou family).

These comments emerged in several ways as some parents thought there were some good methods in the Chinese educational system:

I think that in the classrooms of New Zealand schools, teachers follow the pace of children. It seems that teachers teach what children like to learn and what children are interested in knowing. For Chinese, we are on the opposite side; we are the leaders of our children. Our children are treated as the passive recipients and have to do what we like them to do. Some Chinese teaching methods could be regarded as good as New Zealand ones. It really depends on how to apply these teaching methods to the different individuals (Song family).

Chinese parents preferred to have some discipline in the school as some parents found that otherwise: "children are too lazy to do anything" (Chai family).

A few of the parents thought that the Chinese educational system carried many more compulsory elements. It was most obvious in the provision of standard textbooks and teachers' guidebooks emphasising uniform teaching methods. Passing examinations was actually the end of learning. Parents had some impression that, in New Zealand, teachers transformed all teaching subjects into playing in order for children to obtain knowledge from these carefully planned activities:

We prefer New Zealand education because the purpose of school in offering all sorts of subjects is to allow children to discover their personal interests and intelligence capacity. All subjects will benefit children lifelong for their future career. In contrast, in Chinese education, the school arranges the learning subjects for children instead of considering children's interests (Liang family).

Some parents believed that interest was the first important requirement for learning as education was pointless if children had no interest in learning:

I think that the reason children learn well is because they are interested in learning from their heart. If they are interested in learning, and a proper learning context is offered, children are willing to learn by themselves independently (Zhou family).

A majority of parents (six families from the eight families) felt regret that they had to force their children to learn Chinese, as they did not have the appropriate skills to teach their children:

It is important to raise the interest in learning Chinese, but we did not find good methods to apply in the past. We have to impose Chinese learning on our daughter because we do not have effective teaching approaches to interest her (Wei family).

Parents from two families were aware that gaining knowledge is not always a process of fun. It is not an easy task to make learning fun all the time. Therefore, parents have to impose Chinese learning upon their children:

If we make our daughter to do the learning, she will do some reading in Chinese. If we do not insist on her, she will not do it (Hong family).

Parents from five families stated that they had to require their children to obey them; children simply have to do what they asked on matters like learning Chinese. Parents felt that children were too young to have self-motivation and would never take any learning tasks voluntarily:

If we do not teach our children, they will learn nothing from us. Young children do not like any learning tasks, as they are only interest in playing; they are lack of self-motivation. In this case, we have to require our son to do it, and there is no other way (Cui family).

All parents stated that they hoped they could find a way to let their children realize the importance of learning Chinese. Therefore, children would be willing to learn Chinese voluntarily. Parents considered it was not easy to achieve that since they had not found one in the past:

As you know, children at this young age are never willing to learn anything voluntarily. They are always passive learners. We have to make our son learn not only Chinese but also English (Song family).

In conclusion for this section, the purpose of comparison of two educational systems was that parents tried to find the best suitable teaching approaches for their children's Chinese learning. Parents found it hard to teach Chinese with high interest and motivation, which was regarded as the best teaching approach in the Western pedagogy. Therefore parents felt it was a pity to impose learning the Chinese language on their children, but they thought they have no choice but have to do so.

4.6 THE INFLUENCE OF LEARNING CONTEXT ON BILINGUALISM

Parents had a strong belief that the learning context played a significant role in developing their children's bilingualism and this was clear among these results. In this section, there will be more opinions and comments expressed by parents to support this point.

Parents believed that the learning context took an important role in language learning, not only for children but also for adults. Some parents considered there was no such a thing as *balance* when learning two languages because their children mainly lived in an English language context. Apparently their children learnt more English than Chinese. Two families (Liang & Cui) thought they maintained a modified view of balance as much as they could:

At school, our son speaks in English. At home, when he speaks to us, he has to speak in Mandarin. It is natural thing for us (Cui family).

Most parents (Deng, Song, Hong, Wei, Chai & Zhou families) conceded that their children learnt English more and Chinese received less time and seemed less relevant to children's learning tasks:

We hope that two languages are known equally well, but in an English speaking country, it is hard to make this happen (Zhou family).

Most of the parents (Hong, Cui & Wei families) agreed that their children's Chinese learning was remarkably affected by dominance of English in their lives. Parents believed that young children could learn very quickly but would forget soon if the learnt knowledge was not reinforced later on:

The difficulty for our son in learning Chinese is the learning context. There is no reading, no watching TV available in the Chinese language. He would soon forget unless he used what he had learnt in Chinese. There is no learning atmosphere either. I [the father] remembered that when our son was at kindergarten in China, he did not have any difficulties; he learnt up to 300 Chinese written characters easily and remembered them well without the assistance of Pinyin (Cui family).

Mrs. Cui added that she thought that the teachers in kindergarten in China knew how to teach children, as they were trained teachers. Mr. Cui thought that it was also aided by the learning context in which all children wanted to learn:

In New Zealand, there is only our son at home; he is not interested in learning at all without the competitive learning atmosphere. The difficulties of Chinese learning come from the various learning context. One of them might be the way of our own teaching approaches (Cui family).

It was a common view, children could remember what they had learnt recently, and forgot the things learnt a few days ago, especially for written Chinese characters. Parents considered it was because their children had no opportunities to apply their learning, because they lived in New Zealand without the Chinese language surrounding them:

I [the mother] can remember that our daughter at four and half years old wrote a message with two simple sentences to her grandparents. Now I do not even feel confident of finding something that I think our daughter could read independently, not to mention writing in Chinese (Zhou family).

The mother of Deng family had similar ideas. She believed that language needed to be applied otherwise the language ability and skills would decrease over time:

We insist on speaking in Mandarin to our son and require him to respond back. Sometimes our son expresses himself in English, and we ask him to repeat it in Mandarin. He will do so, even though he cannot express himself as fluent as when he was about five years old. At that age time he could use some sophisticated words, but not now, even he get older (Deng family).

Parents in this study had their own understanding or definition of mother tongue, first language and second language.

One family thought that because their daughter learnt the Chinese language before she arrived in New Zealand, her mother tongue was the Chinese language:

For our daughter, Chinese is her mother tongue as she had learnt it before she was four and half years old. She had finished her listening and speaking learning in the Chinese language at that age and she did not need to reinforce those two skills. She needs to carry on learning how to read and write in the Chinese language and it will need a continued focused attention anyway. English is her mother tongue in her formal education. She should have no problems with listening, speaking, reading and writing in English if she follows the school pace (Liang family).

The following comments raised the similar point on children's mother tongue and formal schooling:

As Chinese is our mother tongue, our daughter should have no problems with her listening, speaking, and reading, but writing cannot be learnt to the same extent as children in China (Wei family).

Three of the eight families considered that because their children lived in an English-speaking country, their first language would be English and that the Chinese language then became their second language:

Because our son lives in New Zealand, his first language certainly is English. As we are from China, the Chinese language will be his second language. He has less chance to practise Mandarin. As our relatives are in China we hope our son keeps in touch with them. We also think Chinese is our culture, and he should have some knowledge about it (Song family).

Based on parents' defining of mother tongue, first language and second language, parents had their own expectations for their children to become bilingual:

We expect our daughter to be able to listen and speak in Mandarin at least. For her reading and writing in Chinese, we will encourage her to learn in the future if there is a chance (Zhou family).

Some parents thought that if their children learn how to read in Chinese well first, then they could learn how to write in the future, as knowing how to read was the basis of learning how to write:

We expect our son to be able to read some simple articles now. We hope he will be able to learn in Chinese through his schooling and link to his university bursary examination. Therefore we expect he reads well in Chinese, but NOW we do not require too much practice on his writing skills (Cui family).

All parents continuously expected that their children should be able to write some simple messages or short letters to their relatives and friends in China, and they considered they did not need to have higher expectation than this:

Our aim in teaching the Chinese language is that our daughter can read and write some Chinese characters, and be able to write a letter back to relatives in China (Chai family).

It seemed not a universal interpretation, however, and some parents believed that language was a learning and translation tool. With the development of the global economy, the need for bilingual skills would rapidly grow. These bilingual children would be the basic links in the bridge of the global economy. There would be great difficulty in understanding people who came from different countries without these bilingual children in the future to help so as to break the language barriers:

For example, if our children have been offered bilingual education, they should have no problem to take the roles as translators, e.g. synchronous translators are in a great need in China. One of the difficulties of being synchronous translators is the lack of background knowledge of some particular concepts of the other language. But there should be no problems for our children who receive bilingual education (Liang family).

In summarizing this section, various parents' comments on the learning context were presented. Parents had their own views on defining mother tongue, first language and second language under the influence of learning context, including their expectation of mastery of the Chinese language. However, parents strove to achieve and fulfilled their

expectations through teaching the written Chinese characters so children could write some short messages and letters back to China.

4.7 CHANGES IN PARENTS' ATTITUDES AND PERSPECTIVES ON BILINGUALISM FOR A FEW YEARS

In this section, the changes in parents' attitudes and perspectives on bilingualism will be reported. Although these parents had lived in New Zealand for various periods, from two up to over five years, all the parents declared that they had not changed their expectations for their children to be bilingual:

We still hope that our son will keep our own language. It is easy for him to keep this language. It means that if he puts in a little effort he can keep the Chinese language. If we do not insist on this, perhaps he will not even know how to speak Mandarin in the future (Deng family).

Most parents thought that they should require their children to learn the Chinese language under the condition that they learned English language well first. That meant their children must master the English language, and then they should consider how to learn Chinese well:

When our son is young, we could teach him more of the Chinese language because he does not have too much homework. As he grows, his schoolwork gets heavier and heavier, so we will teach him less and less Chinese because he lives in an English dominate country anyway. There must be something second, if something is to be the first (Song family).

All parents believed that because they were from China, their children should learn the Chinese language. Children would have chances to go back to China for all sorts of reasons, such as visiting their relatives, sightseeing or working in China. The other reason that parents put forward for learning Chinese was that, by knowing the language, children could appreciate the essence of Chinese literature and culture:

If our daughter cannot learn Chinese well, these things will be impossible (Chai family).

To draw a conclusion from the points above, the expectation of mastery of the Chinese language was based on learning English well first as they are from China. Also it

showed that parents emphasized maintaining oral language skills first, and then literacy development in the Chinese language. However, their views and understandings about the meaning of bilingualism did change as time passed by, especially in the terms of expectation of mastery of the Chinese language.

4.8 CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINESE LEARNING AND CHINA

In this section, the descriptions regarded with their children's attitudes towards Chinese learning and what they think about China will be reported. Because these children lived in bilingual and bicultural worlds as their daily lives, they formed their own opinions and attitudes towards Chinese learning at home. Most children obeyed their parents and spoke in Mandarin at home. The majority of the children also put an effort into learning Chinese reading and writing.

All of the children stated that they were used to their parents speaking Mandarin to them, and most of them respond back in Mandarin. Most of the children were willing to learn Chinese, and would obey their parents when they were asked to do so. Two of the six children in their group interview stated that they were unwilling to learn Chinese, if their parents did not require them to.

While all of the children stated that they were used to speaking and learning Chinese at home, two children declared that they did not like their schoolmates to know that they learnt another language at home because:

If they visit our home, they do not understand our language (Fengfeng child).

The rest of the children either did not mind or felt happy to let their classmates know that they were learning Chinese at home. As one child put it:

It should be like this. Because we are Chinese we should learn the Chinese language at home. If children are Maori they should learn Maori at home (Xinxin child).

The best friends of these children were mostly other Chinese children, but they did not communicate together in Mandarin because children claimed that they knew their

friends could speak English. One girl was annoyed that she and her friends always had different times to study at home during school holidays, especially the time for Chinese learning. She suggested to her mother that she and her friends could study together to learn Chinese, as she preferred her leisure time and study time to coincide with her friends. Her mother replied to her daughter that they would play, and draw the Chinese characters as pictures. They would not know what those Chinese characters were, and they would learn nothing.

The following parents' comments reflected their children's attitude towards China. Parents from two families reported that they felt happy about finding out that their children were very proud of being Chinese. It showed up when they were watching sports. Their children would always cheer for China first, and then for New Zealand:

For the Olympic Games our son thinks about China first, and then New Zealand. He knows how to search in teletext. He shows his great interest in watching certain sports involving Chinese players. If Chinese players win the game, he is very excited about it. If New Zealand's rugby or cricket team win, he will feel very cheerful too (Deng family).

The mother from the Deng family clearly remembered the following story on their first year of arrival in New Zealand:

One day our son came to me and asked when we would go back to China. I asked him "Why do you want to go back to China?" Our son told me: "Oh, mum, China is our home, isn't it?" I said to him: "Yes, we will go back to China one day", but we have not gone back to China yet until now (Deng family).

In summarizing this section, children showed their willingness to obey their parents and were prepared to do what parents asked. These children were used to learning Chinese at home since being bilingual and bicultural were part of their daily lives; thus they showed their positive attitudes towards Chinese learning and China.

4.9 CHILDREN'S EFFORTS WITH REGARD TO CHINESE LEARNING

This section will be divided into two parts; in the first part parents reported that they sometimes had to understand their children's English language before teaching them

the Chinese language. The second part is how the children identify which language should to be used in different contexts.

Firstly, parents found that some concepts in Chinese had to be taught with the assistance from children's English language. Most parents did this because their children's English language was better than their Chinese language. Because of the limitations of their teaching at home, unless parents taught their children, these children could not find the relevant words in Chinese so they could not translate their learnt concepts from school into appropriate Chinese language.

The Cui family stated that they encouraged their son to express his ideas in Mandarin; most of the time their son tried very hard to do so, but quite often their nine-year-old son would say:

"I DO NOT know how to describe this in Mandarin, I only know how to express it in English" (Cui family).

Sometime, parents had to understand their children's English first, and then try to teach their children the appropriate expression in Chinese:

For example, 茄子 (egg-plant), my son would ask, "What is 茄子?" I had to explain to him in English by telling him 茄子 is an eggplant, as he had no concept and no relevant word for 茄子 in the Chinese language (Deng family).

The Hong family also faced the same issue that parents had to understand their child's English, and then teach her how to express in Mandarin:

We encourage our daughter to express her ideas in Mandarin, such as telling us her school events. She would explain to us in Mandarin. If she has troubles in description, we have to listen to her English. Then we translate it into Chinese, after that we can teach her how to express her ideas in Mandarin (Hong family).

One family reported that if they were not busy they would try to encourage their son to have conversations with them, but, once the conversation got too complicated, both sides of them had to be assisted by dictionaries:

When our son cannot express himself in Mandarin and we cannot understand his English, he uses his dictionary in English to find the words, and we sometimes look for the words in the Chinese dictionary.

In our family, sometimes we have to be helped by dictionaries in order to communicate with each other (Song family).

Secondly, parents found it very interesting that their children knew how to select their spoken language in different situations:

Because of the area where we live, there are many Chinese people around. When our son meets with elder Chinese people, he will speak in Mandarin. When he meets some young adults or strangers, he feels a bit shy and speaks in English as he thinks that they must know how to speak in English, and English is the language he uses the most. But when he meets some little girls who are probably two or three years old, he will speak to them in Mandarin voluntarily because he knows they do not go to school yet. His language choices depend on the nationality and the age of people whom he speaks to (Song family).

The parents from the Chai family reported that their elder daughter hardly responded to them in Mandarin, but they noticed that she never spoke English to her baby sister. The mother of this family commented that perhaps their elder daughter watched them speaking Mandarin to her baby sister, and she did the same thing:

Maybe our elder daughter could identify the people who do not know how to speak in English. She also does not like her baby sister to misunderstand her, and she chooses to talk to her in Mandarin (Chai family).

In the children's group interview, the children were asked to whom, where, and when they would like to speak in Mandarin or in English. At first they answered the questions one by one. In the middle of answering the questions, they stopped and stated that they could identify which people knew English or Chinese, and their language selection depended on the different situations. For example, they spoke Mandarin to the elder Chinese who are as the same age as their grandparents, or younger Chinese who are about two or three years old. For Chinese adults who are of a similar age to their parents, these children would like to try to speak in English, but they would respond in Mandarin as well. In their children's group interview, these children spoke English to me at the beginning. As I kept speaking in Mandarin, they eventually responded to me in Mandarin too.

In this section, not only children but also their parents switch between the two languages so that they could clarify their ideas and understand each other (see

codeswitching on sections 2.3.4 and 5.2.4). Codeswitching helps children to learn new concepts and new vocabularies in either language. The way of children selected languages was also presented in this section.

4.10 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings of my research. It showed that parents' understandings of bilingualism dominated their attitudes towards maintaining and developing their heritage language. These understandings played an important role in shaping their expectations on mastery of the Chinese language. However, all parents believed that there were advantages in being bilingual. Parents all taught their children the Chinese language including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Their various teaching strategies were based on their personal parental teaching styles and the way they had been brought up. Their expectations for organised Chinese classes illustrated their desire to have some help from outside of their home. This was, they felt, one way to show their children the importance of learning the Chinese language. Parents had a strong desire to combine the strengths of two educational systems so that their children could benefit the most in their Chinese language learning. Even though there was a strong influence from the English dominated country, which hindered them, parents strove to maintain and develop their heritage language through home teaching and learning. Children's positive attitudes towards Chinese learning and China were the results of their parents' effort.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

All the parents involved in this study showed positive attitudes towards supporting and helping their children to become bilingual. In general, they believed that there were no disadvantages in being bilingual. In this chapter, the parents' opinions are interpreted and discussed under four headings: parents' description of L1 (first language) and L2 (second language); parents' understanding of bilingual development; the impact between traditional Chinese Confucian ideas and the reality on children's bilingualism; and finally, the factors that support or interfere with children's bilingual development.

5.1 PARENTS' DESCRIPTIONS OF FIRST LANGUAGE AND SECOND LANGUAGE

In this section, I shall discuss the parents' ideas about which languages should be their children's mother tongue, their understanding of first language and second language with explanations that support the range of views they hold.

Most of the Chinese parents in this investigation preferred to regard English as their children's first language and Chinese as their second language because their children received their formal education in English, not in Chinese. This illustrated the strong desire from these Chinese parents to master English in the English dominant language society. In addition, they also wanted to maintain and develop their own heritage language - the Chinese language. As it was mentioned earlier in the literature review, Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) found that this appeared as a universal phenomenon that immigrant families always worked for their children to become bilingual. Some parents regarded the Chinese language as their mother tongue and, hence, considered English should be their children's second language. A small number of the parents thought their children had two mother tongues. These parents felt that the Chinese language was one of their children's mother tongues because that was the language they

learned from birth. English was the other mother tongue in an educational sense since the children started to learn English when they began their formal education in New Zealand.

No matter whether parents named the Chinese language as mother tongue, first language or second language of their children, in this study, the Chinese language is regarded as the *heritage language*. Baker (1996) suggested that the term heritage language might be called native language, ethnic language, minority language, or ancestral language depending on an individual's perception. However, all Chinese immigrant children in this study were born in China; so the language that these children learnt firstly was the Chinese language. They learnt to speak in Mandarin. Chinese was the language that was from the children's parents, and parents tried to pass it on and used it in daily conversations. Through this heritage language maintenance, the Chinese language at home, parents passed on their cultural tradition and thereby gave their children the identity of being Chinese.

5.2 PARENTS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF BILINGUAL DEVELOPMENT

In this section, parents' different opinions on bilingualism are discussed. From the data I collected, parents had several different understandings of bilingualism. The main reason was that there should not be any interference to their children's formal education at school. Parents' views are discussed under the following sections: the language dilemma; the bilingual tolerance view; the bilingual advantage view; and codeswitching and children's language choices in different contexts are also briefly discussed as they supported some parents' opinions on their children's bilingual development.

5.2.1 *The Language Dilemma*

In this section, the reservations about bilingualism raised from a few of the parents involved in this study will be discussed, as they felt uncertainties about whether their children could learn two languages at their young age.

When children started their English schooling in New Zealand without English background, a few parents in this investigation were actually concerned about their children's English language learning. They expected their children to follow the school pace as soon as possible. Therefore, some parents actually tried to teach English at home at the beginning of their children's schooling. However, their young children quickly adopted English from school learning, and even brought their English language back to their home, which meant children began to speak to their parents in English. Parents started to realize that their children's Chinese language was going backwards remarkably quickly as children found it easier to speak in English rather than in Mandarin. These parents were in a dilemma about which language their children should learn. They preferred that their children master English first, but they did not like to see their children lose the Chinese language as well. From the data I collected, these parents were not sure that children could master two languages simultaneously at their young age (see section 2.3.1).

These parents' understanding of bilingualism illustrated that they did not have a clear idea on children's language ability and development. It showed parents expected that their children, at least, should have some similar academic abilities compared to their classmates. It was understandable that parents did not like to see their children doing poorly in school compared to their classmates, even though they started with no English. In this case, parents actually compared their children's English ability to monolingual English native speakers. Therefore, these parents rather put the Chinese language learning *aside* while their children struggled to learn English at the very beginning of their formal schooling in New Zealand.

To conclude this section, these parents who had this language dilemma emphasized the need to maintain the oral Chinese language at home by speaking to their children in Mandarin all the time. The main reason was that parents did not want their children to lose their Chinese language ability so they seemed to have changed their expectations for their children on mastery of the Chinese language (see section 4.6).

5.2.2 *The Bilingual Tolerance View*

In this section, parents' understanding of bilingualism can be interpreted and analyzed by applying Cummins' (1980a, cited in Baker, 1996) *Separate Underlying Proficiency* and Baker's (1996) Two Balloon Theory.

Firstly, parents from two families explained that when children learned two languages, they used two spaces in their brains and this developed, extended and benefited their language development. This is illustrated in Cummins' (op cit) theory of *Separate Underlying Proficiency Model* of bilingualism. These parents believed that the two languages developed separately without interlinks. They also explained that when a child wanted to speak one language, her/his brain would open to that language and function naturally. Cummins (op cit) referred to this as an early idea of bilingualism in which the two languages operated separately without transferring between two spaces in the brain and with a restricted amount of *room* for the language to be retained.

Secondly, some parents in this study thought that if their children learnt more English, in time children would think more and faster in English than in Chinese, especially children who live in an English speaking country in which limited the opportunities of applying Chinese. These comments indicated that the better their children's English is, the weaker their Chinese will be. This illustrated Baker's (1996) Two Balloon Theory and explained these parents' understanding, in which parents believed that if one balloon (i.e. language space in the brain) was filled up the other must shrink because there was only a certain amount of *room* for languages in the human beings' brain (see section 2.3.1). In this case, parents considered their children's English as getting better and that was the reason why their Chinese was getting worse since there was not enough *room* for two languages in a human being's brain. This early theory of bilingualism was perhaps a kind of reason behind the parents' preference that their children learn more English than Chinese as they lived in New Zealand now. It seemed to the parents that learning English well was the *key* to be able to survive and succeed in an English dominant country in the children's future lives. But parents also expected that children's heritage language would help them to have a healthy identity, an authentic voice, and a positive self-image (Beykont, 2000).

In summary, these parents' understandings actually were at the early stage of bilingual theories (see section 2.3.1). These parents had tried to interpret how two languages work in their children's brain. From the initial *fact*, it seemed to parents that their children learnt English well and followed the school pace in a short period of time while their Chinese language went backwards remarkably. It was also because parents found their children started to have troubles to express themselves in Mandarin. This showed to parents that their children's English language development is at the cost of their Chinese language improvement for the reasons discussed above.

5.2.3 *The Bilingual Advantage View*

Some parents recommended that the two languages might help each other, and Cummins' (1980a, 1981a, cited in Baker, 1996) *Common Underlying Proficiency* helped to interpret this idea, which will be analyzed in this section.

Because all the parents in this study taught their children mathematics at home, some parents felt that it seemed that the two languages helped each other as children did show some mathematics advanced competence in their classes or schools. Some parents announced as the following comment:

When our daughter is young, she uses her Chinese language to help her learning English. When she is getting older in New Zealand, she will use her English to help her Chinese learning (Wei family).

The parents above started to realize that knowing two languages benefited their children's learning in either language. They sensed that there was a language *bridge* between the two languages. Parents stated that they had to teach their children mathematics in Chinese, since that was what they had been taught and learned in China. Sometimes parents tried to match some mathematics concepts in English, but most of the time, their children would figure out and transfer these mathematics concepts into English themselves once they had been taught in school. Therefore, parents sensed that the previous mathematics knowledge that their children were taught in Chinese at home helped them to achieve a better understanding of mathematics concepts in English at school (see section 2.3.2).

These parents' intuitional experiences illustrated Cummins' (1980a, 1981a, cited in Baker, 1996) *Common Underlying Proficiency Model*, which pictorially represented the two languages in the form of two icebergs. The icebergs were separated above the surface. Underneath the surface, they were fused, showing that the two languages operated through the same central processing system, not separately (see section 2.3.3). The description of mathematics teaching offered by parents illustrated the two icebergs represented as Chinese and English languages separated above the surface, standing for the mathematics concepts taught either in Chinese or English. The understanding of the mathematics concepts was fused in the central processing system. And then children's understanding about those concepts through the central process could be transferred and represented in either language on the surface again. Cummins (1989) stated that conceptual knowledge developed in one language helps to make input in the other language comprehensible.

From the analysis of the example of mathematics teaching and learning above, it was also the evidence that Baker (1996:151) found: "The child's second language competence is partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the first language. The more developed the first language, the easier it will be to develop the second language". According to Cummins' (1976, cited in Baker, 1996) Thresholds Theory, the levels of two languages can be illustrated as three floors of a house, these young Chinese children involved in this investigation were at the middle level or second floor of the house as they had their age-appropriate level in Chinese (see section 2.3.4). Thus, it seemed the children's developed and developing heritage language at age-appropriate competence in Chinese was beneficial to them in learning English as their second language and this was evidenced in this study as well.

Literacy-related abilities were much easier to develop in the first language with parents' help on a daily interaction basis because schools might not always be able to address each individual's needs (Li, 1999). All parents involved in this research tried to teach their children Chinese language at home even though parents had various expectations of mastery of the Chinese language (see section 4.6). Cummins (1984) claimed: " 'Common Underlying Proficiency' associated with literacy can be used in all the languages we know" (cited in Krashen & Biber, 1988:23). So it required that a child's language abilities - Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skill (BICS) - needed to be

sufficiently well developed through the Cummins' (1980a, 1981a, cited in Baker, 1996) *Common Underlying Proficiency* in order to cope with Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in either language. The more children learn from their heritage language at home, the more children will benefit in either cognitive/academic language proficiency. In Kwong's (2000) experience, the more literate children were in the written Chinese language, the more quickly they developed English literacy skills because they could transfer what they knew in Chinese into English.

Finally, in summarizing this section, some parents in this study felt that their children's prior knowledge in the Chinese language helped them to make sense in learning the English language. It indicated that parents intuitively sensed that the understanding of concepts had been transferred between Chinese and English. Therefore, parents' maintenance and development of the heritage language at home is crucial for these children's performance in school, since Cummins (1994, cited in Scovel, 2001) states that it seems difficult to understand how children develop literacy in a second language if they have not become literate in their first language.

5.2.4 *Codeswitching and Language Choices*

In this study, not only children but also parents involved in this study had been switching between Chinese and English unconsciously. So in this section, codeswitching and children's language choices in the different contexts, will be discussed.

Codeswitching was one of the very noticeable features of bilingual children in the observation. In parallel with the findings of Walker (1995), codeswitching in this investigation is regarded as a very useful tool for learning new concepts in either language for these children involved (see sections 2.3.5 and 4.9).

In this study, parents reported that they began to teach their children some Mandarin assisted by understanding of their children's English. For example, the cold color and the warm color were taught in English at school, and then in Chinese at home in the Wei family. The exchanged concepts and understandings in English and Chinese were

discussed between the child and parents with assistance from dictionaries in the Song family. Genishi (1989) stated that bilingual children developed the ability to codeswitch and to use this ability to enrich communication (cited in Brisk, 1998). Bilingual speakers had a unique ability to shift languages, which could be one way to improve children's proficiency in either language by interacting with capable peers or adults. The examples above also indicated that some parents actually applied codewitching in teaching their children Chinese language and had sensed to realize that ability in either language would help their children's weaker language.

Parents in this investigation found it interesting to see that their children knew how to switch between English and Chinese as their language options in different situations. The data from the children's group interview also showed that children knew which language they would select and that depended on whom they would talk to (see section 4.9). Hymes (1964) defined this task of language learning in a broad sense as gaining knowledge of when to say, what, and to whom. In Hymes' term this was called communicative competence. Saville-Troike (1989) explained in detail that communicative competence extended to both knowledge and expectation of who might or might not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent. According to parents' reports in this investigation, children would voluntarily speak Mandarin to the elders of age of their grandparents and to younger children at the age of two or three years old. They would speak English to the people who were at the age of their parents, and they would never speak Mandarin to their teachers and classmates in school settings, including their Chinese classmates. This suggested that children could always get the appropriate language choice to associate with the right context.

In this whole section, parents' understandings of bilingualism were analyzed from their uncertainties to sense the advantages of bilingualism; it actually demonstrated some similarity in accordance with the evolution of bilingual development in literature. In reality, parents' understandings of bilingualism were actually based on the idea of following the school programs in order to master all academic schoolwork first. Under this condition, their children were required to learn Chinese well. Parents found that codeswitching was a great help for them in teaching either Mathematics or other

subjects' concepts, and parents believed that they could also enrich scientific concepts and vocabularies in Chinese by applying codeswitching (see section 4.2).

5.3 THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S BILINGUALISM OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE CONFUCIAN IDEAS AND THE REALITY

Parents' personal experiences and beliefs dominated their teaching strategies and educational philosophy through this whole study. Parents themselves had been taught English in China as a compulsory language since the start of their middle school (equal to intermediate schools of New Zealand). They considered themselves not as mastering the English language. In this investigation, no matter what ways parents used to teach the Chinese language to their children, their teaching strategies were shaped by their own learning experiences and personal beliefs. Garcia (1982:18) stated:

There is no such thing as a culturally free teaching activity... [They all] spring from unconscious assumptions one makes; they are based on one's cultural and ethnic perspectives... What students learn and what teachers teach are ultimately filtered and strained through their cultural sieves.

Therefore, most of the time parents' interactions with their children were actually transferring their cultural identity.

In this section, the impact between traditional Chinese Confucian ideas and the reality in the 21st century on children's bilingual development will be represented. Firstly, Confucian ideas as the hidden educational pedagogy will be illustrated in Figure 5.1, which shows traditional Confucian ideas within the teaching philosophy and educational pedagogy of Chinese parents. Secondly, how Confucian ideas influence parents' understandings and implementation of bilingual education will be displayed as a combined point in Figure 5.2. The points are as follows: parents' understandings of bilingual education; parents' teaching strategies for the Chinese language including the relationship with their children, and their parental teaching style; and the influence of learning context on bilingualism. Thirdly, the factors that support or interfere with bilingual children's development are represented in Figure 5.3, which shows children's attitudes and efforts towards Chinese learning as a positive result of their parents'

teaching Chinese at home. At the end of this section, all the discussions will be pulled together in Figure 5.4 so as to form the whole picture of the impact between traditional Chinese Confucian ideas and the reality for children's bilingualism.

5.3.1 *Confucian Ideas as Hidden Educational Pedagogy*

In this subsection, the Chinese immigrant parents' personal beliefs are interpreted to show how they have contributed as home teachers to their children's Chinese language teaching and learning. Their personal beliefs are actually from Confucian ideas, which are unconsciously rooted in their mind. Without being noticed, Confucianism does permeate all of their teaching behaviors and strategies. The figure below attempts to capture the reason why Chinese parents traditionally value education.

Figure 5.1: Traditional Confucian ideas within the teaching philosophy and educational pedagogy of Chinese parents.



Figure 5.1 shows the reasons behind the determination why the Chinese parents paid very focused attention to their children's education. Parents believed that the proper way of rearing children was to get appropriate education for them, which related to their understanding of the relationship between nature and nurture. In Chinese teaching philosophy, diligence was highly advocated and playing was regarded as wasting time. Positive learning attitude was also emphasized to achieve the high objectives so as to benefit the children's future.

The very popular Confucian ideas were contained in the book of *The Trimetrical Classic*. It started with 人之初 性本善 苟不教 性乃迁 (this means: human beings are born with good nature; but nurture and other influences will make a difference. Their nature will change without being educated) (Wen, Zhou & Fan, 1994). This idea demonstrated to parents that the relationship between children's good nature and the outside world influences and surrounds children's lives, so it would be up to parents to consider what kind of life context and education will benefit children's future life. This illustrated that social and cultural learning contexts play a crucial role in terms of influencing children's lives (see sections 2.5 and 5.3.4), even when they were born with good nature. This was one of the very important reasons that Chinese parents believed education would influence their children's future.

Ngan (1987:126) stated: "In the Confucian Chinese society, education was highly valued because it was the means by which even the son of a peasant could advance socially and become a mandarin". This illustrated that Confucius himself argued about a conscious learning effort in education: "Human beings are similar by nature in their capacity to learn; this, in fact, is the distinguishing characteristic of the human being. But the criteria of opportunity and effort present greater difficulty" (Hall & Ames, 1987:46). Usually, Chinese parents would give anything, including finance and their family time, in order to assist their children to have a better education. It was not only because education would lead to future success, but also because most of the parents would like to see their children have a better life than what they had. The family roles in the educational setting were especially highlighted in Confucian ideas, as this was one of the traditional *Chinese things* passed on from one generation to the next by the Chinese ancestors (Liu, 1998).

Education, in the eye of the Chinese, no matter whether in ancient times or in the current century, provided access to a future successful career and was seen as a way to gain social position in the society so that family would be honoured. For Chinese parents this involved looking for better job opportunities for themselves and better education chances for their children. This was part of the reason for settling in New Zealand, as they believed that immersion into an English-speaking learning context would be the best way of mastering the English language. They also expected to

immerse their children in the Chinese language learning context at home in order to maintain and develop their heritage language and culture, as the parents' educational objective for their children was to become bilingual in the bicultural life situation.

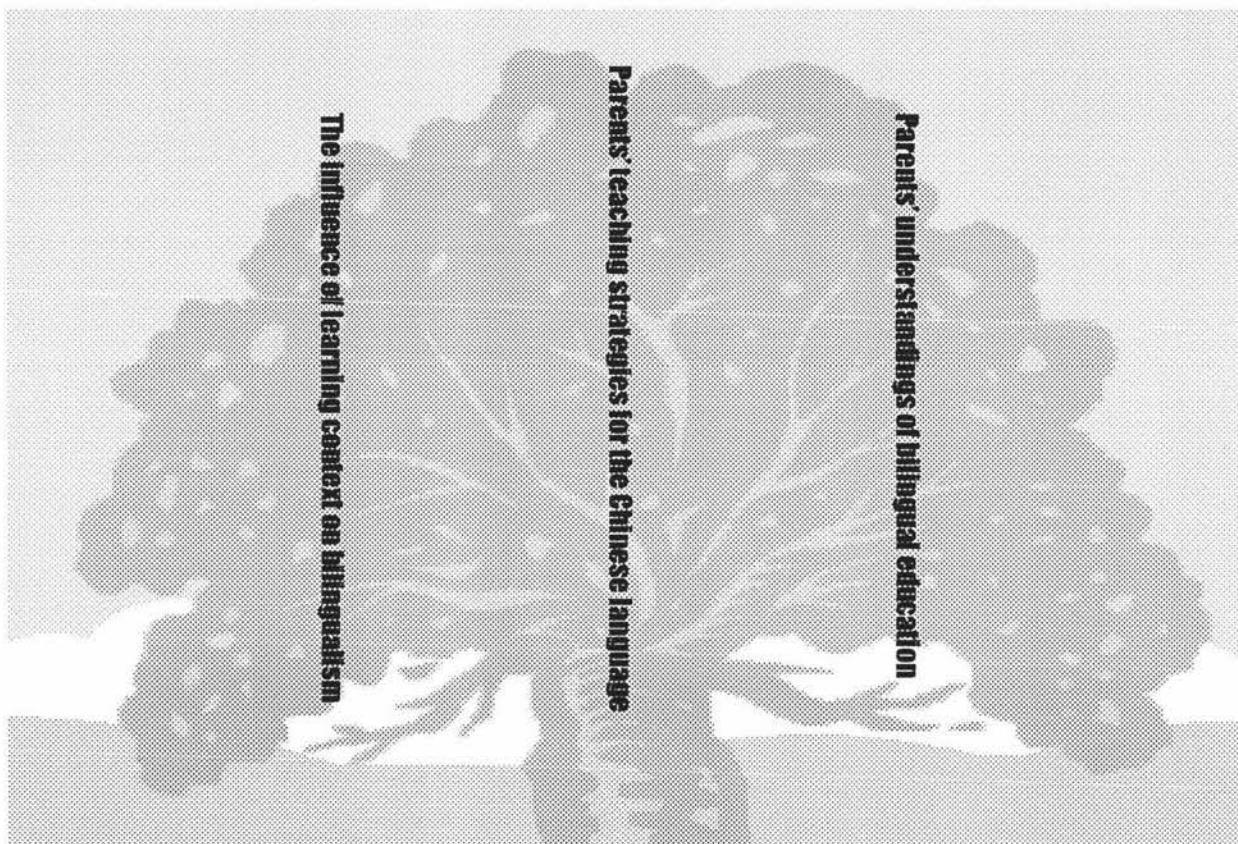
The reason behind this Chinese learning at home was that parents regarded teaching their children as part of their parental responsibilities. It was also impressed by Confucianism that emphasized the relationship between rearing and education. It is said that 养不教 父子过 (this means: rearing children without giving them proper education is fault in parents) (Wen, Zhou & Fan, 1994). This idea indicated that it was parents' responsibility to provide a good education for their children, which was the proper way of rearing children. Teaching children without discipline was also a fault in parents, and in teachers. People did not understand right from wrong unless they had been well educated (Wen, Zhou & Fan, 1994). It was well known that parents are the first teachers of their children because parents are the real cultural and language transmitters early in the lives of their young children (MacFarquhar, cited in Tu, Hejmanek & Wachman, 1992).

The parents involved had a strong desire not to let their children forget Chinese, especially as they lived in New Zealand where English was the dominant language. They were willing to offer home education in the Chinese language since they regarded themselves as Chinese and it was their commitment to pass on Chinese things, because they stated they did not feel like Chinese if their children could not speak Mandarin. Teaching Chinese also carried the expectations of children's grandparents for a strong cultural identity. These parents felt confident about their children's basic oral skills in Chinese before they arrived in New Zealand. Parents thought: "It is easy for him to keep this language. It means that if he puts in a little effort he can keep the Chinese language" (Deng family). They also stated: "If we do not teach our children, they will learn nothing from us" (Cui family).

Thus, in summary, rearing children was inseparable from education and closely linked to parents' attitudes too. The objectives for the success of their children's education were also the success of the family. This thinking was influenced and dominated by the Confucian ideas subconsciously rooted in the Chinese parents' minds.

Figure 5.2 presented below, attempts to pull the following discussions (sections 5.3.2; 5.3.3 and 5.3.4) together as how Confucian ideas influence parents' understandings and implementation of bilingual education. It consisted of parents' understandings of bilingual education, teaching strategies for the Chinese language, and the influence of learning context on bilingualism (which is illustrated as three main tree branches that are grown and are nurtured by their Confucian roots).

Figure 5.2: How Confucian ideas influenced parents' understandings and implementation of bilingual education



5.3.2 *Parents' Understandings of Bilingual Education*

In this section, parents' opinions on education will be represented in the two steps. Firstly I will look at the parents' understanding of *immersion bilingual education*, then the parents' desire for learning through playing or *teaching with high interest*.

In this first part of the section, Chinese parents' understanding of *immersion bilingual education* will be discussed with reference to the literature.

All Chinese parents involved in this investigation tended to believe that *immersion bilingual education* (see section 2.2) was the best way to develop their children's bilingualism based on their personal language learning experiences and beliefs. This belief of teaching and learning was informed by the Confucian ideas of 教之道 贵以专 (this means: in all education pedagogy, persistence is valued the most) (Wen, Zhou & Fan, 1994). In this case, parents felt that it would be better for their children to concentrate on learning the English language at school without interference from any other languages - totally immersing into the English language learning context. When their children were at home, they had been immersed into the Chinese language learning context. In this way, parents thought that their children received immersion bilingual education in two languages in order to become bilingual.

In this investigation, this kind understanding of *immersion bilingual education* had similarities to the immersion bilingual programs in Canada. In the traditional Canadian immersion program, the native English-speaking students learnt French mostly or partly through the medium of French at *school*; therefore they ideally became bilingual in French and English (Baker, 1996). The difference for young Chinese immigrant children in this study becoming bilingual was that they went to *school* to learn the English language formally; *and* their heritage Chinese language was maintained and developed through *home* informal learning.

Even though parents had a strong desire to maintain and develop their children's Chinese language, from the data I have gathered, these Chinese parents expected their children to master English as soon as possible and fit into the all English academic school education in New Zealand. The transitional school bilingual program that the Chinese parents preferred to have was actually what the children involved in this study currently received in schools of New Zealand. "There must be something second, if something is to be the first" (Song family). This idea is reflected in the old Chinese proverb 鱼翅与熊掌不可兼得也 (this means: people could not have fish fin and the palm of the bear's paw at the same time). People could not have two valuable things

simultaneously. It is the same as the English proverb, "you cannot have your cake and eat it too". Most of the parents thought that it was realistic to concentrate on learning one thing only - English - and made sure to learn it well, since their children now lived in New Zealand and went to schools where English was the dominant language.

Under this condition, parents would consider the best way to maintain and to develop the Chinese language without interfering with English learning, as the first priority. It could be teaching Chinese at home, informal weekend school or after school programs. Thus, this was the way the current Chinese parents involved in this study understood about *immersion bilingual education*. It was understandable that some of the parents in this investigation explained that it would be too much for their young children to carry on learning Chinese at home, while they were struggling to learn English at school when they just arrived in New Zealand. Therefore, from the data collected, all parents started with oral language - Mandarin teaching at home by speaking to their children in Mandarin all the time. Slowly they introduced literacy teaching in the Chinese language, especially in weekends and school holidays.

There were also some different understandings from parents on the maintenance bilingual programs defined by educational researchers and theorists (see section 2.2). The maintenance programs were about the school continuously supporting the development of a native language and not pressuring children to use only English; instead children were encouraged to use their own native language in the school learning context, so the children in the programs would ideally become and remain bilingual in their native language and English (Baker, 1988). In the eyes of Chinese immigrant parents in this investigation, the maintenance bilingual programs should be set up as weekend school or after school programs. Only two mothers of the eight families suggested that this kind of maintenance bilingual program could be for limited hours during school time.

Three of the eight families actually continued their children's Chinese teaching and learning right from the time of arrival in New Zealand. The other families, having found that their children's Chinese language went back remarkably, started to put more efforts into teaching and trying to maintain and develop their Chinese language. The contribution from all parents involved was that they established Chinese teaching and

learning at home besides their children's formal schooling. The hidden reason for this was the influences from the traditional Chinese Confucian ideas of nature and nurture, and rearing and education. Parents expected their children to be immersed into bilingual and bicultural situations as *immersion bilingual education*, which they believed should benefit their children's bilingualism the most.

Parents' opinions on teaching principles are interpreted in various ways. Most parents stated that they did not have a very clear idea how the New Zealand school system worked; they only had a sense of the general principle of *learning through playing* or *teaching with high interest*. Compared to *traditional Chinese rote learning*, all parents appreciated and valued Western teaching pedagogy and they felt it focused on the understanding and the process of learning. Parents considered that there were many compulsory learning elements in Chinese education; in contrast, the schools of New Zealand offered more subject options to interest children to learn.

The mother from the Zhou family clearly stated: "Playing is learning" (Zhou family). Some parents in this research realized that playing could be one kind of learning but it would depend on how people designated the *playing* which meant *teaching children with high interest*. Some parents invited their children's native English-speaker classmates to their home to play, so that their children could learn English and interact with native speakers through playing. One interesting fact came from the Cui family as the mother questioned her son why he did not cry when he was playing, but cried when he was learning. Her son replied that playing was happy so why would he need to cry when he was playing. This example showed that children could be taught through some high interests such as playing which was carefully designed by parents and teachers. Thus, parents in this investigation had a strong desire to teach their children through playing.

While parents tried hard to accept the principle of learning through playing or *teaching with high interest*, they were still strongly influenced by Confucian ideas 勤有功 戏无益 (this means: people gain knowledge in diligence and lose it in play) (Wen, Zhou & Fan, 1994). This was demonstrated by the way of teaching mathematics to their

children at home. Parents explained the reason why they tutored mathematics particularly, as they thought it was a very essential learning tool that would be the base for more advanced scientific learning skills in the future. It is also impressed by Confucianism as Confucius himself established his basic curriculum called 六艺 (this means: The Six Arts: they are ritual, music, archery, charioteering, writing, and calculations) (Hall & Ames, 1987). This seemed to be the reason that many Chinese parents set high objectives and valued mathematics teaching and learning very much, no matter whether in school or at home.

The way parents judged their children's mathematics level was to match with the *Standard Mathematics Textbook of Nine Years Compulsory Elementary Education*. Therefore, parents in this study considered their children were at a low mathematics level because of lack of practice and no mathematics homework from schools, so they always arranged more mathematics homework in Chinese after school. It shows that the parents valued the *quantity* of learning, or the memorization of many facts (Haworth, 1996). As the Chai family mentioned, they thought the teaching method of New Zealand was very different from the way of Chinese teaching. Chinese preferred children to practice more and be familiar with all different types of mathematics questions until solving them skillfully. The children in this investigation did demonstrate the benefits they got from their home informal teaching and learning, as most of them showed their outstanding ability in mathematics within class or school. This provided evidence again that concepts and skills could be transferred from one language to another (Cummins, 1989; Baker, 1996) (see sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4).

To conclude this section, parents' understandings of bilingual education were strongly shaped by Confucian ideas, as demonstrated by the analysis of parents' views of *immersion bilingual education*. The parents believed in the Confucian teaching philosophy of nature and nurture, and educational pedagogy of rearing and education, so they involved themselves in home education to pass on their own cultural values through maintaining and developing the Chinese language. As they are the descendants of Confucianism, these parents traditionally valued diligence and set up high objectives for their children, as showed through parents' attitudes towards mathematics teaching and learning in the Chinese language at home.

5.3.3 Parents' Teaching Strategies for the Chinese Language

This section is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the relationship between parents involved and their children. The second part considers parents' teaching strategies using for the Chinese language.

As first part of this subsection, despite the fact parents had their own parental teaching style at home, they all realized the importance of establishing a good relationship with their children. Confucian ideas were: reverence for ancestors, knowing and observing the correct behaviours between superiors and subordinates influenced their teaching (Ngan, 1987). Thus, some parents expected their children to obey them and to do what they would like them to do. Other parents tended to be more accepting of Western culture and negotiated with their children in order to set up some Chinese learning programs at home. Finally an explanation of laissez-faire parental teaching style is provided.

Parental teaching was generally in the authoritarian style, as parents stated that they did not give a choice to their children in learning Chinese; they required children to learn it as a duty. Parents believed that their children understood the reasons behind the requirement. This reflected the Confucian ideas about 幼不学 老何为 玉不琢 不成器 (this means: if the younger ones do not learn, what can they do when they are older? Jade cannot become the jade ware without carving and chiseling) (Wen, Zhou & Fan, 1994). Parents believed that children should learn as much as possible otherwise they would not be able to be useful citizens when they were older. Parents did explain to their children why they should receive education and work hard. They also believed that their children were too young to take self-control for themselves. It was the parents' responsibility to help children to form good life and study habits, which was as, Britto and Brooks-Gunn (2001) called it *getting things done*.

There are some differences between Chinese culture and Western culture, and Chinese culture seems very *foreign* to Western culture. It had been recognized that parents' and teachers' perceptions of each culture were often biased because of their own cultural background (Iram & Malovaty, 1994, cited in Haworth, 1996). This bias created some

conflict over educational expectations. As one family reported, their daughter had changed into a more Western way of doing what she would like to do, and did not always obey her parents as before. The parents had to learn the alternate way of suggesting to her instead of telling her, in order to persuade their daughter to take their advice. So the parents found it hard to make their daughter learn Chinese at home. The daughter from this family had the most advanced Chinese language skill and knew about two thousand Chinese written characters when she finished Grade One of Primary School in China at seven years old before her arrival in New Zealand. Unfortunately the parents reported that their daughter forgot most of the Chinese written characters and found it hard to write them after she had lived in New Zealand for three years, but she could still read well in Chinese.

Another style of parental teaching was democratic because some parents adopted more democratic ideas from Western countries, especially from New Zealand. They negotiated with their children about their choice of learning programs, e.g., Chinese, mathematics or music etc. Some parents respected their children's language learning choice and provided more flexibility of learning programs at home. The third parental style was laissez-faire because parents did not want to have a conflict with their children. They also thought it might have negative consequences to impose Chinese learning on their children. It was really hard for both parents and children to see future value for learning the Chinese language in an English dominant country.

Most parents realized that they needed to build a good relationship and reduced the conflict so children would like to listen to them, especially now these children were growing up and becoming more independent. However, if parents in the future cannot understand their children because of the language barriers, how can they build a good relationship with their children? If bilingual families have communication difficulties, parents take a very high risk of losing their own children in the future. Even though all parents involved in this study had a good start at being home teachers in order to teach Chinese, no matter what kind of parental style they adopted, *extra* effort had to be made to protect their own heritage language so as to fulfil the parents' expectations.

The parents explained their teaching strategies in various ways. Most of the parents mentioned that they were not trained teachers and they did not have the proper teaching methods. They stated that they just tried different teaching methods to see which worked, but they had not found effective approaches in the past. Again, the common principle that these parents followed in their teaching was impressed by Confucian ideas of 凡训蒙 须讲究 详训诂 明句读 (this means: the teaching of children needed to have a systematic teaching method, explaining clearly the meaning of characters, and understanding how to read non-punctuated articles) (Wen, Zhou & Fan, 1994). (Note: written Chinese articles started to have punctuation later on, but not in the age of the Confucius). Most of the parents clearly explained the meaning of articles, either read to children or read together with the children, and asked some questions about the articles to test if the children understood.

After parents taught their children this way, the parents' arrangement for the practice of writing was generally copying the new Chinese characters and reciting some paragraphs. It was rote learning because parents considered children had to remember and practise new Chinese written characters and really had no other strategies. Confucian ideas behind this kind of teaching were 摍其要 记其事 (this means: after you read an article, summarize the main things you learned from it and remember them) (Wen, Zhou & Fan, 1994). It illustrated that teaching and learning the written Chinese was a process of rote learning, as there were no other strategies for memorizing new characters (see section 4.2). Most Chinese people believed that, if you read over a thousand books, you should be able to write excellent articles.

Some parents did agree, "even though our mother tongue is the Chinese language, teaching Chinese is different from knowing how to speak Chinese" (Song family). A simple example was given and named 图形模式 *model of pictorial* by parents. Parents explained that children copied the strokes of the written Chinese characters in an irregular sequential order, thus parents considered that Children must try to remember the whole shape of the characters (see section 4.2). For the *model of pictorial*, the practical teaching method was to continue telling children that the writing order of the Chinese characters was basically *from top and down, from left to right*, which was the general principle. It had to rely on more demonstrations from the parents and more

practice from the children's side. This also illustrated that literacy development in the Chinese language needed to be assisted by skilful adults such as parents and teachers. It would be too hard for the children to learn these patterns by themselves. It would be very helpful if these untrained home Chinese teachers received some guidance from professional Chinese educators in the Chinese language.

In summary, because of the particular features of the Chinese language, it seemed hard to make it interesting, which all parents would expect. All teaching strategies, including copying, reciting, repetition and checking from the result chapter, illustrated the characters of traditional Chinese rote teaching and learning. It might be that some parents adopted different parental teaching styles so that they could manage to teach their children more of the Chinese language. No matter what teaching strategies and parental styles of these parents had, apparently they were all dominated by Confucian roots in the parents' minds. Parents set up the proper educational context with clear achievable objectives for their children in order to nurture their good nature.

5.3.4 *The Influence of Learning Context on Bilingualism*

In this section, the influence from the learning context in which the Chinese children lived is discussed, as parents firmly believed that it strongly influenced their children's attitudes towards Chinese learning. The longer children lived in New Zealand, the more the children were influenced by Western society.

The Chinese parents involved in this investigation, as a result of their personal experiences, believed the problem with their own English proficiency was that they did not have the right learning context in China, even though they had been taught English as a compulsory second language for at least seven years. As adults settled in New Zealand, they still struggled to learn more English. One of the reasons for this, parents considered, was that they had not been offered "face to face 'context embedded' situations" (Baker, 1996:151) which their children *now* had the opportunity to experience in New Zealand schools (see section 2.3.4). Macnamara (1973a:63, cited in Singleton, 1989:2) observed: "... young children in suitable environments pick up a second language with little trouble, whereas adults seem to struggle ineffectively with a

new language and to attempt impose the phonology of their mother tongue on the new language". However, parents firmly believed that there should not be any interference with their children learning English at school so that they could master English as soon as possible in the right language learning context.

In this study, young Chinese immigrant children who received Western education adopted the essential learning idea of learning through social interaction in the social learning context. The example was that the mother of one family involved did not like their daughter's idea about learning Chinese, as the daughter would rather learn Chinese with her friends instead of her parents who generally played supervision and teaching roles. The mother of this family doubted that their daughter and her friends would only play together and had no ideas about what they learnt of Chinese characters and articles. This illustrated that these parents tried their best to adopt the Western idea of learning through playing or teaching with high interest, but they still held their traditional Confucian idea in the depths of their mind about 勤有功 戏无益 (this means: people gained knowledge in diligence and lost it in play) (Wen, Zhou & Fan, 1994). That was the reason why parents encouraged children to learn more and work hard; in reality, it actually reflected this belief about diligence, and some parents stated that there was no point in running around outside without any study. Because parents highly valued diligence and hard work, they encouraged their children to learn Chinese at home besides their formal English schooling.

Vygotsky (1978, cited in Daniel, 2001) argued that children did not develop in isolation; rather, that learning took place when the child was interacting with the social and cultural context. The parents from the Cui family remembered that their son learnt a few hundred Chinese characters from kindergarten in China without any difficulties because of the learning context of the class and the competition between classmates. This perhaps demonstrated Vygotsky's (1978) social learning idea of children inter and intra learning from each other (see section 2.5.1). This also illustrated children learning through the social interaction from their teacher and classmates in the right social learning context. Now parents from this family found it hard to motivate their son to learn by himself at home as he was isolated and had no interactions with his Chinese cohort peers in terms of learning Chinese in the right context.

Some parents accepted that it was not the school's responsibility to encourage people's heritage language maintenance or development. This idea illustrated Confucian ideas of people's concern for their own individual world (MacFarquhar, cited in Tu, Hejtmánek & Wachman, 1992). Most of the parents did find it very hard to teach and maintain their heritage language at home. In reality, they could not help Chinese language becoming marginal learning even at home, regardless of parents realizing that it was very important to maintain their own heritage language. Since the main social learning context was English, (e.g. school, street and even children's playmates at home), parents found that their children's Chinese language went backwards rapidly even though they kept speaking Mandarin to their children all the time. But parents recognized that they, as parents, had not put enough effort and support into their children's Chinese learning. However, this reflected Confucian ideas that mentioned earlier of 养不教 父子过 (this means: rearing children without giving them proper education would be the fault in the parents) (Wen, Zhou & Fan, 1994). On the other side, parents also had their own reasons for their lack of effort in teaching Chinese to their children. They were as follows:

- 1) Parents were too busy or were too tired to do teaching sometimes. Parents found it hard to motivate their children to learn Chinese and the children were not motivated themselves to learn either. If parents did not check, children would skip practicing reading or writing the Chinese language. A few parents from the interviews used the metaphor of the Chinese proverb 两天打鱼, 三天晒网 (this means: go fishing for two days, and dry the net for three days).
- 2) Parents arranged homework in Chinese, but children needed help most of the time, and that was the thing parents could not offer sometimes, so children noticeably lost their interest. In addition, there was no interaction of social learning with their peers in the home learning context since there was always only one child in each family except one family who had a three-year-old second daughter.
- 3) Parents did not intend to stop their children's progress in English, as they would like to see their children following the school educational pace and having similar academic and language abilities compared to their native English speaking classmates. Therefore, most of the parents could not prevent

the retardation on their own heritage language. They also recognized that the Chinese language of their children could not be easily maintained and developed well, even though they tried to teach Chinese and speak to their children in Mandarin all the time. Parents thought at least they offered the chance to their children, and it would depend on children taking this chance. Most of the parents were dominated by the idea of mastering English well first, so they had their own expectations for their children of being bilingual.

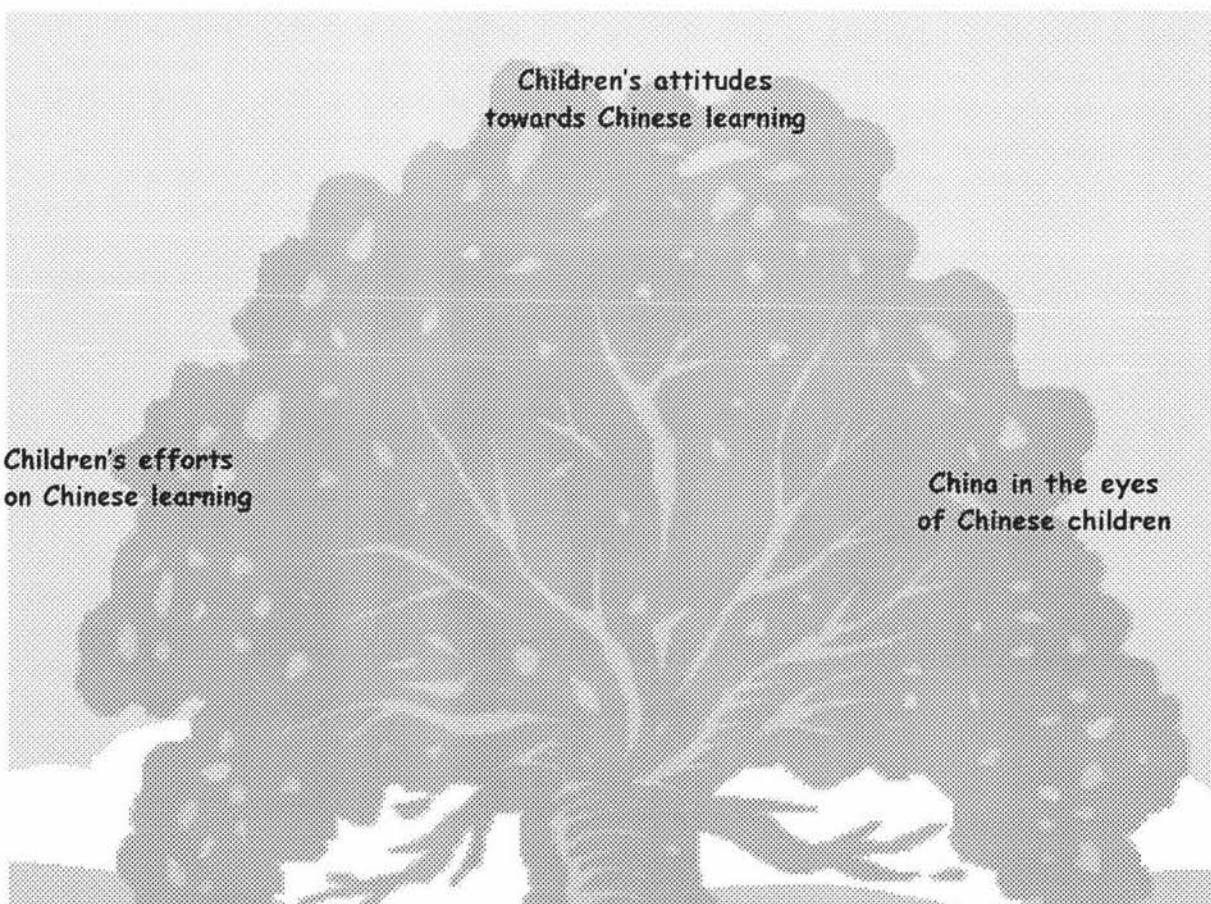
In response to these problems, parents from four of the eight participant families generally focused on listening and speaking skills based on their children's ability level, but they still tried to teach their children some simple reading and writing in the Chinese language. The other four emphasized their children's Chinese literacy development. The children from the first set of families could speak Mandarin well and read some simple Chinese characters, while children from the second set could read well and write some simple messages in the Chinese language. In fact, all the parents had done an amazing job, because all their children were basically at the very beginning level or had no literacy development in the Chinese language when they arrived in New Zealand. These Chinese parents as home teachers carried on teaching their children's Chinese language. The most successful example was that one nine-year-old girl in this study had achieved her appropriate age level in both languages. This perhaps might be because her parents never stopped teaching her and she was well self-motivated. One of her personal characters was that she loved reading in both languages all the time.

To finish this section, parents considered that learning context influenced children's bilingual development either from their own personal experiences or from the facts that children received more Western ideas. However, parents as the descendants of Confucianism considered that they as parents had not done enough for their children's bilingual development. They strove to establish a home Chinese learning context to ensure and influence their children at least to learn something from them so that they could pass on their heritage language and culture. They actually successfully achieved their goal even though their children were at uneven levels in their Chinese literacy development.

5.4 THE FACTORS THAT SUPPORT OR INTERFERE WITH CHILDREN'S BILINGUAL DEVELOPMENT

Although the children lived in an English dominant country, the parents tried to build more supporting factors for their children to grow up bilingually. This included establishing a best possible Chinese learning context at home. In the following section, factors that supported or interfered with this task are discussed. Despite the difficulties, the Chinese children showed a positive attitude and put great effort to learning Chinese (see section 4.9). The positive results from the children are illustrated as leaves on the tree in the following Figure 5.3, which is called 'Children's attitudes and efforts towards Chinese learning as the result of their parents' teaching at home'. The leaves on the tree are in a sense the fruit of the language learning, but in this case, the external and visible part as tree leaves, supported by its trunk and branches and nourished by Confucian roots.

Figure 5.3: Children's attitudes and efforts towards Chinese learning as the result of their parents' teaching at home



In this section, I shall discuss how and why the supportive home learning context benefits children's bilingual development, making links to the literature review, and noting the benefits for the parents successfully building the supportive home learning context.

Children in this study were exposed to two language immersion life situations, English in school and Chinese at home. At school, children always had chances to speak English either in classrooms or playground from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. At home, children would be with their parents from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday to Friday plus weekends and school holidays. At the times with children, there might be something that parents could do with their children together. It might be worthwhile to show that exposure time was widely recognized as a crucial factor in differentiating levels of language proficiency as Kennedy (1973:75, cited in Singleton, 1989:237) stated that:

... above all, the importance of the difference between the amounts' of time spent by the child learning his first language and that available for learning the second language should not be underestimated. It is not difficult to calculate the many thousands more hours, which the first language learner had in exposure to the language he is learning in comparison with the time spent by second language learners. The second language learner is typically a part-time learner.

In this research, all parents insisted on speaking Mandarin at home all the time, as they believed that was one way of maintaining and enhancing children's listening and speaking skills. The interesting thing was that parents spoke in Mandarin, and the children received Mandarin input, but their output, or answer was in English. Parents assumed that it might be hard for their children to conduct the output in Mandarin. But the thing was that children received the input in Mandarin and understood the Mandarin input first, but found it easier to respond in English. If children could understand Mandarin, it indicated that they should be able to produce the responses in Mandarin, but children preferred to avoid responding in Mandarin. Another reason that parents admitted was that they themselves did not show patience or encourage their children to conduct output in Mandarin. The result seemed that now these children had more language ability and skill in English than what they had in the Chinese language. It appeared that most of the children had reached their chronological age level in English, not in Chinese. The example was that most children could read and write well in English, but not in Chinese.

Parents also tried to build a positive low-filter peaceful happy learning context at home. Generally the Chinese children in this study had no problems to express themselves in Mandarin as they had mastered the basic listening and speaking skills before they arrived in New Zealand. So for parents, it was worthwhile to encourage their children patiently and to persist in having them answer back in Mandarin, especially as children were in the embedded context. Krashen (1987) defined the *affective filter* as a mental block to prevent receiving comprehensive language input. He explained that if a learner's affective filter was *up*, s/he might understand when s/he heard and read, but s/he might not conduct output because s/he was "on the defensive" (Stevick, 1976, cited in Krashen 1987:3). Parents agreed that listening and speaking were the basis of children's literacy development - reading and writing. It could achieve the effect of "using one stone to kill two birds" by practising Mandarin and showing the importance of speaking Mandarin.

Parents reported that the best way of communicating with their children was to answer children's questions with interesting historical facts about China, and that good communication could last two or three hours. It illustrated that if children were exposed subconsciously to the Chinese language and culture within these two and three hours, children would question and communicate with their parents in Mandarin totally, and forget about their English language. The First of Krashen's Five Hypotheses, the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, stated that acquisition was a subconscious process in acquiring language, while learning was a conscious process of *knowing about* language. While children questioned and communicated with their parents, they were also learning history and culture in the Chinese language. In this way, parents were using the children's unconscious acquisition ability through questioning, knowing about interesting historical facts, in the conscious process of Chinese language learning.

The children's desire to know gave the parents a chance to apply Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Krashen's (1981) Hypothesis *i + I*. The thing that children already knew arises from their *i* level, the unknown part could be regarded as Krashen's *+ I*. The plus one part would be the knowledge from parents. As parents scaffolded their children's learning so their children would learn from their parents. This situation fits with Vygotsky's ZPD as well. The ZPD represented the

difference between the children and the capable parents. The parents could help children to reach their potential level of learning. It seems important that parents should take the opportunity to use this good communication to scaffold and to help children to reach their potential and the + *I* part. It would be up to the parents to realize that their children learn subconsciously within the parents' consciously designed teaching and learning.

During the good communication above, children have a low affective filter, so the children should be able to absorb more Chinese language at this time. Some examples were mentioned by parents; e.g., 曹冲称象 (CaoChong weighs an elephant) was a good story topic to challenge children to solve this problem in order to achieve to their potential ability as discussed above. Parents could give some hints and discuss various possibilities. Questioning would be a good strategy and they even could trial their ideas together. In ancient China, there was no modern equipment like we have now, but this elephant was transferred across the river in a boat, and there were plenty of boats, stones and etc. How could a child called CaoChong weigh an elephant over a thousand years ago? Considerable language development could be involved in this problem solving activity; parents find it easy to monitor, correct and teach their children who were more interested in this learning at that time.

The example 曹冲称象 (CaoChong weighs an elephant) also illustrated that ancient Chinese realized the importance of challenge to the children in order to lead them to reach their potential ability as Confucius advocated educating the populace, guiding social interaction, and self-development of the potential ability in social and cultural contexts (Liu, 1998). Schwartz (cited in Tu, Hejtmanek & Wachman, 1992) stated that Confucianism stressed very much on individual self-development. While Confucian values had long emphasized the dignity and internal autonomy of the individual, Confucius believed that: "it is man who can make the Way great, not the Way that can make man great" (Liu, 1998:12). This indicated that Confucius himself "put great faith in man's potential" (Liu, 1998:12). Confucius also believed that human beings lived in a social context, so people needed to learn the behavior of social interaction. Confucius referred to this as 礼 (this means: ritual), which was from his basic curriculum called 六艺 (this means: The Six Arts: ritual, music, archery, chariotering, writing, and

calculations) (Hall & Ames, 1987) as mentioned earlier. Therefore, there should be no conflict and no misunderstanding in achieving the individual's potential ability whether in Confucian terms or Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD and social interaction in cultural context. The common thing was that the *potential ability* needed to be developed through social interactions with careful teaching plans to enable children to apply what they had learnt independently.

Parents should take the opportunities of daily communications to input more academic language, such as more technological and scientific terms. Vygotsky (1986, cited in Schleppegrell and Colombi, 2002) made a distinction between everyday concepts and scientific concepts. This distinction is very important as Chinese children involved in this investigation could understand and use daily concepts but not technical ones in more comprehensive conversations. Children had mastered Chinese orally in terms of Cummins' (1984a, 1984b, cited in Baker, 1996) Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skill (BICS), but had not yet reached the level of Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (see section 2.3.4). Everyday concepts were understood subconsciously, but scientific concepts needed to be consciously learned, typically through language. Some parents did realize this difference between everyday and scientific concepts, and tried to develop this to extend and enrich their children's vocabulary. An example from the Cui family was to introduce more scientific terms in Mandarin so as to enrich their son's vocabulary (see section 4.2). Once these Chinese children involved had been taught in this way, in a long run, it would benefit their proficiency not only in Chinese but also in English as Cummins (1987, cited in Freeman, 1998) argued that a certain threshold level of proficiency in a native language (e.g. Chinese) was necessary for children to develop high levels of proficiency in English.

The thing that interfered with this ideal language learning context that parents strove to create for their children was peer pressure because these young Chinese children in this investigation did not like to behave differently. These children were used to speaking and to be spoken to in Mandarin at home as that was the way they were being brought up. Most of them did not mind learning Chinese at home. Some of them worried that their peer visitors would not be able to understand them. However, children involved in this research showed a positive attitude towards Chinese learning in the home

context, but they felt it hard to learn the Chinese language because it was a tough job and it could be very boring too.

To conclude this section, parents in this study successfully created supportive Chinese learning at home by applying Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD and Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis. They used the same educational purpose to challenge and help children to reach their potential ability no matter whether in traditional Chinese Confucian concepts or in modern Vygotsky's and Krashen's terms. The parents' effort produced the results as their children showed positive attitude and put great effort into learning Chinese, especially at weekends and school holidays. These children were growing up as additive bilinguals since their parents successfully established a Chinese culture at home besides the New Zealand culture in school (see section 2.4.3). Even though the parents involved in this study thought they had not done enough towards teaching their children Chinese language, in fact, they had achieved remarkably well in the literacy development in the Chinese language especially since they were not trained home teachers and were working in an informal home teaching and learning context.

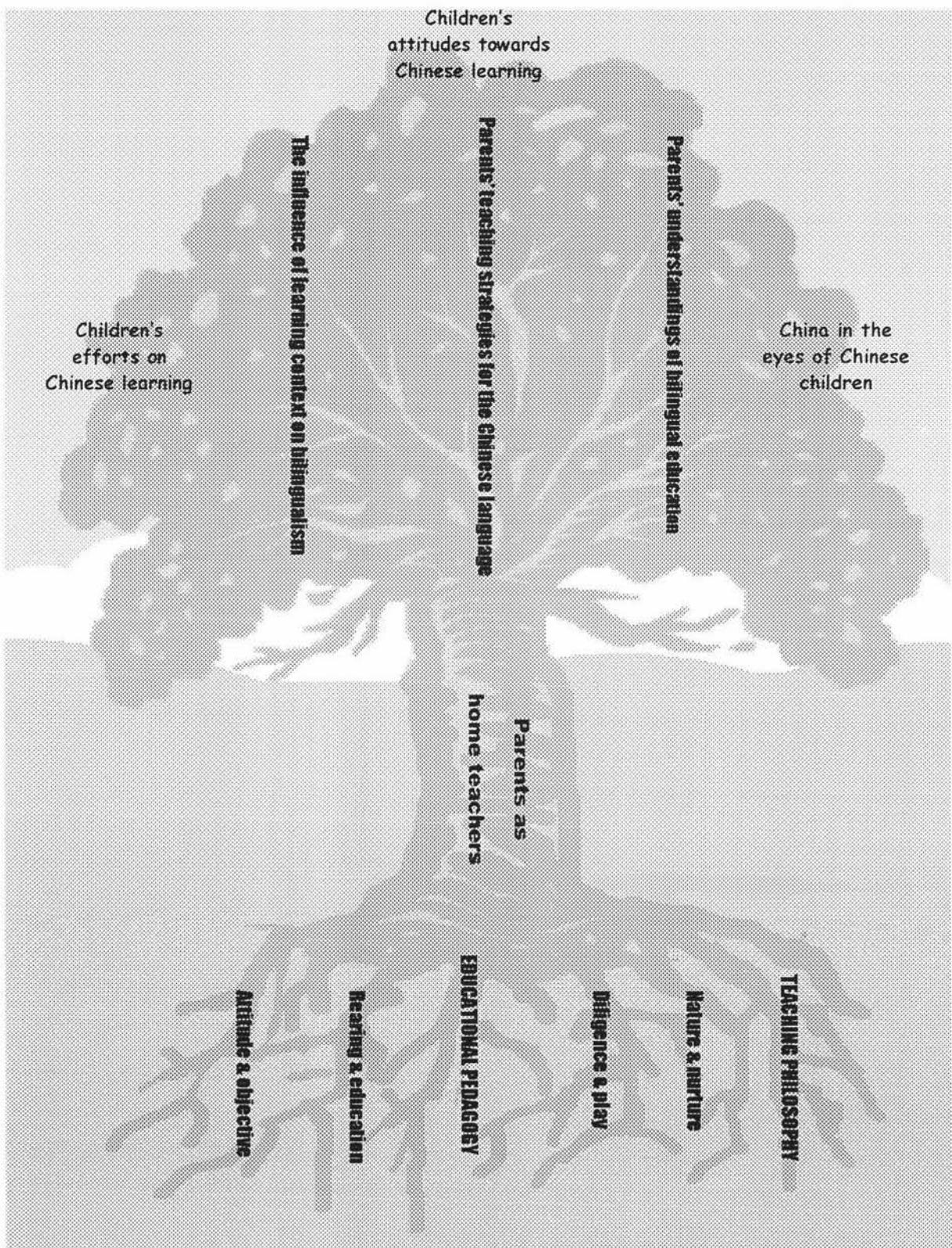
5.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I discussed, in several ways, parents' understandings of children bilingual development. It was interesting to point out that their understandings actually illustrated the evolution of literature (see section 2.3). I also discussed the way in which the current Chinese generations subconsciously hold the Confucian ideas very deeply and strongly in their minds and how this influenced the parents' contribution to children's bilingual development. Since parents firmly believed in Confucian nature and nurture, rearing and education, they took seriously their parental responsibility to be home teachers for their children. Parents were also dominated by valuing diligence without playing; they created home Chinese learning contexts besides their children's formal school so that children could fulfil their objectives to become bilingual in the life context of New Zealand. After parents had lived in New Zealand for a number of years, they tended to accept more Western culture and teaching pedagogy, but

Confucianism is still part of them. This was reflected in their opinions on which language was their children's first language and mother tongues, and this played a decisive role in the children's bilingual development in terms of the expectations of becoming bilingual. While parents stated that learning context played a significant role in children's bilingual and bicultural life, Confucian ideas still dominated their opinions on educational systems and teaching approaches in the Chinese language. Some current educational ideas could be seen in parents' teaching methods, e.g. Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD and Krashen's (1981) *i + 1* Hypotheses could be identified in the practices in the Chinese language teaching and learning at home. Parents had a strong inclination to apply teaching with high interest and to combine the strengths of two good teaching methods from two educational systems, Chinese and Western, in order to benefit their children's bilingualism the most.

The following Figure 5.4 also provides a summary to illustrate the way in which the Chinese immigrant parents as home teachers maintained and developed children's heritage language in New Zealand and helps in answering my research questions.

Figure 5.4: The impact between traditional Chinese Confucian ideas and parents' perceptions of bilingualism in reality in New Zealand.



Research Question One addressed the parents' perceptions about their children's bilingualism when they arrived in New Zealand. The answers can be found in their Confucian roots, which parents hold unconsciously. This appears to be the source of the dominant ideas that guide these parents' beliefs. The trunk represents the efforts of parents as home teachers and their expectations in helping their children to become bilingual. In their efforts they link their own teaching philosophy and the reality of the world in modern society in New Zealand. The trunk also summarises Research Question Three which is how parents contribute their children's bilingualism. Research Question Two, which is about the change of parents' perceptions after living in New Zealand for a number of years, is illustrated as the main tree branches because parents stated that they did not change their underlying views but they did adjust their expectations in accordance with the reality. Parents developed more flexibility in regarding their expectations for their children in mastering the Chinese language. The last Research Question, involving the factors supporting and interfering with children's bilingualism, is presented as tree leaves and it demonstrates positive results as the fruit of the parents' efforts. All these branches and leaves are grown and nurtured by the Confucianism roots that put strong emphasis on education and which are seen to guarantee people success in their future career. This is the most important aspect for Chinese children who are expected to fulfil their parents' expectations.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the main points of the thesis about the parents' contributions as home teachers to maintain and develop children's heritage language in an informal home teaching and learning context in New Zealand, based on parents' understanding of bilingualism shaped by their traditional Chinese Confucian ideas. The limitations will be discussed and some suggestions made for further research. Some practical recommendations arising as a result of the research are also put forward.

6.1 SUMMARY OF KEY IDEAS

In this study, the Chinese immigrant parents involved had their own definitions and understandings of bilingualism. The results showed that parents had several understandings of bilingualism and a range of opinions about two educational systems in regard to teaching strategies. In general, parents believed that bilingualism would benefit their children's future. The reality was that for these immigrant families involved living in New Zealand now, mastering English was the *key* for survival and success in an English dominated country. It is clear in this study that parents expected their children to master English first.

However, parents involved had a strong desire to prevent their children from forgetting the Chinese language, and they had some sense that the development of Chinese language ability would benefit their children's English language learning. The development of the Chinese language was also seen as important by parents to pass on their heritage and culture to their younger generation. Therefore, parents took responsibility for being home teachers and establishing an informal home teaching and learning context for maintaining and developing their children's Chinese language. In this way, parents expected their children to become bilingual, and to be immersed in the

formal English of schooling and informal Chinese in the home teaching and learning context. The reasons for this are summarized as follows:

Firstly, in this study, the Chinese immigrants parents who had grown up under the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China, unconsciously held strong Confucianism beliefs. No matter what and how they did, they would present their own heritage culture and ethnic identity to their children. One of the significant findings was that these Chinese parents represented the Chinese culture subconsciously, particularly the Confucian ideas, which Hall and Ames (1987:8) said: "engaged the Confucianism sensibility".

Secondly, since these parents regarded themselves as Chinese and actually held very strong Confucian beliefs there were some conflicts of understanding between the two different educational systems. On one side, parents tended to accept the general principle in Western educational pedagogy *learning through playing*, which is how they interpreted the *high interest approach* in New Zealand schools. On the other side, they believed in *gaining knowledge through diligence, and losing it in playing*, as they were the descendants of Confucianism. Parents liked the idea of learning with high interest, but in reality, they would like to encourage their children to practise and learn more as well. The Chinese immigrant parents involved in this research were in a *combination* of New Zealand world in the 21st century and the traditional Chinese Confucian culture, with the obvious tension or dichotomy of mind which resulted. This was reflected in their expectations and teaching strategies used in their children's bilingual development.

The parents involved would like to adopt the idea of *teaching with high interest* and create fun learning experiences in the Chinese language at home, but they found it very hard to do so. Part of the reason for this was that they lacked teaching resources and good practical teaching methods. Most of them suggested that videos with some good educational cartoons in Mandarin would be one of the good teaching and learning approaches for the Chinese language learning. Parents had a strong desire to help their children's bilingualism in any way with their *whole heart* but were not satisfied with their own efforts. It would very helpful if some professional Chinese language educators were available to guide parents' effort as home teachers. However, parents

actually tried very hard to combine the strengths of the two teaching approaches from two different educational systems at their home teaching and learning context in order to develop the best strategy for their children to become bilingual as soon as possible.

Thirdly, since parents are acknowledged as their children's first teachers, they are able to scaffold children's bilingual development through the intuitive application of Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) all the time in their children's daily life. Krashen's (1981) $i + 1$ Hypothesis can be demonstrated within Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD. However, these two teaching theories have a common thing in the development of children's potential ability, which Confucius advocated two thousands years ago. It is fascinating to see this overlap of cultural beliefs. Educational theories and philosophies from two widely separate cultures have this strong commonality as well as obvious differences.

Young Chinese immigrant children rapidly adapted to the English language and followed the school pace well in New Zealand educational settings. In my research, the majority of the parents found that their children's Chinese language ability either went backwards or maintained the same level after their arrival before conditions of parental support and teaching at home began. I conclude that these parents have done an outstanding job in terms of maintaining and developing their children's Chinese language even though the children's literacy development was uneven, as their children have maintained and improved their Chinese language proficiency with this parental support.

The children in this study were, according to Cummins' (1976, cited in Baker, 1996) Threshold Theory, at the second level of the Threshold. They started with formal schooling in New Zealand with no English background, but they had their chronological age basic skills in the Chinese language. One of the interesting findings was that the children involved in this study *now* have better language skills in English than in the Chinese language. Most of them could read books in English but not in the Chinese language. Most of the children were about or above their age in terms of language abilities in English but not quite in the Chinese language. This finding did not mean these Chinese children involved in this investigation did not make any progresses

in their Chinese literacy development, which obviously they did. It simply did not keep pace with their development in English.

The parents in this study believed that the learning context played a significant role in their children's bilingual development, and it was based on their own their personal life experiences. Therefore, they believed that they should immerse their children in a Chinese learning context at home and ensure that Chinese language and culture permeated their children's lives. As their children lived in an English dominant country and received their formal schooling in English, the children picked up English quicker than Chinese, even though Chinese was their heritage language, learnt from birth in China and maintained and developed by their parents all the time in New Zealand. Anyway, the parents found it hard to maintain and develop their children's Chinese language especially in terms of the Chinese language literacy development. The parents felt that they did not master the English language well, so they expected their children to master English. Parents successfully set up additive bicultural and bilingual daily life situations for their children; thus, all of the children involved were bilinguals although at various dimensions along the bilingualism continuum. They did not grow up as balanced bilinguals except one child, but they were certainly growing up as productive bilinguals, under the home learning context that parents created for them (see section 2.1).

Finally, another factor that influenced children's bilingualism was the peer pressure. It was natural for some children to be worried about their peers who might not know their language, so they could not communicate with each other in the presence of non-Chinese peers. Most of the children in this study were happy to be learning Chinese at home, however. Because of the parents' positive attitudes towards the Chinese language, the children also had positive attitudes to Chinese learning at home. The children identified their Chinese heritage positively and took the responsibility of learning Chinese. This could be regarded as the fruit of the effort of their parents in maintaining and developing Chinese as home teachers in New Zealand.

6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The case study approach used in this investigation, as discussed in chapter three, has been generally satisfactory. In this section, however a discussion of the limitations of this study is undertaken.

Firstly, this study was to explore Chinese immigrant parents as home teachers attempting to maintain and develop children's heritage language in New Zealand. It focuses on recent arrival young Chinese immigrants families from Mainland China. People in this situation who immigrated to New Zealand were under the Points System. This meant these immigrant parents were highly educated and also had certain years of working experience in China. They had a young child who would start a formal schooling in New Zealand soon. Thus, the sample of people studied was a very narrow one.

Secondly, the non-participant observation did not prove fruitful as parents tried to involve me as a visitor during their teaching activity. It showed their enthusiasm for teaching the Chinese language. The good relationship and mutual trust essential for the interview counted against non-participatory observation. I had to accept the way parents would like to involve me as part of teaching activity as a guest in their lives. To overcome this limitation it might be possible to have two observers, one participant and one non-participant, in order to get the picture of parents teaching.

Thirdly, the children's group interview went well except I did not get the permission for audiotaping although establishing this group interview involved obtaining consent forms. Like their parents, they all gave me the permission for audiotaping which they posted back to me by mail before I started my research. As part of the process, before I started the group interview, I gave children the Individual Consent Form for Group Agreement in Chinese and English. However, the children in this study collectively discussed audiotaping and indicated that they preferred not to be taped. I respected this decision. Individual child interviews might possibly be a solution to this in future research.

Fourthly, considering children's language fluency in either language (Chinese and English), the length of children's residence (from 2 to over 5 years) and the age of children (from 8 years old to 11 years old) were significant. It meant that no matter which language I chose to speak for the purpose of this children's group interview, it would mean a limitation of understanding among some children. The reason I chose to speak Mandarin was that this was the language which children's parents always spoke to them in. I also had the intention to uphold the status of the Chinese language.

Finally, as a native Chinese adult, it has been a great challenge for me to undertake this thesis because English is my second language, in addition to the difficulties of getting enough participants for this particular research. Even though I have been trained as an English teacher in China with my teaching degree, in terms of writing a master's thesis in English, what I have learnt in China is less than enough. Because of the strong desire of wanting to present my thoughts and my participants' contributions, to our younger generations in New Zealand, I chose to take this challenging task so as to spread a tiny *voice* in our multicultural society.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the data collected, there are some recommendations that can be made and some strategies that parents could employ for their further Chinese teaching at home.

Parents and children could work together in a number of ways to enrich their teaching and learning at home context.

- Social gathering is an excellent way to immerse children into Chinese culture, including celebration of various traditional Chinese festivals or visiting Chinese friends.
- Parents might try to spend more time to accompany their children in Chinese learning, such as reading together at bedtime or playing educational games so as to practicing some comprehensive questions.

- The readings in the Chinese language could be in a various range of stories and poems in accordance with their individual interest. There are often some Chinese picture storybooks available in the local public library.
- Parents could also swap books with different families to build their own Chinese reading resources within the circle of friends in the local community.
- Parents could try to read some books with children in English, and then encourage children to retell stories in Mandarin. Both sides can try to ask comprehensive questions of each other in Mandarin.
- Parents can try to use children's questions to raise children's interests in Chinese learning. This was one of the good teaching approaches that some families recommended in this research. It can be one way to apply the Western pedagogy of *teaching children with high interest*, which Chinese parents prefer.
- Parents could help children to create an active and vivid learning context at home; such as decorating the children's room by their own works in the Chinese language, e.g. the Chinese characters with children's painting.

These are simple suggestions that parents could adopt and also develop a more collective approach in doing so.

The following recommendations arise from the research and these apply particularly to schools and schoolteachers:

- It would be helpful if schools and teachers always highlight the importance of the variety of language and culture, including Chinese. This has been stressed in the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 1993). It could be regarded as a very special thing that Chinese children bring to the school environment.
- It would have a positive impact if classroom teachers always encourage children to firmly hold their own difference, such as learning to say children's Chinese names, or encouraging them to write their names in the Chinese written characters instead of in English all the time.
- If schools can have a few books in Chinese to start with, it would help Chinese children to realize that their heritage language is recognized by the

school. Hopefully, this will lead children to speak Mandarin in school educational settings with the encouragement from schoolteachers. This is also clearly stated in the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 1993).

- If school and classroom teachers can show that they value the knowledge which Chinese parents have, it could be one way to involve Chinese parents in school educational settings, with Chinese children as the translators if needed.
- Some parents felt that, if schools could demonstrate the importance of learning different languages including the Chinese language, Chinese children would appreciate and value Chinese language modelled by schools, and be more motivated themselves to learn the Chinese language.

In general the valuing and celebrating of cultural diversity would perhaps help parents of all nationalities to feel valued and make the idea of a multicultural society more real. Research found (Park & Swartz, 2001) that if schools show respect and value a child's culture as parents do, then the child is more likely to feel comfortable about who s/he is. Therefore, not only parents' attitudes, but also schools' attitudes are very important for children's success when children come from different cultural backgrounds.

6.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Snow, Burns and Griffin, (1998) suggested that the childhood environment supported early literacy development, and excellent instruction was important for all children. In the context of this study, the parents created Chinese learning contexts at home, along with the children's schooling, and this developed two languages simultaneously. The children had two sets of language experts around them who focused on their language development. But still it was a very demanding job to get children literate in the Chinese language in a home learning context in an English dominant country. It would be useful if further research on parents as home teachers of children's literacy development, focused on areas such as:

- Developing a handbook for parents to guide their children home literacy development using various teaching resources and strategies.

- Comparing the teaching strategies in two educational systems (the Chinese and the Western) to find the best teaching approaches for children home literacy development.

With New Zealand developing into a multicultural society, there will be more immigrant people coming and settling in New Zealand. For all immigrant families, they need to learn a new language and preserve their own language. Sooner or later, there will be a challenge for schools to take the responsibility to develop various language programs in a number of ways for different nationality immigrant children. I suggest that there should be further research in this whole area.

My final words for this piece of research is to respond to Ngan (1987:128), who asked the question: "Are we denying our children part of their birthright by failing to encourage them to become knowledgeable about 'things Chinese' including the oral and written language?" It has been my great pleasure to present this answer on the behalf of these parents involved in this study as they have successfully striven to achieve: maintaining and developing our children's heritage language - the Chinese language - by creating and developing a home teaching and learning context in New Zealand. Borrowing one of my participants' words:

If we do not teach our children, they will learn nothing from us (Cui family).

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APPENDIX 1.1 A letter to possible participants
 (in English)

My name is Lin Lu. As part of my Master of Education (MEd), I am carrying out research on Chinese immigrant families in New Zealand who teach children the Chinese language at home. It has been approved by the Ethical Committee of Massey University. If you wish to be asked any questions about this research, you can contact me by phone on (06) 3505799 ext. 8842 or by e-mail at ellen_lin_lu@yahoo.co.nz. Alternatively, you may choose to contact one of my supervisors:

Mrs. Penny Haworth
 Phone: (06) 3505799 ext. 8869
 E-mail: P.A.Haworth@massey.ac.nz

Professor Wayne Edwards OBE
 Phone: (06) 3513368
 E-mail: W.L.Edwards@massey.ac.nz

The purposes of this research is to investigate parents' perceptions of, and their contribution to, their children's bilingualism, as well as identify the factors that young Chinese immigrant children feel interfere with their bilingual success. It is hoped this study will benefit the participants by identifying useful methods to maintain Chinese language in New Zealand and pass it on to the younger generation to enhance their identity and appreciation of the Chinese heritage.

This research includes a family observation (father, mother, and a child), a parents interview (father and mother only) and a children's group interview. Chinese immigrant families who being invited to participate *came from Mainland China 3 - 5 years ago*. Their children will now be *8 – 10 years old*. I am particularly interested in talking with the parents who teach their children Chinese at home.

If you would like to find out more, or are willing to take part in this research, please contact me via the phone or e-mail supplied above with your contact details. It would be appreciated if you could contact me within the following two weeks so that I can meet with you informally to explain the study and answer any questions you may have.

Thank you very much.

Lin Lu

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Inception to Infinity: Massey University's commitment to learning as a life-long journey





附录 1.2

给可能参与调研者的一封信

(中文)

我的名字是卢琳。作为我教育学硕士的一部分，我正在研究住在新西兰的中国移民家庭教授孩子中文的情况。这项研究已经被梅西大学人类道德标准委员会复查和批准。如果您愿意被咨询一些有关情况，请与我联系：电话 (06) 3505799 分机 8842。电邮地址：ellen.lin.lu@yahoo.co.nz 或者，您们也可以与我的导师联系。

姓名	Mrs. Penny Haworth	Professor Wayne Edwards OBE
电话	(06) 350 5799 (分机) 8869	(06) 351 3368
电邮地址	<u>P.A.Haworth@massey.ac.nz</u>	<u>W.L.Edwards@massey.ac.nz</u>

这项社会调查研究的目地是调查研究父母对孩子双语教育的观点和父母对此所起的作用，同时寻找干扰年轻的移民孩子掌握双语的因素。希望这项调研能使参加者通过确认有效的维持中国语言的教学方法而获益，进而传递给年轻的下一代去增强他们的身份和欣赏中国传统。

这个调研包括一个对家庭的观察(父亲，母亲和孩子)，一个家庭面谈(父亲和母亲)，和一个由孩子们组成的小组面谈。应邀参加调研的中国移民家庭一般是 3 年前或 5 年前来自中国大陆。他们孩子的年龄现在大约 8 岁或 10 岁左右。我更希望能与正在从事孩子家庭汉语教育的父母面谈。

如果您们愿意知道更多，或者愿意参加这个调研活动，请使用以上所提供的电话和电邮地址与我联系，并提供与您们联系的方法。如果您们能在接下来的 2 个星期之内与我联系，我将非常感谢，然后我可以与您们非正式面谈解释这个调研活动并回答您们的问题。

谢谢您的合作

卢琳

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Inception to Infinity: Massey University's commitment to learning as a life-long journey





APPENDIX 2.1 INFORMATION SHEET (in English)

Research and Contact Details

My name is Lin Lu. As part of my Master of Education (MEd), I am carrying out research on Chinese immigrant families in New Zealand who teach children the Chinese language at home. It has been approved by the Ethical Committee of Massey University. If you wish to be asked any questions about this research, you can contact me by phone on (06) 3505799 ext. 8842 or by e-mail at ellen.lin.lu@yahoo.co.nz. Alternatively, you may choose to contact one of my supervisors:

Mrs. Penny Haworth
 Phone: (06) 3505799 ext. 8869
 E-mail: P.A.Haworth@massey.ac.nz

Professor Wayne Edwards OBE
 Phone: (06) 3513368
 E-mail: W.L.Edwards@massey.ac.nz

Research Aims

I am intending to:

- investigate parents' perceptions of and their contribution to their children's bilingualism
- identify the factors that young Chinese immigrant children feel support or interfere their bilingual success.

The research

This study has 3 parts:

- A family observation
 This will take place while you are teaching your child the Chinese language, for approximately 60 minutes, at a time and place of your choice. The main purpose of this is to observe how you teach your child Chinese, e.g., reading a story, playing games. Some notes will be taken during the observation.
- A parents' interview
 This will take approximately 60 minutes, at a time and place of your choice. There will be some questions about your opinions on your children's bilingualism. If you give permission, these interviews will be audio taped.



- A children's group interview

The final part of the study is a group interview with children of participating families. I will arrange this children's group interview at a time and a place that the parents and children ALL agree to attend, with a voluntary adult nearby but who will not be involved in this group interview. This group interview will last approximately 40 minutes. With the parents' permission and the children's group agreement, this children's group interview will be audio taped. All information will be coded and pseudonyms will be used.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity cannot be guaranteed. I cannot promise this within the small Chinese community, especially as there will be a group interview for children. However, eight families will take part and your real names will not be used in any report or presentations of this study. *for ever*

Your Rights

You have the right to say that you do not want to participate.

If you agree to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to participate at any time;
- refuse to answer any particular questions;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- turn off the audiotape at any time during the interview or decline being audio taped;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded.

If you wish to take part in this research, please complete the attached consent form and return in the stamped self-addressed envelop supplied. It would be appreciated if you could return the consent form within 5 days. **Remember, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Please talk with your child about the study.**

Thank you very much.

Lin Lu



Department of Arts
 & Language Education
 Private Bag 11 222
 Palmerston North
 New Zealand

Telephone: 64 6 356 9099
 Facsimile: 64 6 351 3474

附录 2.2

社会调查研究简介 (中 文)

调研人和联系地址

我的名字是卢琳。作为我教育学硕士的一部分，我正在研究住在新西兰的中国移民家庭教授孩子中文的情况。这项研究已经被梅西大学人类道德标准委员会复查和批准。如果您愿意被咨询一些有关情况。请与我联系：电话 (06) 3505799 分机 8842。电邮地址：ellen_lin_lu@yahoo.co.nz 或者，您们也可以与我的导师联系：

姓名	Mrs. Penny Haworth	Professor Wayne Edwards OBE
电话	(06) 350 5799 (分机) 8869	(06) 351 3368
电邮地址	P.A.Haworth@massey.ac.nz	W.L.Edwards@massey.ac.nz

调研的目的

我希望：

- 调查研究父母亲对他们孩子双语教育的观点和他们对此所起的作用。
- 查找影响年轻的中国移民孩子掌握双语的因素。

社会调查研究

这个调研分三个部分：

- 家庭观察

这个家庭观察将在您们正在教授孩子中文的时候进行，大约 60 分钟，时间和地点由您们选择。主要目地是观察了解您们怎样教授孩子汉语。例如：给孩子讲读故事，玩游戏。在观察的过程中，调研人会做一些笔记。

- 家庭面谈

这个面谈大约 60 分钟，时间和地点由您们选择。将有一些有关孩子双语教育的问题请您们回答。如果您们同意，这个面谈将会被录音。

- 孩子小组面谈

这项调研的最后一部分是与被调研家庭孩子(们的)的面谈。我将会通过电话安排这个小组面谈，面谈的时间和地点将征得家长们和孩子们都同意，面谈时，将有一个自愿参加的成年人陪伴，但这个陪伴人不会参与孩子们的小组调研。小组面谈大约用 40 分钟。在得到父母和这组孩子的同意下，小组面谈将会被录音。所有的资料将使用代码和匿名。

匿名与保密

完全的隐名保密不能绝对保证，主要原因有：中国社区很小，另外还有一个孩子们组成的小组调研。尽管如此，将有 8 个家庭参与面谈，被调研人真实的姓名不会出现在任何调研报告上。

您们的权利

您们有权拒绝这个社会调查。

如果您们愿意参与这个社会调查。您们将享有如下权利：

- 任何时候都可以拒绝参加调研；
- 拒绝回答某些个别的问题；
- 任何时候都可以退出调研；
- 在面对面调研的过程中，您们随时有权要求关闭录音机和删除某些录音；
- 在面对面调研的过程中，您们随时有权咨询关于调研的任何问题；
- 在明白您们的名字不会被使用，除非您们授权给调研人的基础上提供信息；
- 当调研完成后，您们将有权阅读调研结果的报告。

如果您们希望参加这个社会调查，请填写所附的同意书(中英两份)，并放在已附邮资和已有地址的信封内寄回。您们如果能将同意书(中英两份)在 5 天之内寄回，我将非常感谢。请牢记您们有权在任何时候退出调研。请务必与您们的孩商谈这项调研活动。

谢谢您们的合作

卢琳



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Massey University

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

APPENDIX 3.1

CONSENT FORM (in English)

Telephone: 64 6 356 9099
Facsimile: 64 6 351 3474

We have read the Information Sheet and have the details of the study explained to us. Our questions have been answered to our satisfaction, and we understand that we may ask further questions at any time.

We understand we have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

We agree to provide information to the researcher under the understanding that our names will not be used without our permission.

(The information will be used *only* for this research and publications arising from it).

We agree*/do not agree* to the observation described on the information sheet.
(please circle one)

We agree*/do not agree* to the interview being audio taped. We understand we can ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

We agree*/do not agree* that our child may take part in the group interview with a voluntary adult present nearby.

We agree*/do not agree* that our child can be audio taped as part of the group interview.

We agree*/do not agree* to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed:

Names: **Father:**

Mother:

Date:





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附录 3.2

家长同意书

(中文)

我们已经阅读过这项社会调查研究的简介，有关这个调研的细节已经向我们解答过。我们对所回答的问题感到满意，我们明白我们随时可以咨询更多的问题。

我们明白我们有权随时退出调研和拒绝回答某些个别的问题。

在我们清楚没有我们的允许，我们的名字不会被使用的基础上，我们同意为调研人提供资料。

(这些资料只被用于这个社会调查研究和发表有关这个调研的材料)

我们 同意*/不同意* 简介所提到的对我们家庭活动的观察。 (请在适合的上画圈)

我们 同意*/不同意* 这个家庭面谈被录音。我们明白在面对面调研的过程中，我们有权随时要求关闭录音机。

我们 同意*/不同意* 我们的孩子，在有一个成年人在附近陪伴的情况下，参加小组面谈。

我们 同意*/不同意* 我们的孩子，作为小组面谈的一部分参加面谈并被录音。

我们 同意*/不同意* 在调研简介所涉及的范围内，参与这个社会调查。

签名

姓名 父亲

母亲

日期





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APPENDIX 4.1 CONSENT FORM FOR A CHILD

(in English)

I understand what Lin's study is about. My questions have been fully answered.

I understand that I can ask questions at any time. Yes No

I understand that I can stop being in the study at any time. Yes No

I understand that I can refuse to answer any particular questions. Yes No

I understand that I can ask to have my answers removed from the audiotape. Yes No

I agree to participate in this study. Yes No

* Note: please tick one in the box.

Signed:

Name of child:

Date:





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附录 4.2

孩子同意书

(中文)

我明白琳的社会调查是什么，我的问题已经全部被回答。

我明白我可以随时问任何问题。

明白

不明白

我明白我可以随时退出这项社会调同意查。

明白

不明白

我明白我有权拒绝回答某些个别的问题。

明白

不明白

我明白我有权在任何时候要求琳关闭录音机

明白

不明白

我 同意* 参加这个社会调查。

同意

不同意

*注释：请在合适的方格里划勾。

签名：

孩子姓名：

日期：





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APPENDIX 5.1 Individual Consent Form for Group Agreement

(in English)

I understand what Lin's study is about. I agree to be
 audio taped for this group interview.

Yes No

* Note: please tick one in the box.

Signed

The child's name

Date

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Inception to Infinity: Massey University's commitment to learning as a life-long journey





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附录 5.2

小组协议的个人同意书 (中 文)

我明白琳的社会调查是什么,我同意这个小组面谈被录音。 同意

不同意

*注释: 请在方格合适的里划勾。

签名:

孩子姓名:

日期:





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APPENDIX 6.1 Pre-interview Questions for Parents

(in English)

1. General information as background knowledge:

IN CHINA

- a. Did your child go to Kindergarten when he/she was in China? About how long?
- b. Can you comment on your child's language ability at the age of five?

IN NEW ZEALAND

- a. How long have you been in New Zealand?
- b. How old was your child when you arrived in New Zealand?
- c. Can you describe your child's personality and main interests?
- d. Is your child involved in some school activities or outside school activities?
- e. Do you speak to your child in Mandarin at home or in any public situations? When and why?

2. Parents' expectations about bilingualism:

- a. Do you think there are advantages or disadvantages if your child becomes bilingual? Why?
- b. Have you or others you know had experiences that influenced your ideas on bilingualism?





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附录 6.2 面谈前的一些问题 (中文)

1. 背景性的一般了解:

在中国时的情况

- a. 您们的孩子在中国时上过幼儿园吗? 大约去了多长时间?
- b. 您们能评估一下您们孩子在5岁左右时的语言能力吗?

在新西兰的情况

- a. 您们来新西兰多长时间了?
- b. 您们的儿子在到达新西兰时是多大年龄?
- c. 您们能描述一下您们孩子的个性和主要的兴趣吗?
- d. 您们能谈一谈您们孩子所参与的校内, 校外的一些活动吗?
- e. 您们在家里或在任何公共场所与您的孩子用中文交谈吗? 为什么呢?

2. 父母对双语教育的期望:

- a. 您们认为您们孩子具有双语能力有哪些益处或不利因素? 为什么呢?
- b. 您们的经历或是您们朋友的经历曾经影响过您们对双语教育的想法吗?



**APPENDIX 7.1 Interview Questions for Parents
 (in English)**

1. Parents expectations about bilingualism:
 - a. As you told me there are some advantages of being bilingual last time, can you describe what is your understanding (explanation) of bilingual?
 - b. Do you encourage your child to learn Mandarin? How do you encourage him/her? What do you do this?
2. Child's opportunities on Chinese learning:
 - a. Do you spend any time teaching your child Chinese (including listening, speaking, reading and writing)? Can you talk about it? Such as how and when do you teach your child and what kind of resources do you use?
 - b. On weekdays, what is the best time for you to interact with your child in Mandarin? Can you tell me what you usually talk about when interacting in Mandarin and how long you spend on talking?
 - c. What about at the weekends? Do you have more or less interactions in Mandarin with your child?
 - d. When your child is on school holidays, do you think you spend more time interacting with your child in Mandarin? Can you tell me something about that?
 - e. In your daily lives, is there any special thing that makes your child feel interested in learning Mandarin or wanting to learn more Mandarin?
 - f. Are there any other opportunities for your child to learn Mandarin in his/her daily life except learning from you?
3. Home tutoring language:
 - a. If you tutor your child in any subjects of his/her schoolwork, which language do you use? Why?

4. Parents and child's attitudes and values on bilingualism:
 - a. What is your comment on your child's schoolwork and Mandarin learning at home?
 - b. Does your child feel it is hard to learn how to read and write in Mandarin? Can you give examples to describe how your child copes with something difficult to him/her?
 - c. What is the most effective way to teach your child Chinese according to your teaching experiences of your child over these few years (including listening, speaking, reading and writing)?
 - d. How do you cope when your child refuses to learn Chinese or does not want to learn Chinese? What about not wanting to speak Mandarin, or not wanting you to speak in Mandarin to him/her?
5. Learning/teaching Language Selections:
 - a. How do you keep a balance between teaching your child Chinese at home and his/her learning English at school?
 - b. Do you have a plan for his/her Mandarin learning? If yes, can you explain it?
6. Special language:
 - a. Does your child receive any extra tutorials help as English is his/her second language at school?
 - b. How do you value the extra tutorial your child receives at school?
 - c. Do you have some expectations of school language teaching and learning *in both English and Chinese?*
7. Level of language competence:
 - a. Now I would like to know the level of your child's reading and writing. I will give you three articles to read. After you have read them, can you choose one of them to show me the level that your child can read this article independently? How many words in this piece of writing would you say that your child could write by heart?

8. Parents' perspective (opinion) on bilingualism:
 - a. As you have told me, you have lived in New Zealand for a few years. Have your expectations about bilingualism changed in an English dominant country (New Zealand) over the years?
 - b. If yes, why do you feel that these changes have occurred? Can you tell me any particular events that influenced your decision about bilingualism?
 - c. If no, can you explain the reasons?



附录 7.2 父母面谈的问答题
 (中 文)

1. 父母对双语教育的期望:
 - a. 正如您们上一次谈到的孩子具有双语能力有很多益处，您们能解释一下您们对双语教育的理解是什么吗？
 - b. 您们鼓励您们孩子学习中文吗？如果是，您们是怎样鼓励他/她的呢？

2. 孩子学习中文的机会：
 - a. 您们花费时间教您们孩子学习汉语吗？包括听，说，读，写？您们能谈一谈吗？
 - b. 在星期工作日里，什么时候是最好的时间您们与您们孩子用中文交谈？您们能告诉我您们与您们孩子经常用中文谈些什么，并且一般是用多长时间？
 - c. 周末的情况是什么样的呢？您们是不是有更多或更少的时间与您们孩子用中文交谈？
 - d. 当您们孩子放假在家时，您们认为您们花费更多时间在孩子的中文学习上吗？能谈一谈吗？
 - e. 在您们日常生活当中，有没有一件特殊的事件使您们孩子感兴趣或更愿意学习汉语吗？
 - f. 在您们孩子的日常生活当中，除了与您们学习中文之外，他/她有没有其它的机会学习汉语呢？



3. 家庭辅导时所用的语言：
 - a. 如果您们辅导您们孩子学校的功课，您们使用哪一种语言呢？为什么？
 - b. 您们是怎样辅导您们孩子学校的功课？您们认为您们的辅导方式和学校教学方法有什么不同？
4. 父母和孩子对待双语教育的态度和评价：
 - a. 您们能够评论一下您们孩子学校的功课和在家学习汉语的情况吗？
 - b. 您们孩子认为读写中文的学习是很难的吗？您们能够举一些例子来说明他/她怎样克服对他/她来说有困难的事情吗？
 - c. 根据您们这几年教您们孩子汉语的经验包括听，说，读，写，最有效的教育方法是什么？
 - d. 当您们孩子拒绝或者不愿意学习中文的时候，您们是怎么样做的呢？当您们孩子不愿意讲中文，或不希望您们对他/她讲中文，您们又是怎么样做的呢？
5. 教和学语言的选择：
 - a. 您们是怎么样维持这个平衡，即在家里孩子学习中文和在学校里孩子学习英文？
 - b. 您们有孩子学习中文的计划吗？如果有，能谈一谈吗？
6. 特意附加的语言：
 - a. 因为英文是您们孩子的第二种语言，在学校里他/她是否有一些额外的英文辅导呢？
 - b. 如果有，您们是怎样评价您们孩子所得到额外的英文辅导呢？
 - c. 您们对学校的中英文语言教学有什么期望吗？

7. 汉语能力:

- a. 我想要知道您们孩子中文阅读和写作的能力。我给您们三篇文章去阅读，读完之后，请您们从中选择一篇您们认为您们孩子可以独立阅读的文章。在这篇文章里，请指出有多少个字您们孩子能背着写下来。

8. 父母对双语教育的看法:

- a. 正如您们告诉我的，您们在新西兰已经居住有几年了。在这几年里，在一个以说英语为主的国家(新西兰)里您们对双语教育的看法有什么改变吗？
- b. 如果有，您们认为为什么会有这些变化呢？您们能够告诉我有什么特殊的事情影响您们对双语教育的看法吗？
- c. 如果没有改变过，您们能够解释其中的原因吗？



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APPENDIX 8.1 Interview Questions for Children

(in English)

- 1 Who is your best friend in your school? Why did you choose him/her to be your best friend?
- 2 Who is your best friend outside school? In what ways are you alike?
- 3 Who travels to school with you? Which language do you speak to your parents, your extended family members or your friends when they accompany you to school and pick you up from school? Why?
- 4 When you meet your friends in school, supermarkets or public parks, in which language do you speak to them? Why? What about to their parents?
- 5 You and your friends learn English at school. You as Chinese also learn the Chinese language at home after school. How do you feel about this?
- 6 When do you like to speak in Mandarin the most? Why? (you can choose more than one answer)
 - with parents
 - with brothers/sisters
 - with relatives who are older
 - with Chinese friends
 - with teachers at school
 - with other children
 - with other adults
- 7 When do you like to use English the most? Why? (you can choose more than one answer)
 - with parents
 - with brothers/sisters
 - with relatives who are older
 - with Chinese friends
 - with teachers at school
 - with other children
 - with other adults



8. Where do you like to speak in Mandarin the most? Why? (you can choose more than one answer)
- in classrooms at school
 - in the school playground
 - at home
 - at supermarkets
 - at the public park
 - at the public library
 - at MacDonalds
 - at the movies
9. Where do you like to use English the most? Why? (you can choose more than one answer)
- in classrooms at school
 - in the school playground
 - at home
 - at supermarkets
 - at the public park
 - at the public library
 - at MacDonalds
 - at the movies
10. Do you like your schoolmates to know that you learn Mandarin at home? Why/why not?



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附录 8.2

孩子面谈的问答题 (中 文)

1. 在你们学校里, 谁是你们最好的朋友呢? 你们为什么选择他/她作为你们最好的朋友呢?
2. 在你们学校以外, 谁是你们最好的朋友呢? 你们和你们的好朋友有什么相同之处吗?
3. 谁陪你们上学呢? 当你们的父母, 亲戚或者朋友陪你们上学或放学接你们回家时, 你们同他们讲哪一种语言呢? 为什么呢?
4. 当你们在学校, 在超市, 在公园里见到你们的朋友, 你们同他们讲哪一种语言呢? 为什么呢? 你们与他们的父母讲哪一种语言呢?
5. 你们和你们的朋友在学校学习英语。你们作为中国人放学以后又在家里学习汉语。你们是怎样看待这件事呢?
6. 你们什么时候最喜欢讲中文? 为什么? (你们可以选择多项答案)
 - 与你们父母在一起的时候
 - 与你们兄弟姐妹在一起的时候
 - 与你们亲戚长辈在一起的时候
 - 与你们的中国朋友在一起的时候
 - 与你们学校老师在一起的时候
 - 与其他孩子在一起的时候
 - 与其他成年人在一起的时候



7. 你们什么时候最喜欢讲英文？为什么？（你们可以选择多项答案）

- 与你们父母在一起的时候
- 与你们兄弟姐妹在一起的时候
- 与你们亲戚长辈在一起的时候
- 与你们的中国朋友在一起的时候
- 与你们学校老师在一起的时候
- 与其他孩子在一起的时候
- 与其他成年人在一起的时候

8. 你们在什么地方最喜欢讲中文？为什么？（你们可以选择多项答案）

- 在学校的教室里
- 在学校的操场上
- 在家里
- 在超市里
- 在公园里
- 在公共图书馆里
- 在麦当劳里
- 在电影院里

9. 你们在什么地方最喜欢讲英文？为什么？（你们可以选择多项答案）
- 在学校的教室里
 - 在学校的操场上
 - 在家里
 - 在超市里
 - 在公园里
 - 在公共图书馆里
 - 在麦当劳里
 - 在电影院里
10. 你们愿意让你们的学校同学知道你们在家里学习汉语吗？为什么？
11. 当你们高兴时，生气时，伤心时，幻想时，你们用哪一种语言来表达呢？