

LEARNING CULTURES:

The Example of Learning Chinese as
Community Language in Chinese
Schools in the UK

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ABSTRACT

LEARNING CULTURES: THE EXAMPLE OF LEARNING CHINESE AS COMMUNITY LANGUAGE IN CHINESE SCHOOLS IN THE UK

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Within a multi-cultural society, it is important to understand the effect of ‘when culture meets culture’. This study uses the British Chinese schools, where Chinese is taught as a heritage language, as an example to explore the culture of learning when there is a meeting of British and Chinese cultures. The study hypothesises that under the situation of learning heritage language the students are learning more than the heritage cultural content, they are also learning about the ‘culture of learning’. The study attempts to present an integrated account of the complex factors which contribute to the development of distinctive cultures of teaching and learning in these schools. It applies multiple methods in data collection, including a teacher questionnaire, followed by classroom observations and interviews with the teachers and some of their students. The students’ learning strategies were also explored, using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning developed by Oxford, to add dimensions to the findings. To analyse elements in the research context, an Ecology Model of Learning Cultures is proposed which extends from the concept developed by Bronfenbrenner in his ecology model of cognitive development. The study identifies several distinctive issues from the research context, including particular types of activities used in the classrooms, mixed-age/ability groups of children, distinctive roles of texts and textbooks, of the teachers and students, of the community schools, and the Chinese families. By using the analogy of ‘micro-cultures’ for each of the identified issue, the study intends to provide a better reflection of the complex nature of the culture of the UK Chinese schools than can be provided by the idea of an encounter between monolithic cultures of learning.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There is a strong link between language and culture. Researchers and language teachers have become increasingly aware that a language can rarely be learned or taught without taking into account the culture of the community in which it is used.

The present study is an attempt to explore both the relationships and the underlying issues which pertain when culture meets culture. It uses the example of learning in Chinese schools in the UK where Chinese is learnt as a community language; and where the learning of several 'cultures' takes place.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the literature on bilingual and multilingual education the terminology used to refer to the language used by ethnic communities is varied. This is one factor which contributes to the complexity of describing the situation in Chinese schools. At the same time, it is necessary to bear in mind that the term 'Chinese' includes many dialects; and Chinese speakers including those who live in the UK often use more than one. The dialect variation factor further complicates the picture in the British Chinese schools as even though the majority of students in these schools are from Cantonese-speaking families, more and more of the students are attending classes in *Putonghua*/Mandarin. The situation may be due to the hand-over of Hong Kong to

China in 1997 (Edwards, 1998). As the national language of the Peoples Republic of China is *Putonghua*, the importance of learning it is widely emphasised amongst speakers of other Chinese dialects. Further discussion on the Chinese language and the language situation of the Chinese community in Britain will be provided in more detail in Chapter 2. The following paragraphs focus on defining the terms used in this study.

Regarding the larger context – the UK society as a whole, there is a terminology issue of how to describe the language(s) used by ethnic communities. Edwards (1998) points out that:

... terms for the languages which [bilingual] children bring with them to school are equally problematic. ‘First languages’, ‘home languages’ and ‘mother tongues’ are all in common usage: they are accurate in some cases, but not in others. (p. 8)

The language in question may or may not be the subjects’ ‘language learnt first’, ‘language used to communicate at home’, ‘language spoken as a baby’. However, these languages play an important part in the subjects’ lives. In a similar vein, Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson (1999) challenged the use of the term ‘bilingual’ and stated that to ‘talk about individuals as bilinguals is difficult’ (p. x).

They argued:

What are the criteria for describing people as bilingual? Would they have to speak their two languages equally well? Would they have to be monolingual-like in both languages? If not, just how much of the weaker language do they need to know to be called bilingual? ... (p. x)

The more neutral expression suggested by Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson (1999), to 'live with two languages', is what I feel to be one term describing more closely the situation of the Chinese speakers in the UK (cf the well-known book by Grosjean (1982) *Life With Two Languages*). The two languages referred to in the present study are the language of the main society, in this case, English, and the language of their community. Edwards (1998) uses several examples to illustrate the difficulty of distinguishing accurately between different situations of minority language use. The examples include many Pakistani, Cantonese-speaking, and third and fourth generation Polish children. As Edwards (ibid.) suggested,

[i]t would be inappropriate to describe Urdu or Putonghua or Polish as the first language, the home language or the mother tongue of the children in question. The use of 'community languages' in Australia and the UK and 'heritage languages' in Canada and the USA conveniently side-steps these issues. A community or heritage language may or may not be the first or home language or the mother tongue of the children in question.
(p. 8)

These comments show some possible complications of trying to research in the area of community language learning. For discussion in the present study, the subjects will be described as 'living with two languages' and the language learnt or taught at Chinese schools will be referred to as a 'community language'.

In the field of teaching Chinese as a second, foreign or even community language, there are many aspects that need to be explored. Due to the opening up of China to the West, the need for teaching and learning Chinese has grown immensely. Walton (1996) identified four supply sectors for language instruction in the United States,

one of the countries where the development of Chinese language teaching has long been established. The four sectors identified are the heritage language sector, the government sector, the private provider sector and the education sector. Walton (1996) stated the reasons for emphasising the area of heritage language teaching.

Changing demographics, the rise of bilingual education, and a rising political and social awareness of multiculturalism have all come together to make the preservation of languages other than English an issue of national import. (p. 62)

The same remark can be adopted to fit the diverse language situation in the multi-ethnic British society of today. The success of Chinese schools in countries outside China, such as the UK, will no longer be viewed as just a Chinese community affair for maintaining the language for generations to come (even though it remains the intention of the community) but can also be a resource for the host country.

Previous research involved in the field of learning Chinese as community language, although not identified explicitly as such, has been focused mainly on the pedagogy and the content of teaching. Although culture has been recognised as an important contributing issue, there is little literature devoted to such issues. The present study attempts to fill the gap as well as to address some background factors that have relevance to the enquiry of culture of learning. The following section will present the aims of the study and the research questions to be answered.

1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study has the following broad aims.

1. To explore current practice in UK Chinese schools in order to provide contextual information for understanding current issues involved in learning Chinese as a community language, especially in the context of Chinese schools in the UK.
2. To examine the relationships between culture and learning – cultures (that is, British and Chinese cultures) that teachers and learners bring with them into their interaction and the culture of learning in the UK Chinese classes.

As research into the teaching and learning of Chinese as a community language is a relatively new area in academic research, there was a significant element of exploration in this research project, particularly in its early stages. As the research progressed through a number of distinct stages, the research questions were revised several times before they reached the final form. At each stage, many new questions were raised. The answers to these questions then resulted in the generation of questions which were more sharply focused and which define the limits of the present study. Since the process of refining the focus of the enquiry is relevant to an understanding of the nature of the enquiry itself, I provide here a brief description of the quest for the actual research questions which emerged from the above aims.

1.2.1 Quest for Research Questions

This study was initially planned to look at the management of teaching Chinese in countries outside China, specifically the UK. To up-date myself with the current situation in UK Chinese schools, my first question for investigation is:

1. What is the current state of learning Chinese as a community language in UK Chinese schools?

I started to consider questions such as the following: What systems or routines operate in UK Chinese schools? Who organises the Chinese schools? What are the attitudes of the people who are engaged in this activity? What kind of training is offered to the teachers? Is there any training at all? How successful is the management of the teaching? What success do children of Chinese descent achieve in their study of the language of their parents? In other words, as a member new to this area of pedagogy and research, my intention was to explore the managerial and pedagogical practices in UK Chinese schools in order to gain insights into the operation of Chinese schools in general, especially in terms of school management.

Once I had surveyed the situation in which the UK Chinese schools operate through observation of Chinese classes and a survey of the literature, I came to the conclusion that the management of Chinese schools is problematic and involves several dimensions which require in depth investigation (some of these issues are listed in Chapter 2 (2.2)). Researching the management in general, as I found out, is too broad an area for this research to examine in full. However, during the course

of investigation my attention was directed to one aspect of the UK Chinese schools which needs urgent attention – the nature of classroom interaction in the Chinese schools – which in turn became a major research focus of the current study.

After refining the research focus, the second research question was identified:

- 2 What is the nature of classroom interaction in Chinese schools in the UK?

In order to answer this question, there are a series of issues to be explored: How are lessons conducted? How do learners behave in the special context of a Chinese school? Does the behaviour of learners in the Chinese schools match their behaviour in mainstream schools? If the behaviour is different, in what way is it different? Do the students apply particular strategies for learning in each context? How do the teachers/learners structure the elements of Chinese in these schools? What activities do teachers use in their class? What are their teaching styles? Do these styles reflect their cultural background? What are their perspectives? Clearly, then, many questions were raised.

Both the first and the second research questions are asked to examine practical issues involved in the running of the Chinese schools and the role of Chinese schools in the UK Chinese community in line with the first broad aim of the study.

In the process of carrying out field work and analysing the data obtained, one element emerged as essential to a proper understanding of the questions which were

being investigated: culture – both the British and the Chinese cultures to which the teachers and the learners have come into contact. This, then, developed into the second main aim of this study – to examine the relationships between culture and learning. Several interesting questions were then raised: How does Chinese culture contribute to the culture of the classroom in UK Chinese schools? What part is British culture playing in shaping both the teachers' and students' attitudes towards learning in British Chinese classrooms? What are the areas that are already showing changes towards British culture? Are these changes an experience shared by all participants? Are they all sharing the changes of experience to the same degree? This is not to suggest that the situation in UK Chinese schools is a simple dichotomy. On the contrary, it is clear from the outset that the situation is complex and includes several dimensions. Not least, the research has to consider the following question: Are there any features of the British Chinese classrooms which are distinct from the two main influencing cultures? If there are, what are the implications of these distinct features?

In order to understand how the classroom culture develops, the following accounts of interactions are noted and needed to be taken into consideration: (1) the interaction between individuals within the classroom and with the classroom environment; and (2) the interaction between the individuals in the classroom and the constraining effects of external systems. From this perspective, three more research questions to be answered by this enquiry are as follows:

3. What are the cultural elements developed in the context of the UK Chinese schools where there is a meeting of cultures? How can we account for this distinctive mix of cultural elements?
4. Of the two main cultures in question, which contributes the most to the construction of the classroom culture? Where do the activities, beliefs, practices, values and identities that we observe in the classroom come from?
5. Can the answer to these questions help us to understand in a more general sense what happens when two or more cultures meet in an educational setting?

In order to explain the complex dynamics within the Chinese schools, a descriptive model of the possible interactions within British Chinese classrooms was constructed, showing the inter-relationships between the elements present in the UK Chinese schools (Chapter 6). The framework of an ‘ecological’ metaphor was used to give theoretical coherence to the model (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 1993). Bronfenbrenner’s ecological approach to educational theory-building is appropriate to the current study since the Chinese classroom not only represents an ‘ecosystem’ of its own, but it also creates a meeting point of cultures. The multi-level nature of the ‘ecology model’ is therefore a useful framework for this research. Further discussion of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model is provided in Chapter 3 (3.3).

The following section of this introductory chapter is devoted to a description of the orientation of the study and small investigations carried out in the early stage of the study which helped to shape the study into its present form. In the final section, an outline of the thesis is presented in terms of the content and focus of each chapter.

1.3 GENESIS OF THE CURRENT STUDY

The initiative for this study came from my personal interest as a teacher of Chinese as a second language. It started when I was recruited in Taiwan by the headteacher of one of the British Chinese schools (in the study, I will use the pseudonym of Tang school to refer to it) as I attended a course for teachers of Chinese as a second/foreign language at a private institution in Taiwan. I have always been interested in doing research of any kind. So, when the headteacher encouraged me to move on to investigate this topic about management within Chinese schools in the UK and promised that, although it would not provide me with a living wage, there would not be any problem for me to take Tang school, a school situated in the West Midlands, as one of the cases in my study, I decided to come to the UK and start my research at the University of Leicester.

While I was in training to become a teacher of Chinese, I found, from the discussions with other teachers, that there was a mutual understanding among Chinese teachers that the training of teachers to teach Chinese fell short in at least two aspects.

First, most of the teachers who were in training or working as teachers of Chinese were not Chinese majors nor were they trained to be teachers – this was especially true of those working overseas (that is, in the UK or elsewhere outside Taiwan). It is shown in different reports on Chinese language teaching overseas (CRE 1979; Tsow 1984; HMSO 1985; CILT 1986; Wong 1992), the majority of the teachers of

Chinese in the UK are students who are studying overseas for short periods of time, and housewives who have accompanied their husbands to overseas postings. A relevant point here is that it is commonly seen by teachers of Chinese language as ‘very important’ that one should be able to speak another language in order to teach Chinese as a second language (for instance, one of the training sessions during my teacher training course was devoted to this particular issue). This has made many teachers with expertise in the Chinese language have doubts about their ability to teach Chinese abroad. For those teachers who have received some training, the training was concerned mainly with providing general knowledge about the Chinese language – the pronunciation, the origin of Chinese characters, the syntactic structure, and most of all, the teaching methods for certain teaching materials. As most of the training courses were carried out by institutions that offer classes for overseas students, the training courses were mainly designed to find teachers that would be able to teach in the institutions in the future. For example, a syllabus (written in Chinese) from one of the institutions which offer training courses to their teachers includes topics on: ‘how foreigners learn Chinese’, ‘Chinese characters and teaching’, ‘Linguistics and learning languages’, ‘Comparing the pronunciation systems from mainland China and Taiwan’, ‘Teaching pronunciation and teaching oral skills’, ‘Chinese syntactic structures and grammar’, ‘Teaching oral skills and teaching material’, ‘Teaching practice’, ‘discussion’, and ‘final test’ (Taipei Language Institute, 1995-1996).

Second, in spite of the fact that there are many Chinese schools in the USA, and some literature on the Chinese community and Chinese language teaching in the USA (Chu 1988; Chao 1990; Wang 1992; Li 1995), there is not much literature concerning the actual situation within Chinese schools, especially those in Europe and other areas. Many studies, especially those conducted in Taiwan on Chinese language teaching have focused on the analysis of the Chinese language and on the provision of methodological tips on teaching the elements of the language, for example, pronunciation and syntactic structures. Examples include Chü (1979), Li (1982), Chou (1982), Huang (1982), Tang (1985), Yeh (1990), Feng (1990), Huang (1993), Ho (1994), and Huang (1996). It was not until later on that other approaches to Chinese teaching such as the use of standardised tests (Chiang 1994; Chu 1994; Tsui 1994; Tsai 1996), the use of audio-visual resources (Chu 1993), and the use of computer technology (for example, issues 74 and 83 of the journal *The World of Chinese Language*) were introduced into this field. Among the few studies devoted to the teaching of Chinese as a second language are the following: Li (1985: 1992), Wu (1985), Han (1991a: 1991b), Na (1992), Tang (1992), Lin (1993), Yeh (1990: 1994). These articles give teachers and other interested parties some useful guidelines as to what is expected of a teacher of Chinese. For example, Na (1992) lists 6 basic requirements for a teacher of Chinese: to speak pure *Gúoyǔ* ‘National language’ (a termed used in Taiwan to refer to Mandarin Chinese), to have sharp ears for recognising pronunciation, to avoid talking all the time in a class and give more opportunities for students to practise listening and speaking, not to ignore basic sentence patterns but to have more practice mechanically, to have

patience, to be aware of the relationship between language and culture. In general, the picture of the teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language which is presented by these publications is patchy and limited in scope. There are some notable gaps, particularly in terms of describing accurately the beliefs and practices which contribute to the culture of teaching and learning Chinese. There is a need for systematic research to organise all these pieces of information to build up a complete picture of this area. This observation brought to my attention to some general issues to be explored in the first stage of this study and hence the first research question, introduced in Section 1.2.1, emerged.

1. What is the current state of learning Chinese as a community language in UK Chinese schools?

In order to answer the above research question, the first stage of this study was to contact Chinese schools in England. Fortunately, I was able to get in touch with the UK Federation of Chinese Schools (UKFCS) which had 90 member schools at that time. The UKFCS is an independent, non-political, non-religious charity organisation which was set up in 1994 to take over the responsibility for organising Chinese teaching materials for Chinese schools in the UK – a service originally provided by the Hong Kong government. At the time when I contacted the chairperson, the Federation had just given out a set of questionnaires in May, 1996, to which they gave me access. The questionnaires were sent out to member schools for building up a database which may help schools to exchange resources or help members of the community to find suitable schools for potential students. The survey resulted in a member schools handbook which contains information such as

the schools' name, address, contact person, number of students, number and range of classes, whether students are taking formal examinations, time for classes, school premises, teaching materials used, tuition fee, library, extra-curricula activities, number of teachers and staff, make up of the teachers in the school, rate of teacher leaving each year, teacher training, ways of recruitment, payment for teachers, source of funding, whether the school is a part of other organisation and other information. This survey acted as a starting point for me to draw up an outline of the recent status of Chinese schools in Britain and of further investigation.

The data from the UKFCS survey showed that most of the schools in the study did not have a formal management structure due to their size. A lot of decisions were made by committee members, headteachers and sometimes by the parents. This ad-hoc approach to decision-making was not without its problems. At Tang School, for example, there were significant tensions between teachers and students. These arose out of differences between the teaching and learning strategies favoured by the teachers and those favoured by the learners. These differences seemed to stem from the fact that more and more of the children at the school were born or grew up in an exclusively English-speaking environment, and had, as a result, very different attitudes to learning from those of their teachers. This, then, turned into the main focus for the present study (research questions 2-5). Details of the aims and the research questions of the study have been provided in the previous section.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In the present chapter, I have identified the area to be investigated in the study. The aims and the research questions are stated. The genesis of the study has also been described to provide background information.

Due to the nature of the study, the relevant literature will be examined in Part I of the thesis, following this introductory chapter, which includes two separate chapters. In Chapter 2, I will continue to build on the initial picture of the background to this study. I look at the issues faced by Chinese communities overseas (mainly in countries where English is spoken in the society), paying particular attention to issues relevant to learning the Chinese language. In this chapter, I touch on the issue of inter-generational language use among the Chinese community in countries outside China and the reasons for these communities to set up Chinese schools. I also provide information about the research context, that is, the current situation in the UK. This is followed by a brief discussion about the nature of the Chinese language and the tradition of teaching Chinese language as the mother tongue. As the background to a discussion on learning Chinese as a community language which started by observing classroom activities, Chapter 3 begins by critically examining theories which provide insights to language learning and teaching. In particular, literature which focuses on different teaching/learning styles/strategies of different cultural background groups is of most interest. The influence of culture on teaching and learning is also discussed. The final part of Chapter 3 examines Bronfenbrenner's model in some detail before discussing its

adaptation and appropriateness for the present context. It looks at Bronfenbrenner's concept of ecology model for cognitive development. An adopted ecology model is also proposed for the current study to provide theoretical framework for understanding the development of cultures in British Chinese schools.

Part II contains Chapters 4 and 5 which provide the research design and methodology for the study. In order to disentangle the complex situation of the Chinese schools, the justification for choice of methodology will be presented in Chapter 4. Two separate sections are devoted to considering first, issues of triangulation, validity and reliability; and secondly, ethical issues involved in this research. Chapter 5 firstly looks at a few considerations underlying the research, and also shows a conceptual framework proposed in the early stage of the current study, a model of 'British Chinese classrooms', which was used to illustrate the relationships between the elements influential to the development of 'culture of learning'. The chapter then gives a detailed description of the process of data collection and analysis, examining the three methods employed for collecting data: questionnaire, interview and classroom observation.

The result of the data analysis will be presented in three chapters in Part III. In order to provide a general picture of the research context, Chapter 6 begins with a description of activities observed or reported by the participants in the Chinese classrooms. The description is supplemented with extracts from classroom

observations and other data collected. Using factor analysis, some of the activities described are further grouped and interpreted against data from the questionnaires distributed to the British Chinese teachers. This process helps the researcher to identify elements that influence the development of learning culture in the classrooms.

The discussion in Chapter 7 focuses on other factors contributing to the culture of learning in the Chinese classrooms, including students' language learning strategies, the role of texts and textbooks in the classrooms, the relationship between the teachers and their students. It also discusses how the different school settings may contribute to the culture of learning in the classrooms.

Chapter 8 reports on the influences of the participants' families on the development of culture of learning in the classrooms. It begins with an examination of the family influences on the participants' values and attitudes and then considers language issues concerning the families of the teachers and students. The focus then turns to the role of Chinese schools as an extension to the Chinese community, discussing their social functions and how the Chinese schools partly contribute to the students' development of ethnic identity. It also addresses one of the issues emphasised by many practising teachers: the family support of the students' learning. The final part of this chapter notes the family influence on the culture of learning in the classrooms by comparing different 'school cultures' in British Chinese schools set up by Chinese community members speaking different Chinese dialects. Chapter 9

concludes the study by outlining some of the themes which have emerged from the research results discussed in the preceding chapters and looking at the implications of the study.

PART I

CONTEXTUALISATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

OVERVIEW

As indicated in the title, the aim of Part I is to set out the context of this study and review literature in the relevant fields. This part is divided into two chapters. Chapter 2 begins with contextualising the research area in this study. Section 2.1 outlines issues concerning Chinese communities overseas, including the issue of inter-generational language use among Chinese community members and the history and tradition of the Chinese schools in the UK and the USA. The discussion is followed by a description of the background of Chinese schools in the UK in order to set out the research context in this study. Section 2.2 includes discussions on both the research context and the people in the Chinese schools. However, as the research progressed, it became evident that certain issues of teaching/pedagogy are related to the nature of the Chinese language. Thus, a brief introduction to the Chinese language forms the final part of this chapter.

Chapter 3 examines other literature relevant to the current study. It looks at issues of language learning, teaching and culture of learning. The chapter begins by looking at language learning theories, including different models of second language learning, paying particular attention to the social models in this area. The discussion

then focuses on the concept of ‘culture of learning’, a central theme in the current study. In the second part of Chapter 3, the notion of ‘culture of learning’ is brought forward and put into the context of learning Chinese as a community language. As stated in Chapter 1, it is part of the aim of the current study to explore the ‘culture of learning’ present in British Chinese schools. In order to present the complex dynamic observed in the Chinese schools, a theoretical framework to illustrate the situation is sought. The study adopted Bronfenbrenner’s ecology model of cognitive development and developed it into a framework for understanding the development of a ‘culture of learning’ in the Chinese schools. The discussion of Bronfenbrenner’s model, the adopted model, and its appropriateness to the current study is in Section 3.3.

CHAPTER 2

LEARNING CHINESE AS A COMMUNITY LANGUAGE OVERSEAS

There is a strong link between language and culture (Gardner 1984; Hofstede 1986; Kramsch 1993: 1998; Byram *et al.* 1994; Hinkel 1999). Researchers and language teachers have become increasingly aware that a language can rarely be learned or taught without reference to the culture of the community in which it is used.

Language is viewed as a complex system that reflects what meanings are attached to behaviours and how they are expressed (Gardner 1984). The present study is an attempt to explore the relationships existing when culture meets culture and the underlying issues in these relationships. It uses the example of learning in Chinese schools in the UK where Chinese is learnt as a community language; and where the learning of several 'cultures' takes place. The aim of this chapter is to describe the research context in this study and situate the study in the wider research field. This chapter focuses particularly on the 'Chinese' aspect of the current study. However, before outlining the structure of this chapter and the discussion of each aspect in detail, a brief clarification of the term 'Chinese' as used in the study is presented here.

DeFrancis (1984) points out that the confusion or 'fantasy' about 'Chinese' is often caused by misunderstanding and misuse of the term in different situations as it 'is

used to refer both to a people and to their language in both its spoken and written forms' (p. 38). Indeed, with the sensitive political situation in areas including and surrounding China in recent years, it is even more difficult to define the term 'Chinese', and to what or whom it refers. However, for the purpose of this study, I use the term to refer to those people who identify themselves as 'Chinese' and their descendants. Issues of the 'Chinese language' will be examined in separate sections of this chapter.

This chapter begins with a description of Chinese language communities overseas (by the term 'overseas', the study refers to those contexts outside places where Chinese is used as a common language among the whole population). It focuses particularly on the spoken aspect of the Chinese language. As a crucial part of the current study is the language used by the participants in the study, considerations of their language use and the setting up of Chinese schools as a consequence of the effort to maintain the Chinese language are discussed. The second part of this chapter looks at the research context in this study including the origins of Chinese communities and Chinese schools in the UK, their development, and the people in the Chinese schools. As the nature of a language may also have an effect on how it is taught and learnt, the final part of the chapter briefly describes the Chinese language, especially its written aspect, and considers the traditional practices of teaching and learning Chinese.

2.1 CHINESE LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES OVERSEAS

It is estimated that more than 1,000,000,000 people are speakers of some form of Chinese, which makes it the language with the largest number of speakers in the world (Li & Thompson 1991; Dalby 1999). Apart from being spoken as an official language in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, it is also maintained by about 30 million Chinese scattered in other parts of the world. Within the Chinese language, there are a number of ‘dialects’ which may be mutually unintelligible. Although there are debates about whether the terms ‘languages’ or ‘dialects’ should be used to refer to and to acknowledge the significantly difference between the ‘dialects’, in this study I follow Li and Thompson’s use (1991) of the term ‘dialects’ for these language groups as they are not only genetically related languages of one nation, but they have always had a uniform written language which is logographic. As noted by Li & Thompson (ibid.), people ‘who cannot understand each others’ speech can still read the same written language provided that they are educated’ (p, 813). The written aspect of the language will be discussed later in Section 2.3. In order to understand the Chinese communities overseas, the following paragraphs will first look at the differences between the dialects spoken by the community members before focusing on issues related to these communities.

The different dialects can be classified into seven commonly identified groups on the basis of their structure affinities: Mandarin, Wu, Min, Yue (Cantonese), Hakka, Xiang, and Gan (Chen 1999). Mandarin is the largest group of all, with its native speakers accounting for the majority of the Chinese population. ‘Mandarin’ is an

English translation of the old *Beijing* expression *gūanhùa* ‘official language’ and is known by several names. It is called *pǔtōnghùa* ‘the common language’ in Mainland China and Hong Kong, *gúoyǔ* ‘national language’ in Taiwan, and *húayǔ* ‘Chinese language’ in Singapore although each of them differs slightly in both vocabulary and grammar. All the dialects identified above are also represented in many of the Chinese communities overseas although the main linguistic group may differ in different countries. For example, Dunseath (1996) notes that there are large groups of speakers of Hakka, Hokkien (Min), and Cantonese (Yue) in Brunei tracing the ancestry of the speakers back to Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, whilst in Quebec (Canada) and in the USA, a large population of Chinese people are speakers of Mandarin (Cummins 1995; Baker & Eversley 2000). With the tie between Hong Kong and the UK, it is not surprising that the majority of the settled people in the UK are speakers of Cantonese although the number of Mandarin speakers residing in the UK has grown in recent years. It is also worth noting that the role each dialect plays is slightly different considering the inter-group relationships of the Chinese community. Historically, Mandarin (also referred to as *pǔtōnghùa*, *gūanhùa* or *gúoyǔ*) not only has its official status, but is often used in formal relationships whilst other Chinese dialects are more as community languages.

Interesting statistics are revealed in Baker & Eversley’s survey (2000) of language used by London school children. They compare data from their own research with Dalby (1999) and Miller’s survey (1993: 1999) result and found that Chinese languages (including five languages [*sic*] of China: Putonghua (Mandarin), Wu,

Min-nan, Xing and Hakka) together with certain South Asian languages and the Indic languages are 'proportionately better represented in the world than in London' (p. 6) as the majority of Chinese speakers in London are speakers of Cantonese. In the fourth national survey of ethnic minorities by the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) (1997), spoken Chinese used among Chinese communities is recorded, distinguishing the different dialects, and shows that Cantonese is still the most prevalent (66%), Mandarin (10%), Hakka (11%), Hokken/Min (2%), and Vietnamese (6%). However, there is a growing population of Mandarin Chinese speakers for political and economical reasons. In Baker & Eversley's study (2000), they also report that Chinese language courses are offered in Putonghua (Mandarin) and Cantonese as modern languages in the public sector establishments. The number of Putonghua (Mandarin) courses has grown in recent years whilst the number of Cantonese courses has fallen. Baker & Eversley (ibid.) suggest that the 'situation may be a consequence of the transfer of power in Hong Kong to China (where only Mandarin has official status)' (p. 7). A similar situation also occurs across British Chinese schools as I discuss in Section 2.2.

The discussion in this section focuses on the Chinese language communities outside Chinese-speaking countries. As participants' language use plays a big part in the current study, the first subsection looks at the issue of inter-generational language use whilst the second discusses the set up of Chinese schools in different countries and its importance to the Chinese communities concerned.

2.1.1 Inter-Generational Language Use

In McGregor & Li's study (1991) of language choice amongst Chinese students in Newcastle, they set out to identify factors affecting the subjects' language choice by comparing two models: domain analysis (assumes that only one language is appropriate and will be chosen for a specific domain) and audience design (speakers choose their language primarily in response to audience types – addressee, auditor, overhearer, and even eavesdropper). By comparing the 128 questionnaires returned by students in the Newcastle area, they conclude that the most salient influence on the linguistic behaviour of the speaker comes from the identity of the 'audience' and that the domain analysis model is less satisfactory. In other words, the subjects choose language most frequently in the presence of a third party which often involves members of the family or the community. In his later work, Li (1994) examines the language choice and language shift of the Chinese community in Tyneside. He categorises the Chinese community in Newcastle into three generation groups: the first-generation emigrants, the sponsored emigrants (who entered the country as immediate kin of the first-generation emigrants or through personal contact with them), and the British-born. By comparing the three generations, Li (1994) concludes that there is 'a rapid inter-generational language shift from Chinese monolingualism to English-dominant bilingualism' (p. 114).

In the Policy Studies Institute's 1997 report, it is noted that among the Chinese 'there was evidence of linguistic decline with just over four in ten of the 16-34-year-olds using a Chinese language with family or their own age group, and nearly a

quarter of all respondents not able to speak a Chinese (or Vietnamese) language' (p. 312). Even in Taylor's study (1987) on Chinese pupils in Britain, the pupils were found to have 'a considerable increase in English usage' (p. 158). Taylor (ibid.) notes that, at the time of research, the majority of the parents had only limited facility in English and Chinese dialects were dominant in the home, whilst the children had some facility in a Chinese dialect but they were less likely to be able to read or write in the Chinese script unless they attended Chinese language classes.

A similar tendency of Chinese language 'disappearing' from the Chinese community in Brazil is observed by Hsü (1996). Hsü also finds that there are two reasons for this: (1) there are less Chinese people moving into the country, and (2) many Chinese people married local people producing new generations who speaks very little Chinese and have little intention to try to speak Chinese – even at home. This is similarly illustrated by one of the examples in the Swann Report (HMSO 1985):

... another witness stressed the difficulty of the Chinese language and pointed out that it was 'glib' to expect children to learn it properly from perhaps one lesson each week. In his experience many of the people running the supplementary schools lacked both the resources and experience to make the work interesting for the children and too much reliance was placed on rote learning. One Chinese teacher from a language unit felt that Chinese children born in this country saw the supplementary classes as leading nowhere and were not interested in learning Chinese as they had no pride in their cultural and linguistic heritage. ... (p.665)

To contrast with such a statement, the following subsection aims to look at the background of Chinese schools based mainly on literature on the USA and the UK contexts. The following subsection examines the communities' reasons for setting

up Chinese schools and compares the Chinese school systems with mainstream education systems in these countries.

2.1.2 Chinese Schools in the UK & the USA

The set up of Chinese schools in many overseas Chinese communities shares the same aim, that is, to tackle a specific problem, the maintenance of Chinese language and culture among the new generations born in their host countries. Literature in this area also shows that Chinese schools in different countries often share similar circumstantial features such as limited time and resources, voluntary teachers with limited training background, their curriculum, and the wide variation between the participants. Chinese schools are generally held at weekends and are different to the mainstream education system. To illustrate the situation, I found the comparison made by Wang (1996) of the public school system and Chinese language school system in the USA illuminating and for this reason I include it below, in Table 2.1.

Surveys and literature on British Chinese schools also show similarities to the features listed in Table 2.1 (Tsow 1984; Taylor 1987; Ghuman & Wong 1989; Wong 1992). I shall discuss the situation in British Chinese schools in the next section.

	Public School System	Chinese Language School System
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication: emphasis on four skills - More than one language offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preserve language and culture: emphasis on literacy - One language offered primarily for heritage students
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full-time/part-time paid - Professionally trained - Usually certified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Usually parent volunteers, low pay - Limited training - Usually not certified
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paid career position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent volunteers, no salary
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-Chinese heritage & Chinese heritage students - Similar age - Choice of language - Usually start learning at older age than Chinese heritage language students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primarily Chinese heritage language students - Large range of age in one class - No choice of language - Start learning at preschool age
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited role - Usually not speakers of the language taught - Of diverse cultural and linguistic background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active role - Usually speakers of the language taught - Often same cultural and linguistic background
Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For credit - Part of curriculum, may be required by school district - English-speaking environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not for credit - Extracurricular, not required by school district, may be required by parents - Authentic linguistic and cultural environment of the language taught
Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekdays during regular school hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After school or on weekends
Teaching Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taught as foreign language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taught as both heritage language and second/foreign language depending on students
Textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Typically not from home country. - Targeted to English speakers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Usually from home country. - Targeted to native speakers.
Testing/Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affects GPA/graduation credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No effect on GPA/graduation credit.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taxes (public money) - Access to other school resources (i.e. library, language lab, computers) - Own building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donations, tuition, & funding from home country - No access to other resources - No permanent space (i.e. must rent classroom).

Table 2.1 Comparison of the public school system and the Chinese language school system in the USA (Wang 1996, p.79).

2.2 BACKGROUND OF CHINESE SCHOOLS IN THE UK

According to the 1991 Census, the Chinese represented 0.3% (156,900) of the British population. They are the third largest immigrant group in Britain, after the Asian and African Caribbean communities. One of the objectives of this research is to illuminate the practice of Chinese language teaching in the context of Chinese schools in the UK. And going beyond that, to illuminate the relationship between culture and learning and teaching styles. The aim of this chapter is to provide a description of the contextual framework of the study and the following sections will therefore explain explicitly the context being researched.

2.2.1 Chinese Community and Chinese Schools in the UK

Around the time of the Swann Report (*Education for All*, HMSO 1985), there was a considerable body of research carried out on the Chinese community (Tsow 1980: 1983a: 1983b: 1984; CILT 1981: 1986; Nuffield Foundation 1981; Chann 1984; NCC 1984; HAC 1985; Tansley 1986; Jones 1987; Taylor 1987; Ghuman & Wong 1989). This research focused on different aspects of the community, paying particular attention to the language needs of Chinese children. The situation in Chinese schools is also noted in several of the above studies. This section firstly outlines some of the findings from these studies before discussing the population in Chinese schools.

As noted in Section 2.1.2, similar features of differences between Chinese language schools and mainstream schools to those identified in Table 2.1 are also observed in

British Chinese schools. The following paragraphs focus on the situation of British Chinese schools and discuss some of the issues noted in the literature.

After studying the survey report constructed by UKFCS (UK Federation of Chinese Schools) in 1996 which aimed at providing information about Chinese schools to Chinese parents around the country, I summarised the following points from the report which may help to provide a picture of the situation of British Chinese schools at the time of the current study: (1) Although most Chinese schools are located around the London area, there are Chinese schools in every region. (2) Most of the schools have classes on Sunday. (3) Most schools run Cantonese classes – a few of them also offer Mandarin Chinese classes. (4) Almost all the schools in this report use the UKFCS textbook. (5) Only 10 schools have their own premises, others rent their premises for teaching –mostly primary or secondary schools in the local area. (6) Student numbers at the schools range from 21 to 160; teacher numbers between 4 and 14. (7) Most schools have difficulties finding financial resources. Thus, not surprisingly, resources for supporting teaching and learning are very limited.

In the more recent study of Verma *et al.* (1999), they point out that many of the issues highlighted in previous studies, being discussed so far, remain the same as the provision of community language still relies heavily on the communities themselves. They make a strong statement in stressing that:

[u]nfortunately, the problem faced by the Chinese community is identical to the one faced by ethnic minorities living in Britain. The DfEE, the Home Office and Local Authorities have resolutely refused to accept any responsibility for the education of the children of minority groups in their mother tongues in spite of their obligations which Britain freely entered into [the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989]. (p. 188)

Even though the situation may look difficult in Chinese schools, a close look at the Chinese community as a whole may provide the reasons why parents continue to send their children to Chinese schools. In Tsow's survey (1984), it was shown that the reasons for learning Chinese were: 'They have Chinese origins (78%)', 'Should know mother-tongue (62%)', 'To communicate with own people (24%)', and 'Useful if return to Hong Kong (24%)' (p.16). Although it might be true that a majority of the Chinese parents can now speak English, and for most of the time at home children speak to their parents only in English, parents still think it a duty to keep their children 'Chinese literate'. This may explain why although it is so very difficult to set up a Chinese school, and it is even harder to maintain one, Chinese schools in the UK have not decreased either in size or quantity – according to Chen (1996), there are 150 Chinese schools altogether in the UK.

The core problem many schools are facing is that the perceptions of the learners, the teachers and the parents towards the Chinese schools are very different and they do not coincide with each other. This raises not only practical questions but also interesting theoretical questions. As the current study is interested in the culture of the people who are involved in the context and their circumstances, thus, before

discussing the theoretical background of the study, I feel it is also necessary to describe the population in Chinese schools in more detail.

2.2.2 Population in the Chinese Schools

Studies on students' learning and teachers' teaching process/strategies stress the importance of 'things one brings into classrooms' – personal background, experience, personality and attitudes (Cummings 1988; Ehrman & Oxford 1989; Oxford & Nyikos 1989; Skehan 1989; Biggs 1993: 1996; Ellis 1994). In other words, factors external to the classroom, rather than individual differences in learning styles between learners are affecting the interactions within a particular context. The attention of this research, therefore, has been brought to the broader context rather than simply looking at how learners perform. It is, however, as Watkins (1996) puts it, 'imperative to realise that [the common theoretical and complementary research approaches] are the products of a century of Western research' (p.3). So another intention of this study is to examine the particular context of Chinese schools in the UK with the notion of the possibility of the mixture of two cultures: Western – the British, with a non-Western culture – the Chinese one.

In order to investigate teaching and learning strategies and other factors in Chinese schools, it is necessary to define people's attitudes and circumstances, including those of the parents, teachers and students, within the setting of Chinese schools. These will be examined accordingly in the following paragraphs.

Chinese Parents

Parents who send their children to Chinese schools are generally those who feel that they should give their children a 'Chinese education'. Although this represents a shared set of assumptions, Chinese parents differ considerably in their background, ideas about 'learning Chinese', and their attitude towards children when it comes to using Chinese at home. Even though these parents are mostly employed or running their own businesses in the UK, some speak fluent English, whilst others use only a little English for the purpose of communication. Thus, the decision about whether or not to insist on their children speaking Chinese at home varies from one family to another. In some rare cases, children whose parents are both Chinese might have decided to speak only English to their children and found out later that they still want their children to learn Chinese and therefore enter them into Chinese schools. As the Chinese class time is so short, it is very difficult to see children making progress without help from their homes. Also, being members of committees for the schools, will give parents opportunities to put forward their opinions on textbooks, other supplementary materials to be used, and even teaching activities. Parents in Chinese schools, although they are not really working within the classrooms and will not be investigated in this study, should not be excluded from the whole context.

Teachers

It has always been a problem for Chinese schools to find teachers who are suitable for the post, a fact noted in early surveys (Tsow 1984) and later ones (UKFCS' 1996 report). Chen (1996) also pointed it out that '*lìrú zài lúndūn qū nèi, yào zhǎo yìxiē zīshēnde pǔtōnghuà lǎoshī búshì nánshì. Rào huànle zài pīanyuǎn xiǎopù, kěnéng biàndé hěn kùnnán* {For example, in the London area, it is not difficult to find experienced Putonghua teachers, whilst in rural areas, it may have become very difficult}' (p. 49). Not only are the teachers not experienced or trained, but most of them are also volunteers who pay for their own transportation, and sometimes buy little gifts for rewarding their students' good performance in class.

As a result, there are two issues within the group of teachers: (1) A high drop-out rate: Many teachers are students who study in the UK for a short period of time or housewives who come to the country to accompany their family. Thus, when they move away or go back to their original country, there will be an immediate shortage of teachers. (2) Teachers are in real need of teacher-training: Since a high proportion of teachers have not been trained either to teach Chinese as a second/foreign language (which is very often the case as only few institutions are offering training of this kind) or to be a teacher of any subjects, they usually meet with a lot of difficulties in trying to cope with the complex situation in Chinese schools. There is no doubt that teachers can all speak good Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese) – which is normally the basic criterion for selection of teachers; but

apart from that teachers are just trying to teach using what they think is the best way to learn Chinese.

The above discussion indicates some of the influences of culture on teaching styles. That is, teachers would (1) apply techniques that helped them while they were learning as children, (2) expect a similar classroom culture referring back to their own experience. Therefore, it is not uncommon to hear teachers expressing similar comments such as ‘It should be learnt this way’ or ‘I think this way is the proper way to learn Chinese’. In reality, however, it was common from time to time for the teachers in this study to find their students ‘resisted doing what they were told’, and teachers felt ‘disappointed’ or ‘frustrated’. (More of the teachers’ views are discussed in Part III.)

One relevant factor is the age of the teacher. It seems obvious the older the teacher the more they are likely to be influenced by the traditional way of teaching. Interestingly, though, some younger teachers appear to insist on traditional ways of teaching more than their senior colleagues – which leads to another factor: the experience of the teacher. Thus, on the other hand, it is likely that the older the teacher the more experience they are likely to have. If they are sensitive to the experience and the situation, the more likely they are to adopt non-traditional strategies. Later, in Part III, more about this complex interaction between age and experience factors showing impact on teachers’ perceptions and teaching discovered through the study will be discussed in detail. In the first stage of the

empirical investigation, teachers were asked about their ideas on Chinese language teaching in the UK and the strategies/perceptions they use/hold to face up to the complex nature of Chinese schools.

Students

Students at Chinese schools vary even more than their teachers in their personal factors prior to their going to Chinese schools. They can be classified into four major groups: (1) second generation Chinese language learners, (2) first generation Chinese language learners, (3) learners with Chinese heritage background who do not speak Chinese in the family, and (4) non-Chinese language learners. However, these are not watertight groups and the students' circumstances may vary which place them in different groups.

Second generation Chinese language learners make up the vast majority of students enrolled in British Chinese schools, and are mostly second generation British-Chinese born to parents whose first language is Chinese (Cantonese in most cases, but also Hakka and Mandarin Chinese) (Tsow 1984). Although Chinese is usually the first language of these students, English soon becomes their primary language after they start formal schooling (for example, Wong 1992; Baker & Eversley 2000).

There is also a large group of first generation Chinese language learners in Chinese schools. The group (mostly speakers of Mandarin Chinese) is growing bigger as

many of the new-comers enter the UK with their parents for scholarly or professional purposes. The students' language abilities vary according to how many years of schooling they received in their native country and their length of stay in the UK. For those who only have limited formal schooling in their native country and have been in the UK for many years, their language ability may be similar to those of the first group.

However, there may still be variations within the above two groups of learners. They are different in their experience in at least two aspects: (1) their language use at home – whether or not they speak Chinese to their parents, siblings, and friends; (2) their experience of contacting people who speak only Chinese – holidays to their original countries, senior relatives who only speak Chinese come to visit; which will inevitably affect their attitude toward learning and using the language.

The third group of learners make up only a small proportion in the Chinese schools. They are mainly children from families with only one Chinese parent. Children from this group may sometimes be similar to some of the children from the above groups whose family speak in a dialect or a language different from what they are learning (in most cases, Mandarin Chinese). The children's family send them to Chinese schools (in many case, for Mandarin Chinese classes) mostly for practical reasons as Mandarin Chinese has world recognition. However, even if these Chinese non-Mandarin-speakers are exposed to Chinese culture at home and their parent(s) may be able to help them with learning Chinese characters, they lack opportunities for

listening to and speaking Mandarin Chinese at home. This group of students is the most difficult to cater for if they are placed with the above two groups of learners. I return to discuss this problem in Part III.

The final group of learners, the non-Chinese language learners, only make up a very small population in Chinese schools. Students in this group are mainly British citizens with no Chinese heritage background. Due to the limited resources of the Chinese schools, there are not always separated class for this group of learners. If they had experience of learning Chinese previously and were at an average level, they may be placed with other Chinese students in a regular class. In some cases, they are placed in a separate class especially designed for teaching Chinese as a foreign language and charged for a different fee for their lessons. Although the number of learners in this group is growing steadily around the country, there are also growing numbers of universities, community colleges/centres, and even colleges and schools which are offering Mandarin Chinese classes in their modern language programmes. In the current study, only a couple of schools offered such classes. As indicated earlier, the age-range for this group is normally wider and post-16. This research is particularly interested in the culture of learning concerning the first three groups of children. Therefore, no further discussion is given to this group of learners.

One aspect that the students in the first three groups have in common is that they have all spent time in British schools during weekdays to learn subjects other than

Chinese. For some students, having to go to ‘school’ every weekend is a tiring experience; for others it might have been a very ‘different’ or ‘new’ experience. To what extent these experiences differ from students’ expectations will have an effect on their attitude in class. Students who have difficulties adjusting to the ‘Chinese context’ are going to make the task harder for teachers trying to help them learn in the Chinese classes (no matter what kind of methods the teachers will be using). It is my intention in this study to describe more closely what kind of factors students have brought with them into the classrooms; what strategies they are using to deal with the different context of ‘Chinese schools at weekends’; and what they see as learning Chinese.

So far, the discussion in the previous sections has examined the people involved in Chinese schools. From these discussions, another important aspect to this study, the Chinese language – particularly its written form, is identified and discussed in the following section. Traditional practices of teaching and learning the Chinese language, often associated with the written Chinese language, are also discussed.

2.3 CHINESE LANGUAGE

As noted in Section 2.1.1, children of Chinese origin often have some facility in speaking a Chinese dialect from their experience at home, but many of them rely on the experience of Chinese language classes to improve their ability to read or write in the Chinese script. Although the literature also notes that experience of Chinese children varies, dependent on the situations at home, the importance of literacy is

stressed in the students' lives, being viewed as an intrinsic part of the formation of their identity. Verma *et al.* (1999) note that not only do Chinese people take pride in being able to master the Chinese script, for a person 'to be *Chinese* in a proper sense, he or she must also be a fully literate person' (p. 32, original emphasis). The following subsections look at the significant features of the Chinese language that contribute to this sense of 'belonging' and the elements of the written script. I then discuss how the elements are taught in the traditional practice of teaching and learning the Chinese language.

2.3.1 Nature of the Chinese Language

The Chinese writing system is called a 'character' system. Each symbol is a character but the characters can both be words and syllables. This is due to the nature of the written language and I shall explain it briefly here.

There are six sub-groups of which the Chinese characters are categorised, four of which are particularly important to the learners in Chinese schools as many of them are basic parts which make up the majority of characters early learners learn and use. I list the four sub-groups in the following page including some examples. The other two sub-groups of Chinese characters are loan characters of slightly different nature. As they are less used and discussed in Chinese schools, I will discuss them no further. The nature of the four sub-groups just discussed has an influence on the way Chinese characters are taught and learnt and this is discussed in the next subsection.

(1) Pictographs refer to characters derived from pictures of particular objects.

日 *rì* = sun 月 *yuè* = moon

(2) Ideographs refer to characters representing ideas.

上 *shàng* = up 下 *xià* = down

(3) Compound ideographs refer to characters based on metaphorical extensions or associations of parts compounded together. For example, the character bright is a compound of the character of sun and moon.

明 *míng* = bright

(4) Phonetic compounds refer to those characters each of which is a combination of two characters, one representing a semantic feature and the other representing the phonetic. For example, the combination of the character sun and the sound character for king becomes the new character to mean prosperous.

旺 *wàng* = prosperous

Another aspect of written Chinese which is also influencing the teaching and learning of the Chinese language is the difference between old written Chinese, *wényán* 'classical literary language', and modern written Chinese, *báihuà*

‘vernacular literary language’. Like all other languages, Chinese in both its spoken and written forms has undergone great changes over the years. *Wényán* is so much different from *báihùa* that intensive training is needed to master both. However, the nature of the Chinese characters, as discussed above, has facilitated the maintenance of *wényán* over the years. Although *báihùa* is closer in following the national spoken standard (Mandarin) for its grammar and vocabulary, *wényán* has not gone out of fashion as it is considered refined, elegant, and an important part of the cultural heritage. While the spoken form has changed almost altogether over the years, much work created in *wényán* style is still taught and used as part of everyday language. Some of the *wényán* expressions are preserved in their original totality, while others are maintained as proverbs, or ‘idioms’ which are taught in traditional Chinese schools as well as Chinese schools overseas. The following subsection looks at some of these practices.

2.3.2 Traditional Practice of Teaching and Learning Chinese Language

After the discussion in the above subsection, it is necessary to look at how the characters are taught in Chinese classrooms. After guiding students through the construction of basic characters and the emphasis of precision in writing them (as the meaning of the character may change completely when a single stroke is misplaced or omitted), one activity which is often cited in the literature is illustrated here using the description by Hudson-Ross & Dong (1990): the ‘concentrated character learning’:

After the basic learning of some 300 characters (not unlike “sight words” in English), children learn groups of characters clustered by similar sound, shape or meaning ... Teachers usually teach children how to analyze a character, break it down into smaller parts, and look for meaning and sound components. (p. 120)

In other words, the ‘concentrated character learning/recognition’ emphasises learning first the basic radicals then associated characters built on these radicals. It is one of the most popular techniques. There are other techniques used to help teach Chinese characters and enhance the character-pronunciation association in the Chinese context, such as ‘systematic learning’, ‘character labels for objects’ and ‘six categories of characters’ (Taylor & Taylor 1995).

As shown from the discussions so far, although the Chinese script can be commonly understood by speakers of different dialects, the use of vocabulary and grammar may still vary and require standardisation for it to be used by the population as a whole. During the time *wényán* ‘classical literary language’ was used, when literacy was the privilege of the few, proficiency in the standard language at the time was an important part of the attainments of scholars. However, to promote modern Chinese, *báihuà* ‘vernacular literary language’, to the whole Chinese population, it was viewed to be essential for designing phonetic scripts based on the base dialect (close to Mandarin) to help overcome the difficulty of learning and using the traditional script by providing a supplementary or alternative writing system. Two systems which are commonly used and taught are: *Zhùyīn zìmǔ* ‘[Chinese] alphabet for phonetic annotation’ is used in Taiwan and *Hànyǔ Pīnyīn* (commonly referred to as Pinyin) ‘phonetic for Chinese language’ is used in Mainland China and

Singapore. *Zhùyīn zìmǔ* contains a list of Chinese ‘alphabets’ for sound annotation, whilst the Pinyin system uses the romanization letters to indicate sounds of individual character. Both systems are used for teaching at British Chinese schools discussed in Part III.

Apart from the teaching of Chinese characters with the aids of the phonetic system, another common feature of the traditional practice of the Chinese language is its heavy reliance on written texts or textbooks. Observers of the Chinese Education system have reported on the strong status of prescribed books for Chinese school children – from the ‘*Three Character Classic*’, ‘*The Book of Song*’, ‘*Records of the Historian*’, and other Confucian classics such as the Four Books and the Five Classics in the ancient time to the textbooks prescribed by modern Chinese governments (Wilson 1970; Sheridan 1981; Ho 1986; Cleverley 1991; Stevenson & Stigler 1992; Chen 1997a; Cheng 1997; Cheah 1998). Literacy has had a high priority in traditional China, as it is explained by Cleverley (1991),

... [l]iteracy enhanced status, helped locals protect themselves against tax collectors, officials and soldiers, and lessened their chances of being cheated. ... (p. 23)

Literacy still holds a central position in modern Chinese society, at least by way of the existence of public examinations. Stephens (1997) examined cultural stereotyping and claimed that some of the stereotypes are caused by the limited contact with the native speaker, that is, the Chinese speakers. The following point is nicely made:

Spoken Chinese consists of a variety of dialects which might be called different languages. Because written Chinese is an ideographic language, it can function as a written lingua franca for the nation. Writing therefore holds a peculiarly central place in the process of education and cultural solidarity in China. (p. 122)

Literacy is also an essential ingredient of the modern Chinese curriculum in the Chinese context as well as in British Chinese schools today. As a result, the use of texts/textbooks is necessary as texts are the medium through which literacy is developed. In the same vein, the fact that written Chinese has long been used as the main medium of communication by people across regions, and it can be read 'across different time and "dialects"' (Taylor & Taylor 1995) put the text reading in the centre of literacy development. As Taylor and Taylor (ibid.) pointed out:

Thanks to the [fact that Chinese can be read across different time and dialects], Chinese speakers all over the world feel that they are unified as the Han people, and that they have access to the vast storehouse of knowledge written in characters that has accumulated over thousands of years. (pp. 174-175)

This characteristic of the Chinese characters makes it important for Chinese educators to place a high priority on literacy. However, it does not come without consequences. Speakers of different dialects to Mandarin Chinese need to put in a special effort in order to understand and reconstruct the written forms. The process of becoming literate in Chinese is a complex one for all Chinese people. It is observed by Taylor & Taylor (1995):

Chinese characters, Hanzi, are numerous, have complex shapes, and do not indicate sounds adequately. ... Learning to write characters usually accompanies learning to read them. (p. 131)

Indeed, it involves several stages of learning. These stages are outlined by Hudson-Ross & Dong (1990).

Children must memorize (a.) the shape of each character, (b.) the way of writing it, (c.) the meaning of the character, and (d.) the pronunciation of the character, ... (p. 119)

Unlike English, it is almost impossible to make use of guesswork in the same way for inferring meaning from written symbols. As Hudson-Ross & Dong (1990) stated further:

Chinese children bring the same rich oral language to school, but they must learn a very different system for written communication with fewer helpful cues related to what they already know. (p. 119)

It is even more difficult for some learners as the written pattern is one that is distinctively different from their speech pattern. This is often the case for many of the students of Chinese schools, especially for those whose mother tongue is Cantonese, as there are distinctive differences between spoken Cantonese and written Chinese. (It was clarified in Section 2.2 that there are distinct differences between literary and vernacular Chinese, and that the modern vernacular Chinese is closest to the speech pattern of Mandarin Chinese.) Donaldson (1989) warned against such a difference in children's introduction to literacy. When the language spoken is distinctively different from the written form,

it presents formidable problems for beginners because it confounds their expectations and frustrates their attempts at intelligent prediction. ... (p. 18)

As a result, it seems to many teachers that there is an even stronger reason for acquiring textbooks/texts which can be given to each student for them to study in detail, and to take home and learn in their own time. Not only is it easier to teach with a text/textbook, there is also the cultural tradition of learning by modelling (Hudson-Ross & Dong 1990; Stigler & Stevenson 1991; Stevenson & Stigler 1992; Eve 1993; Nelson 1995). It is the Chinese teachers' general belief that 'those people who were selected to edit textbooks should be experts in the field', and 'the textbooks can provide a systematic way to gain knowledge and to learn the language'. Thus, texts/textbooks represent 'models' as language learning materials, as well as a system which contains 'things students should learn'. It is hence interesting to investigate a little bit further what are included in the texts/textbooks.

In Taiwan and also in China, the governments, until recently, published all the textbooks used in the schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Different series of textbooks to the original, official version published by the government were available in China from 1993 (Taylor & Taylor 1995) and in Taiwan from 1996 (Chen 1997b). However, since they are still based mainly on the guidelines provided by the governments, it is not surprising that the content of the materials carry strong social and political messages. Ho (1986) reviewed content analysis on educational materials reported by McClelland (1963), Lewis (1965), Solomon (1965), Ridley, Godwin & Doolin (1971), and Chang (1979). The educational materials in Taiwan and Mainland China were found to be aiming to train the children at different levels to become active, self-reliant, competent,

intellectually critical, achievement oriented, as well as co-operative and concerned about the economic and social modernisation. In other words, these are materials in aid of children's socialisation. The analysis by Wilson (1970) also reported a similar set of aims. Wilson's report (ibid.) on the organisation of the contents of the educational materials is striking for its similarity between the material he analysed and those I used when I was at school in the late 1970s and one of the versions I have seen used by school children in Taiwan.

The lessons in the primers are designed so that one theme will serve as a central focal point for several lessons and subject materials. The object is to take similar subject material and, by putting it together, give the children a deeper understanding of one question and a means for heightening comparative awareness of the merits of each lesson. ...

(Wilson 1970, pp. 167-168)

According to Wilson (1970), themes that were included in the Taiwanese textbooks then were diligence, co-operation and guarding the law, tactfulness and taking heed [fearless about obstacles], liberating and saving our compatriots on the mainland, great love [between family members], industry and learning to stick to a task until the obstacles are overcome, exercising the body, the New Year's holiday, loving the country loyally and bravely. There was a strong emphasis on political issues and time of difficulties due to the economic and political background of the time. However, there were also contents about general knowledge, science and traditional Chinese culture. Although the emphasis on political issues in our textbooks had shifted slightly and the political atmosphere had become more relaxed by the time I reached school age, I still remember there were times I and my classmates laughed

after the class about the propaganda and some of the seemingly ridiculous Chinese fables.

On analysing textbooks used in Chinese contexts, researchers found several interesting features. Firstly, it is stressed repeatedly by researchers that the messages contained in textbooks and those that children learn may be expected to be different (Martin 1975; Price 1980; Meyer 1988). To quote the following from Martin (1975):

what can be gained from an examination of school texts is a picture not of what children learn, nor of all they are taught, but rather of what the government would like the content of childhood socialization to be. (p. 243)

In other words, like my own case described earlier, the government can certainly prescribe principles to be delivered through textbooks to school-age children but the effect of these messages are not necessarily as they were originally intended. Especially, in this age of information explosion, children have ample opportunities to be in contact with facts around the world. This may be particularly so for British Chinese children who are encouraged to explore, and interpret the world from their own view point: traditional Chinese texts and textbooks are, in many case, not appropriate for them. The teachers need a balance between following the textbooks and teaching something that makes sense to their students.

Secondly, research on Chinese textbooks found that it is inevitable for textbooks to reflect the publishers' ideology, be it the morality to be learnt by the readers or the social-political messages of the government or the 'Taiwanese consciousness'

introduced by conservationists (Wilson 1970; Price 1980; Meyer 1988; Chen 1997a, 1997b). For example, despite the obvious political agenda reflected through different textbooks (especially when textbooks editorships are open to competition from private publishers), they are all concerned about different educational issues: should the textbooks emphasise the thinking process or factual knowledge; how much local cultural heritage (Hong Kong, different provinces in China, or Taiwan) should be stressed in the textbooks. These, and more importantly the ideologies behind them, are all interesting aspects that are reflected through language textbooks.

Thirdly, there are sometimes mixed-messages in the textbooks, and some are dealt with better than others. For example, the issue of the individual versus the group. Although individuality and creativity are encouraged in the Chinese context, the connotations behind them can be very different from their English word equivalent. Here, I quote Meyer (1988) at length, as his words reflect my own feelings about the treatment given to the issue of 'individuality' in the textbooks I have used.

Even the virtues which are a part of individual cultivation, such as integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, wisdom, courage, and so forth, are explained in such a way as to promote the welfare of the group.
(Meyer 1988, p. 274)

... individual freedom is praised, but it is never mentioned without cautionary statements about the limits of freedom, the difference between freedom and licence, and advocacy of the idea that true freedom must put the group's welfare before that of the individual.
(Meyer 1988, p. 277)

Inventions, and topics related to creativity, are also often found in textbooks. For example, stories about scientists such as Bell and Newton and discussions on their inventions are common reading materials. However, these stories are provided more as scientific facts than evidence of creativity to be followed. This does not mean that creativity is not encouraged in the Chinese context; rather, the concept of creativity exists in a different form. This issue is discussed in more detail in Section 3.2.1.

Fourthly, one common feature observed in previous studies in Chinese language textbooks is the use of language exercises (Price 1980; Meyer 1988; Chen 1997a). These exercises appear in the form of short questions at the end of each text or extra exercises in workbooks to go with the series in the attempt to strengthen the students' learning. The exercises include comprehension of the text (stressing the moral-political aspect), questions concerning the form of the characters, and suggested passages to be written out from memory or dictation. There is a wide variety of formats for these exercises. All of them serve the purpose of strengthening the learning of the main text. Students are encouraged to learn firstly by copying out unfamiliar characters, then by trying to use the characters in various ways, such as combining them with familiar characters to make new words, substituting words in a selected sentence to give the sentence a different meaning, or even using limited prompts to create new sentences. The goal of these exercises is that students should be able to reproduce those sentences presented in the texts, using appropriately the newly learnt words. In the traditional Chinese practice, the

students are strongly encouraged to not only reproduce the sentences but to give their sentences even more ingenuity given the same basic sentence frame.

However, the tradition of using exercises in readily available workbooks designed by textbook publishers in order to practice language has its pitfalls. For example, teachers may become too dependent on textbooks. Chen (1997b), using comments of a teacher and a principle to illustrate the potential problems in choosing appropriate textbook/teaching materials states:

“In the process of educating teachers, they are really not taught how to design teaching materials or select textbooks,” says Cheng Pao-hsiang, who worked as a teacher in the past. ... (p. 25)

“Over the years, many teachers had no concept of curriculum and taught just by following the textbooks, thus losing their ability to take charge of course content and teaching materials,” says Chungshan Junior High School Principal Chao Li-yu. (p. 25)

Although the concepts of ‘student-centred’ teaching and ‘teacher as facilitator’ are all popular beliefs in the modern Chinese educational field (Pan 2001; Yu 2001), the traditional practice of teaching literacy is still visible in many Chinese classrooms. I believe that this is part of ‘culture of learning’ that remains closely linked to the Chinese language. The current study set out to explore the ‘culture of learning’ in British Chinese schools. Thus, in Part III, I will be able to compare the teaching practice in the British Chinese classrooms in this study with some of the traditional practices discussed here.

2.4 Summary

The two chapters in Part I aim at providing the contextual and theoretical background for this study. This chapter has concentrated on the ‘Chinese’ aspect and it examines three main areas related to the current study: the Chinese language community overseas, the background of Chinese schools in the UK, and the Chinese language itself. In this chapter, I define what the term ‘Chinese’ refers to in its sense of people, the spoken and the written language. I also look at the Chinese communities that are located in countries where ‘Chinese’ is not a common language: the language choice of the community members, the setting up of Chinese schools as means of maintaining the language and culture, and the people involved in Chinese schools. To facilitate discussions in later chapters, I feel it is necessary also to provide some linguistic background information about the spoken form and written form of the Chinese language and how they are taught in traditional Chinese settings. In the next chapter, a review of the literature which provides a theoretical framework for the current study will be presented.

CHAPTER 3

LANGUAGE LEARNING, TEACHING AND CULTURE OF LEARNING

The first chapter in Part I, Chapter 2, has looked at overseas Chinese communities and Chinese schools around the world focusing on the UK and the USA. The background of Chinese schools in the UK is discussed and issues concerning the Chinese language are examined. Chapter 3 focuses on the literature but particularly on the theoretical background for the current study. This study was undertaken to explore certain aspects of what happens in Chinese schools in the UK where learning of Chinese as a community language takes place. As suggested in the title of the study ‘learning’ and ‘culture’ are the main themes to be explored. The chapter is in three parts, the first two covering the above two themes – language learning theories and ‘culture’ and language learning. The final part of the chapter discusses the theoretical framework used to fit the data emerged from the study to clarification of the complex situation studied: an ecology model.

The chapter begins by critically examining language learning theories which provide insights to language learning and teaching. In particular, literature which focuses on different teaching-and-learning styles/strategies of different cultural groups are of most interest. As the study aimed at exploring the learning of the Chinese language as a community language, the social elements in language learning are also of

interest. Thus, a few important social models of second language learning are also discussed in the first section, whilst in the second part of Chapter 3, the discussion is focused on ‘culture’ as a factor influencing language learning. An important notion, the ‘culture of learning’, developed by Cortazzi and Jin (1996a), is a central concept for this study and is discussed in some detail. Also central to the current research is the theoretical framework used to organise the data collected: the ecology model based on the paradigm developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979: 1993). The final part of this chapter looks at literature using ‘ecology’ as a theoretical framework and how it provides a comprehensive structure for explaining the complex situation of UK Chinese schools.

3.1 LANGUAGE LEARNING THEORIES

There have been wide-ranging and extensive debates regarding language teaching and learning. The areas chosen for this study have received increasing attention since the 1970s as a result of a range of developments. A number of theoretical models of second language learning have been developed during the past twenty years. Some of these models are devoted to the cognitive aspect of second language learning, such as those provided by Bialystok (1978), and McLaughlin *et al.* (1983). Many others concern the way information is processed in the learner’s mind. These models have been widely scrutinised over the years and new models put forward (for example, McLaughlin 1987; Skehan 1989; Ellis 1994). Although it is still debatable whether learning Chinese as a community language is as a second language for the subjects discussed in this study, there are features of this group

which make the study of second language learning relevant to the current study. The discussion in this section starts by examining several language learning models as they provide theoretical understandings to the current study.

The current study began by examining the elements in the UK Chinese classrooms: students' learning strategies/styles and teachers' teaching activities/styles. Thus, models concerning second language learning and teaching in general, and relevant studies on learning strategies and learning styles are discussed in the next section to fit the current study into the field of language learning. Section 3.1.1 first looks at the body of research directly concerning language learning strategies which derive from the concept of 'good language learner' (Rubin 1975: 1981: 1987; Stern 1975; Naiman *et al.* 1996; O'Malley *et al.* 1985a: 1985b; Oxford 1990). Research in this area set out to identify the characteristics of effective learners and the strategies employed by them for pedagogical as well as academic interests. In the current study, the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (1990) is employed as part of data collection in order to understand the students as they learn Chinese in the British Chinese schools. The use of strategy inventories for research purposes is also discussed in this section while other methodological issues concerning using surveys in research will be covered in Part III.

Another area regarding language teaching-and-learning which has been researched substantially is the area of learning styles. It is widely accepted now that a mismatch in teaching and learning styles of the teacher and the learners can easily lead

to the failure of the class (Hofstede 1986; Dunn & Griggs 1988: 1990; Reid 1987: 1995; Felder & Henriques 1995; Oxford & Anderson 1995; Nelson 1995; Coleman 1996). Although the effect of 'mis-match' cannot easily be overcome by understanding the differences in different context, research in learning styles helps to provide important details on major features about language and learning in different cultural contexts. The second part of Section 3.1.1 examines some of the literature focusing on the aspect of learning styles.

In Section 3.1.2, the concentration of attention is directed at the role of social factors in language learning. It compares and contrasts several social models in second language learning including the acculturation model and socio-educational model.

3.1.1 Models of Second Language Learning

Different models have been proposed to illustrate the process of language learning from the aspect of cognitive psychology, general linguistics, psycholinguistics and socio-linguistics. Earlier models concerning the existence of the learner's self-monitoring process (Krashen 1978; Bialystok 1978), have also resulted in the distinction between explicit (learned) and implicit (acquired) knowledge. While Krashen's *Monitor Model* suggests that the two (learning and acquisition) should be separate systems, Bialystok's *Model of Second Language Learning* (also referred as '*Strategy Model*' by Gardner 1985) allows knowledge to move between systems using four different strategies (processes): formal practising, functional practising,

monitoring and inferencing. Within Bialystok's model, it is also proposed that there should be a third system – 'other knowledge' – to represent individual differences that are characteristic to each learner. Although these theories (especially Krashen's model) were very much criticised for their simple dichotomous style (Tarone 1983; McLaughlin 1987), other models have derived from aspects similar to these theories and other aspects aimed at expanding areas not covered by these theories. All these models have slightly different emphases but together they provide frameworks for empirical research in order to identify several dimensions of language learning. One important area which has been developed over the years is the study of language learning strategies.

Learning Strategies

A wide range of studies have been carried out on language learning strategies both to identify different strategies employed by students and more importantly, using this knowledge to raise awareness and to develop students' learning (Rubin, 1975; Stern 1975; Wenden 1986b; Oxford 1989; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Naiman *et al.* 1996). One of the principal aims of these studies is to identify those strategies which distinguish between the successful and the unsuccessful language learner. There is a large body of literature built upon the concept of 'The Good Language Learner' since the concept was proposed by Rubin and Stern in 1975. It is believed that by studying what learners do to enhance their own learning will provide clues for improvement. Various definitions of learning strategies have been offered by

researchers as a baseline for research. One of the earlier versions is provided by Rubin (1975):

[Strategies are] the techniques or devices which a learner may use
to acquire knowledge (p. 43)

Building upon years of research in this area, several other definitions of 'language learning strategies' have been offered. Other terms such as 'tactics' 'techniques' are also proposed to distinguish the nature of the behaviour. Oxford (1990) gives a refined definition of 'learning strategies':

... learning strategies are operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information. to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations. (p. 8)

Parallel to the research into students' learning strategy use, taxonomies and classifications of strategies are also suggested by different researchers. For example, O'Malley & Chamot (1990) have built upon Rubin's scheme and identified 26 strategies in three mutually exclusive categories: cognitive (strategies that have an operative function), metacognitive (strategies that involve planning, monitoring and evaluating the language learning process) and social/affective (strategies that involve working with others). Oxford's list (1990) is more detailed and draws a distinction between direct and indirect strategies. The former consists of 'strategies that directly involve the target language' and includes three sub-categories: memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. The latter 'provide indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy and other

means' (p. 151). It also includes three sub-categories: metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

Both of the lists proposed by O'Malley & Chamot and by Oxford take into consideration individual differences. Research based on these studies of learning strategies has turned to investigate several factors that affect choice of language learning strategies (Oxford (1989: 1996) and Ellis (1994) provide summaries and an overall picture of these factors). Oxford & Nyikos' paper (1989) also reports empirical research data on such factors, falling into two categories: (1) factors that are 'situational' (Ellis 1994): language being learnt, duration of learning the language, language teaching methods, task requirement, (and type of strategy training); and (2) learner personal and background factors: age, sex, aptitude, learning style, degree of metacognitive awareness in learning, affective variables (such as attitudes, motivation, goals, personal characters), career orientation, and national origin. As discussed earlier, strategies alone cannot account for the whole process of learning. It is believed that there exists a relationship between learning styles and learners' choice of learning strategies. "Particular strategies are often chosen because they are compatible with a student's culturally-influenced learning style" (Oxford & Anderson 1995, p. 203). Due to the strong culturally-related nature of the present study, the issue of learning style and research carried out in this area will be reviewed more closely in the following sub-section.

Before turning the focus of the current discussion to the relationship between learning style and learning strategies, another important aspect of the literature on learning strategies is worth noting. The vast amount of studies in language learning strategy not only suggests categories to be used for identifying lists of learning strategies, but it is also useful in providing methodological tools for research into second language learning (Rubin 1981; Stern 1975; O'Malley *et al.* 1985a; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990; Naiman *et al.* 1996). A wide range of research methods were employed in these studies (Oxford & Crookall 1989). Stern (1975) and Rubin (1975: 1981) try to identify, through observation, the 'Good Language Learner' and to compile lists of the strategies that learners were observed to be using. This is, however, reported as 'not very productive' (Rubin 1981, p.121) as strategies involving mental process are not easily observed. Another way of deriving a list of learner strategies is by using students' diaries or oral reports (Cohen & Apeh 1981; Rubin 1981; Cohen 1987; Rivers 1983) as they can 'provide direct evidence about processes that are otherwise invisible' (Cohen 1987). On the other hand, using oral reports also has its limitation as Cohen (*ibid.*) points out:

We can only learn about the conscious strategies that learners utilize in their efforts to master a language. (p.32)

Methods that are found to be more successful are the use of interviews (Wenden, 1986a; O'Malley *et al.* 1985a; Drever 1995; Naiman *et al.* 1996) and questionnaires (Bialystok 1981; Reiss 1985; Politzer & McGroarty 1985; Oxford 1985), and sometimes a combination of both techniques. Learners are allowed to report

retrospectively on their strategy use. Hence, with some tutoring, learners are able to provide detailed information about their learning strategies. The present study uses the 'Strategy Inventory for Language Learning' (SILL) created by Oxford (1990) to investigate the students' learning while they were members in Chinese schools in the UK. Although Oxford's framework has received some criticism for the overlapping of the sub-categories (O'Malley & Chamot 1990), it is still acknowledged as possibly the most comprehensive of learning strategies available to date (Ellis 1994). The inventory has been widely employed in different cultural contexts and its reliability is high across many cultural groups (Oxford & Burry-Stock 1995; Oxford 1996). Previous studies using the inventory with different cultural groups have helped researchers identify strategies preferred by particular cultural groups and compare learning strategies used by learners from different cultures. The current study attempts to understand the culture of learning in the British Chinese schools by exploring the students' language learning strategies as one dimension of whole picture. The methodological implication of using SILL for this study is discussed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 5).

Learning Styles

It has been indicated in the learning strategy literature that learners' choice of strategy may be influenced by a variety of factors such as age, sex, affective variables (attitudes, motivation, language learning goals, personality characteristics), aptitude, career orientation, national origin, language teaching methods, task requirement and learning styles (Rubin 1981; O'Malley 1985a:

1985b; Politzer & McGroarty 1985; Reiss 1985; Chamot 1987; Wenden 1987; Ehrman & Oxford 1989; Oxford 1989: 1996). Oxford (1989) stresses the closeness between learning strategies and learning styles in the following statement.

It is likely that a strong relationship exists between the individual's use of learning strategies and the individual's learning style; the former refers to specific behaviors and the latter to more general learning and problem-solving tendencies.

(p. 241)

Much research regarding Chinese learners has focused on their 'learning styles' which derive from traditions of general psychology and aim at exploring the characteristic ways "that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact and respond to the learning environment" (Keefe 1979, quoted in Ellis 1994, p. 499). According to Oxford & Lavine (1992), learning styles are 'the general approaches ... that students use in acquiring a new language' (p. 38). Dunn & Griggs (1988) examine research carried out on learning styles in American secondary schools from the view of practitioners and define it as the following:

Learning style is a biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others.

(p. 3)

Extensive research documents a strong relationship between students' success and the matching of their personal learning style strengths in both first and second language learning. Table 3.1 summarises major categories provided by some of these studies based on six interrelated aspects of learning styles identified by Willing (1988): cognitive, executive, affective, social, physiological, and behavioural.

Aspect	Styles		Researcher	Features
Cognitive	global (holistic)	analytic	Nelson (1995), Schmeck (1988) Kolb (1984)	global/relational/impulsivity: Learners begin with a whole picture.
	relational	analytic	Cohen (1969)	analytic/reflection: Learners begin with
	impulsivity	reflection	Oxford <i>et al.</i> (1992), Nelson (1995)	separate parts, like details better.
	field- dependent	field- independent	Witkin <i>et al.</i> (1977), Nelson (1995)	the degree of ability to separate insignificant background details from significant ones.
	feeling	thinking	Briggs (1980), Myers <i>et al.</i> (1985)	feeling: decisions based on feelings of others. thinking: decisions based on logic and analysis.
Executive /Cognitive	intuitive- random	concrete- sequential	Briggs (1980), Myers <i>et al.</i> (1985), Oxford <i>et al.</i> (1992), Alasuutari, 1995)	intuitive: feels free with compensation strategies concrete: prefer concrete- sequential learning material
	open or perceiving	closure- oriented or judging	Briggs (1980), Myers <i>et al.</i> (1985)	open: perceive language learning as a game closure: plan language learning carefully
Affective	(feeling (impulsive extroverted	(thinking) reflective) introverted	Myers <i>et al.</i> (1985), Hofstede (1986), Hudson-Ross <i>et al.</i> (1990), Oxford <i>et al.</i> (1991)	extrovert: enjoy highly interactive activities introvert: prefer to work alone or with someone they knew well
Social	extroverted introverted			
Physiological	visual, auditory and hands-on (tactile/kinesthetic)		Reid (1987), Rossi-Le (1995)	
	left-brain dominant	right-brain dominant	Kinsella (1995)	Physiological description, normally links to global - analytic distinction.
Behavioural				Depends on the learning environment

Table 3.1 Aspects of learning styles (adapted from Willing (1988)).

Various studies have claimed that these styles have a very strong cultural component (Hofstede 1986; Reid 1987; Vogt *et al.* 1987; Dunn & Griggs 1988; Oxford & Anderson 1995). Culture conflicts between classroom and home culture are also well-described (for example, Au 1980; Heath 1983; Voght *et al.* 1987).

However, cross-cultural studies in learning styles sometimes show confusing results regarding the Chinese group. According to Scarcella (1990), Chinese learners are 'global', which indicates their tendency to seek unity between events or objects. Yet, they are often 'detail- and precision-oriented', showing some features of the analytic style (Oxford & Burry-Stock 1995). Even though the classification in Table 3.1 shows that 'global' and 'analytic' are two contrasting styles of the same cognitive aspect, style researches have found that cultural groups are flexible in their choices of style and these classifications can only act as indications to cultural preferences.

Oxford & Anderson (1995) point out another similar conflict using a different style dimension (field dependent/independent):

... Japanese and Chinese students have elements of both field independence and field dependence and might therefore be flexible in cognitive style. (p. 206)

Examples of such conflicts can be found regarding different style dimensions (Briggs 1980; Reid 1987; Nelson 1995; Oxford & Burry-Stock 1995; Rossi-Le 1995). Thus, it will be an over-exaggeration to say that learning style is specific to a particular culture; and everyone from one culture should be adopting the same learning style. It will also be dangerous to suggest that the teacher or learners change their preferred style in order to match those of others. On the contrary, studies on learning styles warn against stereotyping and forcing students/teachers to make radical changes in their learning/teaching styles. Instead of matching preferences, these studies suggest that efforts should be concentrated into raising

both teachers' and students' awareness of style preference and increasing style flexibility (Oxford & Lavine 1992).

The aim of finding out more about students' learning – whether on strategies or styles – is to help students learn more effectively. In order to achieve this goal, however, it is also believed that it is important for research in this area to consider other factors that teachers and students bring with them into the classroom, one of the critical factors being the social dimension. The following section will therefore turn to look at second language learning theories that concern social/cultural factors.

3.1.2 Social Models of Second Language Learning

Social factors have a major role in the context of learning Chinese as a community language. Many members of the Chinese community, including teachers and students, participate in the learning of Chinese because of social reasons such as pressure from other community members or the enhanced social status (as discussed previously in Chapter 2). It is, therefore, of vital importance that we examine social factors that are related to language learning.

It is necessary to bear in mind that learning Chinese as a community language is more than a matter of learning a language (either as a first or a second language). The nature of community language learning means that there is a large variation in the compositions of teacher and student population and their background, and

motivation. The case of the UK Chinese schools is shown to be more complex than simply maintaining Chinese as the mother tongue. It is often the intention of community members that the students should obtain the kind of educational 'high degree of success' (HDS), as identified by Skuttnab-Kangas (1988), both linguistically and socially. In her effort to contrast different educational programmes aiming for learners of minority languages, Skuttnab-Kangas (ibid.) made the following comment:

... in all HDS contexts the linguistic goal has been bilingualism,
and the societal goal has been a positive one for the group
concerned. ... (p. 27)

Thus, the aim for minority language teaching is not only teaching the language, but also socialising learners into bi-/multi- cultural beings. However, Skuttnab-Kangas (1998) also criticised the kind of 'a couple of hours a week' language instruction provided by weekend schools as 'more therapeutic cosmetics than language teaching' (p. 29). On the other hand, Skuttnab-Kangas' comment can also be interpreted in a different way: the experience of learning a language at weekend school may only be a cosmetic one for language learning, but it can serve other purposes that are of equal importance. In fact, Chinese schools provide many functions other than language instruction (a point which will be discussed further in Chapter 7). The role of Chinese schools has changed from a 'compensatory' to a 'complementary' one as the trend in the wider society adapted to a more multi-cultural dimension. Although there are still debates about the role of community language learning, especially in the case of the Chinese language, it is highly likely that social and cultural factors have an impact on learning Chinese as a community

language (Wong 1992; Chi 1996; Rosenthal & Feldman 1996; Walton 1996). It is the intention of this study to use the case of the UK Chinese schools to demonstrate how these social factors are in play. As the students in this study lived in an English-speaking environment while learning Chinese as a community language, the following discussion reviews some of the literature on the influence of social factors in second language learning.

Several important factors have been proposed as they affect different aspects of language learning. Ellis (1994) highlighted four variables which have received the most attention in SLA research. They are: age, sex, social class, and ethnic identity. These factors can indirectly influence second language learning, as Ellis (ibid.) points out:

They determine the learning opportunities which individual learners experience. ... (p. 197)

This is a point which becomes evident in the empirical part in this study, discussed in Part III. Furthermore, one element that is stressed by Ellis (1994) and many other researchers in this area is learners' attitudes/motivation .

Social factors have a major impact on L2 proficiency but probably do not influence it directly. Rather, their effect is mediated by a number of variables. One set of variables which have been found to be of major importance is learner attitudes. Social factors help to shape learners' attitudes which, in turn, influence learning outcomes. (p. 197)

In this study, participants' attitudes, both teachers' and students', are at the centre of interest and will be explored by means of interviewing and triangulation. The

following sections will look at two important models that concern socio-psychological and cultural influences on second language learning: Schumann's Acculturation model, and the Socio-educational model developed by Gardner.

The Acculturation Model

Schumann's Acculturation Model is relevant to this study as the focus of the model is on the acquisition of a second language by immigrants in majority language settings – which is true for some participants in Chinese schools. In Schumann's Model, language learning/acquisition is viewed as an indicator of acculturation, a process which is defined by Brown (1980) as 'becoming adapted to a new culture' (Brown 1980, quoted in Ellis 1994, p.230).

In the Acculturation Model, Schumann (1978: 1986) distinguishes two kinds of acculturation dependent on whether or not the learners wish to assimilate fully into the host culture. These two types of acculturation, according to Schumann, in turn affect the learners' process in language acquisition depending on two sets of factors: their levels of social distance (to what extent learners become/feel they are members of the host-cultural group) and psychological distance (how comfortable learners are with the learning task and constitutes).

There is no shortage of critical comments on the Acculturation Model (for example, McLaughlin 1987; Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991; Ellis 1994). One of the reasons for the limited support for this model is caused by the difficulty of measuring

acculturation. The model is in a way heavily criticised as Schumann (1986) indicated the chain of causality – acculturation brings about input (contact) which causes (influences) second language acquisition. Not only is it difficult to find valid and reliable measures of the affective variables ('social distance' and 'psychological distance'), and to monitor these variables over time, but this model is also criticised as not indicating how the variables relate to each other and how the factors might affect the ultimate level or rate of language acquisition.

Although there are several aspects which cannot be covered by the Acculturation Model, the proposals developed by Schumann were a significant early attempt to address the neglected social side of language learning and provided basic structures for several current strands of research (for example, in the area of second language socialisation).

The Socio-educational Model

Unlike the previous model, Gardner's Socio-educational Model was designed to account for the role that social factors play in classroom settings, in particular the foreign language classroom. It argues that the success of learning a second language is influenced by the attitudes of the learners towards the second language culture, as the learning process is 'acquiring symbolic elements of a different ethnolinguistic community' (Gardner 1979, p. 193). The model demonstrates the interrelationships of four major factors on second language learning: cultural beliefs, individual differences, the context, and the outcomes (both linguistic and non-linguistic).

It argues that the success of learning a second language is influenced by the attitudes of second language learners towards the second language culture, since a second language 'is a salient characteristic of another culture' (Gardner 1985, p. 146). Furthermore, the learners' cultural beliefs determine the extent to which they wish to identify with the target-language culture and the language learning situation. Both in turn contribute to the learners' motivation, one of the four key variables identified by Gardner as individual differences, that is, intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety.

Despite the many criticisms of the methodological validity of the model, one of the strengths of Gardner's model should be that it attempts to explain how setting is related to proficiency by identifying a series of intervening variables, relating them to each other and building up a picture of how these variables affect learning. However, it falls short in accounting for how particular settings highlight different factors that influence attitudes, motivation, and achievement. Although it is not the aim of this study to look at the outcomes learners gained at Chinese schools, neither does this study try to examine each aspect identified in this model, the model posits a conceptual map for starting this investigation.

3.2 CULTURE AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Another important dimension to this study is its cultural aspect. Kramsch (1993), Holliday (1994) and Cortazzi & Jin (1996b) have concentrated on the implications of culture on the language learning task. This section seeks to outline some of the

major contributions to these research areas. The first part of this section examines the relationship between language and culture. This is followed by the discussion of a particular concept, the 'culture of learning', which is central to the current study. In the final part of this section, literature that identifies features that are present in Chinese classrooms are discussed.

However, before moving onto the main discussion, I feel that it is necessary to make brief reference to the different notions of culture. The notion of culture is highly complex as it can be defined in numerous ways. Duranti (1997, pp. 23-50), for example, makes reference to six theories of culture in which language plays a particularly important role: culture as distinct from nature, culture as knowledge, culture as communication, culture as a system of mediation, culture as a system of practices, and culture as a system of participation. A number of the above theories are used as references for the concept of culture in the current study. To begin with, the study views culture as something learned and transmitted. It is also viewed as knowledge in the sense that members of a group 'share certain patterns of thought, ways of understanding the world, making inferences and predictions' (Duranti *ibid*, p. 27). Whilst 'culture as communication' puts emphasis on the semiotic aspect of language and 'culture as a system of mediation' emphasises material cultural objects, part of the emphasis in the theory of 'culture as a system of practices' provides ideas for the current study. Especially, the role of language is thought to be a set of practices which imply 'not only a particular system of words and grammatical rules, but also an often forgotten or hidden struggle over the symbolic

power of a particular way of communicating' (Bourdieu 1982, quoted by Duranti 1997, p. 45). Finally, the current study also takes into account the notion that 'culture is a system of participation' which assumes that any occurrence of actions is inherently social, collective, and participatory. Although it is not the intention of this thesis to include a detailed discussion of culture, I simply wish to stress the complexity of the term.

A separate but related issue here is the concept of 'culture of learning', a concept which I make considerable use of throughout this thesis. Detailed discussions on the relationships between these aspects of culture, language and learning are presented in the following subsections.

3.2.1 Language and Culture

The relation between culture and language has long been pondered over since the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis made the claim that the structure of a language might determine or at least influence how one thinks and behaves (Whorf 1956). Over the years, a weaker version of this hypothesis has come to be generally accepted. This is supported by empirical findings that there are cultural differences in the semantic associations evoked by seemingly common concepts. In this case, the involvement of culture in a second language learning becomes more complicated: both the first language and the second language cultures determine the learning of the second language. It also raises the question of the relationships between the two cultures and how the two cultures contributing on students' learning situation.

There are several ways of exploring the relationship between culture and learning. One of the key areas researched is different learning traditions in different cultures. Many of these studies aim to raise cross-cultural awareness. By demonstrating the differences in learning experience, these studies are also used for policy change or curriculum development. For example, Hofstede's well-known study (1986) of employees from 40 different countries of the same multinational business and the four dimension model it also suggested provides a categorical framework to explain cultural differences in teaching and learning. The four dimensions developed in this study include: 'Individualism vs. Collectivism', 'Power Distance', 'Uncertainty Avoidance', and 'Masculinity vs. Femininity'. This framework has been widely discussed and used to develop cross-cultural observation. It provides general categories for setting out investigations. However, not all differences in teacher/student interaction can be associated with one of the four dimensions. As Hofstede (1986) pointed out, 'certain interaction patterns are particular to a given country or even to a given school; often differences may relate to other dimensions, not identified in my study. ...' (p. 313). This is one area the present research aimed to explore further.

Other researchers approached the issue of culture and learning from different angles and used different research methods. Gardner's description (1989) of the experience he and his colleagues had during several educational visits in China provokes thoughts about the concept of 'creativity' in both Chinese and Western cultures. Stigler and Stevenson compared students learning under 'Chinese learning

traditions', including students from China and Taiwan, and students learning in the USA and their mathematic results (Stigler & Stevenson 1991; Stevenson & Stigler 1992). They noticed significant differences in attitudes towards learning, achievement, and failure. They also noted the very different ways teachers deal with the large class teaching situation in Asian classrooms (Stigler & Stevenson 1991). Moreover, a new area has been developed recently – looking at the whole learning experience as an experience of interaction in a different culture: the culture of learning. This will be the focus of the next section.

3.2.2 Culture of Learning

Issues of culture in language learning have been addressed from two main dimensions: (1) culture embedded in text and curriculum (Valdes 1986; Harrison 1990); and (2) culture linked to the language being learnt (such as Chinese culture to Chinese speaking people) (Kramsch 1993: 1998; Byram *et al.* 1994). However, investigation into the culture of the learning context has only just begun. Cazden & Mehan (1989) raised the notion:

... [culture is thought of] as the normal, expected ways of perceiving, thinking, and behaving of larger social groups, such as an entire country or at least a community. But it is heuristic to think of the classroom as having a culture also. (p. 49)

They also argue that it is important to recognise that in the development of classroom culture 'effective participation in the classroom requires participants to recognize different contexts for interaction and produce behavior that is appropriate

for each context' (p. 50). This track of thought has pointed out a new dimension for investigating the relationship between culture and teaching/learning where different languages (and the cultural concepts they carry) are involved. The term, culture, is used to refer to not only the literary works or art, or facts about the region where the particular language is spoken (e.g. the history or the geography or even their customs), but, more importantly, referring to the behaviour and attitudes, and the social knowledge a particular group use to interpret their surroundings. These social beings in the group, in turn, are able to behave appropriately according to their 'culture'. The whole concept has been transferred by researchers to look at the learning environment as a cultural being and the analogy is applied to language classrooms. The review of the literature shows that there are at least two key gaps in the research on learning Chinese as a community language, and they are related to this particular view of culture.

The first gap is that although writers of the previous literature have shown interest in the role of culture in the context of learning Chinese, the influence of British and Chinese cultures on the teachers' and the learners' 'way of learning' has not yet been explored. This concept of the 'culture of learning' was developed by Cortazzi and Jin (1996b). As the concept is fundamental to the topic of this study, a quote from these authors is provided here to help clarify the concept 'culture of learning'.

... "culture of learning" ... is set within taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education. ... (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b, p. 169)

The concept 'culture of learning' directs our attention to the fact that the learning occurs in an environment where the learners share a similar 'culture' to the one their teachers are accustomed to (or have to accept in the case of English native-speaker teachers).

This notion of 'culture of learning' is useful to the current study as Cortazzi and Jin do not only focus on students of a particular level (Cortazzi 1990: 1996: 1998; Jin 1992; Cortazzi & Jin 1996a: 1996b; Jin & Cortazzi 1998), but they show that the concept of 'culture of learning' can be applied to different classrooms. In the case of Chinese language learning in British Chinese schools in Britain, the importance of learning culture is even greater. As discussed in the previous chapters, there are several issues in clarifying the learning situation in the Chinese schools, such as defining the students' language use and identifying the multiple roles of Chinese schools. For example, for some students, Chinese may be the first language; for some, it may be a mother tongue they can hardly handle. Others, particularly those who come from mixed-ethnic background families, learning Chinese for them is no different from learning any other foreign language. Furthermore, culture teaching in these classrooms is often carried out implicitly, through the teachers as well as the teaching contents. The whole experience of learning in the UK Chinese classroom may be an alien one for some of the learners in it, from the content being learnt to the classroom routine and their teachers' style of teaching.

The interest of the present study is not only in issues of culture involved when learning Chinese as a community language, but the intention of the study is also, and more importantly, in finding out the 'culture' shared by the teachers and the students in the Chinese schools in the UK. The study aims to look at learning in a cross-cultural context, in a sense, where all participants are made to deal with cultural issues in the process of learning – a phenomenon increasingly common in this fast-moving, international society.

The second gap, building upon the base of the discussion above, is that there have been few systematic studies on cross-cultural teacher-student interactions concerning how participants' cultural background is learned, especially in the area of Chinese as a community, despite the extensive writings in this field addressing the importance of cultural factors in students' learning. A significant element here concerns the expectations between Chinese teachers and their learners about the classroom culture.

In the present study, in order to examine thoroughly the culture of the Chinese classroom in the UK, it is important to consider not only the formation of the class, the organisation of the classroom, the curriculum, but also the interactions within the classrooms. Moreover, the study is also interested in looking into the expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs of the participants (that is, the teachers and the learners). To organise all these interacting elements, a conceptual framework is devised in the phase prior to entering the research field. The

conceptual framework, together with its methodological implications, is discussed in Chapter 5 (5.1.2). However, before commencing the discussion on the main study, some specific features that are noted in literature as strong characteristics of Chinese classroom culture are discussed in the following subsection.

3.2.3 Specificity of the Chinese Classroom Culture in the UK

Previous studies on learning in Chinese contexts, particularly language learning, involve mainly the following four scenarios: (1) Chinese children learning their Chinese mother tongue with Chinese teachers – they learn Chinese Culture through everyday life and within Chinese context. (2) Chinese children learning English with Chinese teachers – they learn some Western Culture through learning the language. (3) Chinese children learning English with English native-speakers – they learn not only through the content of the class but also through their teachers. In the above three cases, the outside environment is still a Chinese one matching the learners' cultural background. There is a strong Chinese connection between participants and even the learners' families. However, there is one group of cases studied in Chinese context that seems to have similarity to the situation encountered by Chinese learners in the UK. The scenario is as follows: (4) Foreign students learning Chinese in Chinese environment with Chinese teachers – the learners learn the Chinese Culture through learning the language and from the environment. However, the last scenario – the studied cases of foreign students in Chinese context – is different from the Chinese in the UK because the subjects tend to be adults with higher motivation for learning compare to the learners at Chinese schools. Another key

difference is that the teachers in this case are Chinese native-speakers and they are living in an environment of shared Chinese values. Unlike Chinese teachers in the UK, there is less force for them to challenge their beliefs and attitudes about learning and teaching. However, certain features are prominent in the Chinese learning environment which are discussed in this subsection.

Much cross-cultural research focuses on comparing differences between learning contexts in Chinese and in Western societies. This subsection looks at two of these key features, especially when they are also present in UK Chinese classrooms. They are emphasis on textbooks and emphasis on school and home contact.

Emphasis on Textbooks

Oxford (1990) points out that unconscious use of certain learning strategies can occur when ‘the lesson itself encourages the learner to use certain strategies’ (p. 239). Such design may include comprehension questions, preview questions, and such like. It reflects clearly the reason why many Chinese teachers rely heavily on textbooks. However, many teachers do not have a concrete reasoning that students can benefit more with the help of a textbook. This study will, to some extent, explore the role of the textbooks in the classroom.

Traditional Chinese classrooms place strong emphasis on the use of textbooks. I summarise elements described by Price (1980) that are typically included in Chinese language teaching procedure in Table 3.2.

Many of these traditions still continue in today’s Chinese classrooms. It is not surprising that Price (1980) commented after his observation: ‘the overwhelming impression created by the new textbooks is how little they have changed, either in form or content’ (p. 549).

- Lessons open with a long phonetics section followed by introduction of the Chinese characters.
- Teachers familiarise students with characters: attention is paid to radicals (*bùshou*) and phonetics (*xiangsheng*), and to stroke order (*bishun*).
- Pages of revision exercise are used.
- The use of *hanyu pinyin* decreases abruptly [from Book 3 or later volumes].
- There is a provision of a word list [either in the lesson or at the end of the textbooks].
- Regular usage of language exercises:
 - ... provided throughout the five volumes. These take the form both of short questions at the end of each text ... or separate collections of questions, *lianxi*. ... the questions appear to exercise the various linguistic points more thoroughly ... (Price 1980, p. 538)
- Teachers then guide the students to appreciation and comprehension of the text, often stressing the moral-political aspect.
- Teachers also often ask students questions concerned the form of the characters. Students are encouraged to use a dictionary, to memorise or to recite the text.
- Passages are suggested to be written out from memory or dictation.
- There is a tendency of reduction in classical stories in recent textbooks.
- In the case of the poems, pupils are required to commit them to memory and then recite them (*bèisòng*).

Table 3.2 Elements typically included in Chinese language teaching procedures (adopted from Price (1980)).

Emphasis on School and Home Contact

It is common sense to understand the importance of using both home and school resources in helping the children’s learning. Cazden & Mehan (1989) noted that the

value of personal contacts between home and school for children’s education is frequently reported. ... [the] frequency of parent-

teacher contact correlated significantly with student gains in reading during the school year. (p. 55)

It has also been pointed out (Stigler & Stevenson 1991; Stevenson & Stigler 1992) that the attitudes parents have towards education and their view on teachers' role in their children's learning are often very helpful to teachers in what are sometimes difficult teaching conditions. Teachers can rely on the families to provide students with positive views on learning and to share responsibility in helping children become familiar with the school routine and fulfil the school requirements, such as homework. This culture of learning as a collective work is a strong feature of Chinese classrooms. In later chapters, we will examine how this feature presents itself in the UK Chinese school context.

In order to present the data collected in this study in a systematic way, this study proposes a theoretical framework, an ecology model, to facilitate such process. The following section examines the analogy of 'ecology' used in relevant contexts and looks at the ecology model chosen to be adopted for the current study, Bronfenbrenner's ecology model of cognitive development. The following section also argues the appropriateness of the model to the present study.

3.3 THE ECOLOGY MODEL

There are different ways of presenting theories from an ecological perspective in different disciplines. For example, Hawley (1950), a sociologist, extended the term 'ecology' from its original biological sense to address the interrelations between

human societies and their environments. As an extension to Hawley's work, research carried out by Voegelins *et al.* (1967) and Haugen (1972/2001) made the links between the concept of ecology to languages. They no longer put emphasis on the biological model where the metaphor is used to compare language as having a 'life' – languages were born and died, like living organisms. Instead, their research is more interested in the 'environment' in which languages are used. Haugen (1972) defines language ecology as 'the study of interactions between any given language and its environment' (p. 325). In arguing this notion, Haugen (*ibid.*) stresses the importance of understanding the interaction of languages and their users.

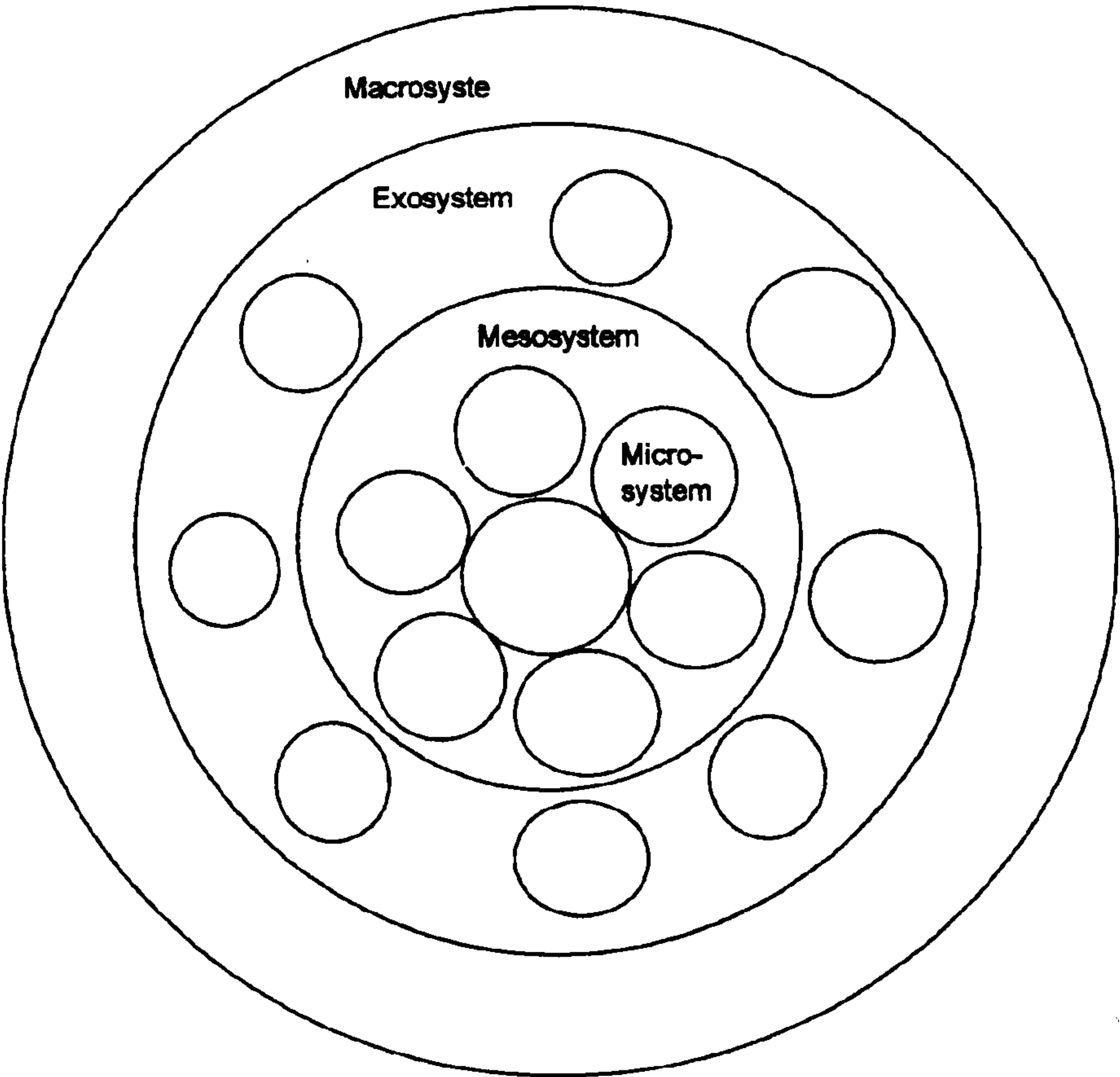
In this study, however, although concerned with the issues of language use, the metaphor of 'ecology' is applied in a different way. As themes started to emerge from the data collected in the study, patterns began to form. A conceptual framework was devised in the 'pre-fieldwork phase' which was refined as the study progressed. A discussion of this 'pre-field work phase' is in Chapter 5 (5.1.2). As the results came together, I felt that there was a need to introduce a framework to facilitate organising the results and to ease the explanation and interpretation of the complex situation present in the British Chinese schools. The following paragraphs first justify the appropriateness of introducing an ecology concept to illustrate the situation of the British Chinese schools before discussing the model proposed by Bronfenbrenner and the adopted model in the study in detail.

There is a temptation, when seeking to understand a situation of cross-cultural encounter, to think of the contributing cultures in monolithic, stereotypical terms (e.g. 'oriental' and 'western'), and of the encounter between these cultures as resulting in a hybrid or compromise culture. However, in the situation of the British Chinese schools, this type of model may not be very illuminating, principally because it does not take account of the highly variable circumstances under which these schools have come into being, and of the bicultural identity of the students. The ecological model of cognitive development developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979: 1993) was chosen for the study as the model is developed to analyse 'the developmental environment as a system of nested, interdependent, dynamic structures' (Bronfenbrenner 1993, p. 4). In addition, the constituent nested systems are, as Bronfenbrenner argues, themselves interdependent. It is this framework of inter-related systems together with his notion of the importance in situating the context in 'everyday life' that makes the model suitable for applying on the current study as a tool to understand the data collected in the field.

Renn (1999) also applied Bronfenbrenner's ecology model to investigate college students' development of multiracial identity in the USA and found the model useful 'for understanding the influence of multiple person-environment interactions' (p. 6). To envision the model graphically, Renn (1999) constructs a figure of an ecology model for understanding identity development. I found the figure useful in facilitating the understanding of the concept proposed by Bronfenbrenner and

adopted it into Fig. 3.1. This is presented below and followed by a detailed discussion on Bronfenbrenner’s model.

Fig. 3.1 Conceptual framework of an ecology model



Bronfenbrenner’s model is based on a four-part hierarchy of systems: micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-systems. The first system, the micro-system, concerns the immediate setting in which a person’s development occurs. These micro-systems are represented by the small circles in the centre of Fig. 3.1. According to Bronfenbrenner (1993), each circle, micro-system, is likely to be affected by two

major aspects, 'first, the people present in the setting; and second, the physical, social and symbolic features of the setting' (p. 11). In other words, each 'micro-system' considers the activity, role and relation in a setting contains the individual. The examples of micro-systems, used by Bronfenbrenner (1993), include settings such as home, day care, school, family and peer group.

The next higher nested structure of the model is the meso-system which is defined as a system 'involves two or more settings frequented by the same person' (Bronfenbrenner 1993, p. 20). The meso-system, therefore, comprises the linkages and processes taking place between the micro-systems, for example, the micro-systems of school, family and peer group. As the model was originally constructed for understanding the cognitive development of individuals, Bronfenbrenner (ibid.) stresses the 'synergistic effect' within a meso-system as a result of the interaction of micro-systems. Such effect on cognitive development can be identified by observing at meso-system level. For example, both parental and peer influences may operate simultaneously on individual student's school performance.

So far, the systems discussed have been concerned only with developmental influences occurring in settings where the individual is present. At exo- and macro-system level, however, the main concern is on the environmental context. According to Bronfenbrenner's definition, an exo-system 'refers to one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting

containing the developing person' (1979, p. 25). Like the relationship between meso- and micro-systems, an eso-system may include several different meso-systems. As shown in Fig. 3.1, the one meso-system containing micro-systems regarding to the developing child may exist together with other meso-systems containing other developing individuals. For example, there is a link between the home and the parent's workplace for a developing child.

In the same vein, the macro-system concerns an even broader environmental context. To illustrate what a macro-system entails, it is necessary to introduce Bronfenbrenner's own definition which he refined in 1993 (*italics was the original emphasis given by Bronfenbrenner for distinguishing his extended, refined version of the original definition*),

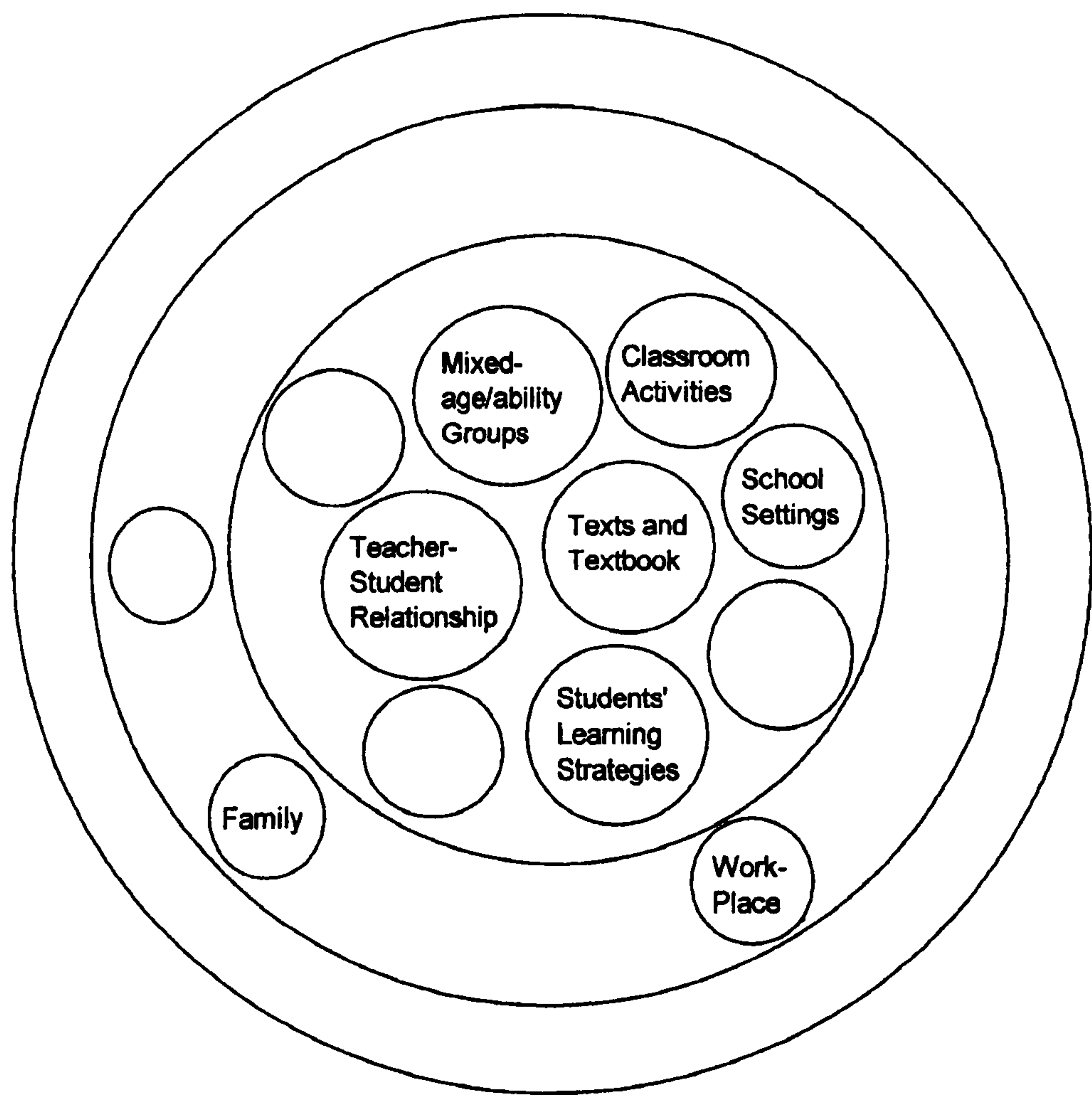
The *macrosystem* consists of the overarching pattern of micro-meso- and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other extended social structure, *with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in such overarching systems.*

(Bronfenbrenner 1993, p. 25)

Instead of focusing on cognitive development (as intended by Bronfenbrenner's original design) or development of multiracial identity (cf. Renn 1999), the current study employs the ecology model for understanding of the development of 'culture of learning'. The model developed by Bronfenbrenner provides a clear framework to be compared with the present situation. The model is useful for a number of reasons: First, it emphasises the importance of understanding behaviour in context

rather than in laboratory settings. Second, it allows us to view the classroom culture as a self-regulating system. Third, it is readily adapted as a model of cultural development. For the purpose of the current study, an Ecology Model of Learning Cultures is proposed and the model is shown as Fig. 3.2. A brief description of the model will follow.

Fig. 3.2 The Ecology Model of Learning Cultures



This study is concerned with the development of the ‘culture of learning’, the development of the ‘expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education’ (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996b, p. 169). Hence, in the centre of the proposed model is the ‘culture of learning’ and the micro-systems are the settings in which the ‘culture’ is developing. There are many possibilities for such settings/micro-systems. This study looks at a number of these micro-systems including classroom activities, school settings, student groups, and texts and textbooks in Part III of the thesis. The micro-systems are shown in Fig. 3.2.

In the hierarchical structure of the Ecology Model, one of the meso-systems is identified as the British Chinese school environment which envelops many of the micro-systems regarding Chinese classrooms. However, other meso-systems may include individual’s family and workplace environment. For example, although what occurs in the teacher’s family or workplace might not have immediate impact on the culture of learning in British Chinese schools, it may in some way contribute to the different micro-systems as presented in Fig. 3.2. These meso-systems, in turn, are included in the wider exo- and macro-systems which may include the national culture of ‘British’, ‘Chinese’ or even cultures of other ethnic groups. There are dynamic interactive relationships operating between different environmental contexts.

The dynamic nature suggested by the model is what I feel particular useful for explaining the highly variable circumstances of British Chinese schools. The Ecology Model of Learning Cultures attempts to provide a better reflection of the complex nature of the culture of the UK Chinese schools than can be provided by the idea of an encounter between monolithic cultures of learning. In Part III of this thesis, I will demonstrate how the data collected in the study can be fitted into the model.

3.4 SUMMARY

Following the description of the 'Chinese background' for the current study in Chapter 2, this chapter has focused on the theoretical background of the study. The first part of the chapter examines the current thinking on language learning theories. Although it is still debatable whether Chinese as a community language is learned by the subjects in this study as their first or second language, the subjects are 'living with two languages' and therefore, several important issues in second language learning are discussed. The second section of the chapter examines the relationship between culture and language learning. It firstly looks at the link between language and culture. The focus of the chapter is then directed to the core of the study which concerns the 'culture of learning'. By investigating the 'culture of learning', the study intends to explore the 'expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn' (Cortazzi & Jin 1996, p. 169). Features that are specific to the culture of Chinese classrooms are also discussed in the section. The final part of Chapter 3 discusses a different aspect of

the study. It concerns the theoretical framework introduced to interpret data collected for this study: the Ecology Model of Learning Cultures. The model is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecology model (1979: 1993) of cognitive development. The model proposed by Bronfenbrenner and how it is adopted for the current study have been discussed in some detail.

The discussion in Part I demonstrates the theoretical influence on the current study. The next part of the thesis will present the methods and methodology employed in the study.

PART II

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

In Part I, studies recently carried out to demonstrate the practice and issues within the Chinese communities and Chinese schools in the UK were examined to provide some basic contextual information. Part II of this volume is concerned with the methods and methodology employed in this study. As noted in Chapter 1, the data collected in this study will be used in order to achieve the aims of the study which I repeat here.

1. To explore current practice in UK Chinese schools in order to provide contextual information for understanding current issues involved in learning Chinese as a community language, especially in the context of Chinese schools in the UK.
2. To examine the relationships between culture and learning – cultures (that is, British and Chinese cultures) that teachers and learners bring with them into their interaction and the culture of learning in the UK Chinese classes.

The first broad aim of the current study is to expand on the existing knowledge and to add more insights into the current situation in British Chinese schools. The study

attempts to achieve this aim not only based on the literature surveyed in Part I, but also builds the picture upon data collected from the field. The second broad aim to explore the relationships between culture and learning inevitably involves examining it from various angles. In order to place this study in its wider context, the discussions of literature in Part I have touched upon a wide range of related themes. It also identifies areas for concern regarding to Chinese schools in the UK.

To answer the research questions raised in Chapter 1 and to achieve the above two abroad aims, the current study adopted a multi-method research approach in collecting data which is the focus of discussion in Part II. This gives the researcher an opportunity to record views and observe negotiations that take place in the participants' interactions. By carrying out this study, I intend to explore particularly the relationships between language and culture, to see how culture develops within the context of Chinese schools.

The exploratory nature of this study and the nature of the Chinese schools in the UK as explained in Chapter 2 (scattered across the country, limited school time) have both contributed to my decision to adopt a qualitative approach to the current study. Due to the limitation in resource for the study, a large scale, quantitative survey or a laboratory experiment did not seem feasible, neither would it be appropriate for the purpose of the study. The study is highly exploratory, the focus of the study becomes clearer as the research process is pursued. Part II is concerned with defining the research in more detail, describing and justifying the methods

chosen to explore the issues identified in the current study. It will be divided into two chapters. Chapter 4 considers the theoretical background to the methodological issues. It starts with a discussion of the methodological orientation to this study. Issues concerning triangulation, validity, reliability and some of the ethical issues in the research are also discussed. Chapter 5 considers the actual methodology used and methods of data collection as well as noting the obstacles encountered during the research.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Due to the nature of the inquiry, this study has inclined towards a qualitative tradition, and the interpretative paradigm. The methodology for the study is one of ethnographic research. As pointed out by Flick (1998), qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus. This study has followed this tradition in applying different methods, and within the research, each element which was employed complemented each other, all of which measure dimensions central to explore the complex psychological and sociological issues involved. Chapter 4 considers the theoretical background to the research design and the methodology of the current study. The chapter begins with a discussion of ethnography as methodology and its appropriateness to the study. This is followed by a discussion on issues regarding triangulation, validity and reliability in the study. The final part of this chapter considers ethical issues.

4.1 AN ETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY

In her description of the theoretical orientation and development of ethnography from an anthropological background, Tedlock (2000) describes 'ethnography' as involving 'an ongoing attempt to place specific encounters, events, and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context' (p. 455). In essence,

ethnography involves the researchers in people's daily lives for a period of time collecting data to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). By applying different inquiry methods and considering multiple perspectives of all the participants (including that of the researcher's) in an investigation, researchers gain understanding in the beliefs, motivations and behaviours of their subjects. Ethnography is context-specific, formative and emergent, and responsive to emerging features (Cohen *et al.* 2000).

Brewer (2000) spells out three main uses to which ethnographic data are put: knowledge generation, theory-building, and applied ethnography. As discussed in the first part of this section, the aim of ethnographic research is to get close to the field and generate understanding to the social meanings of the people involved in the setting. Hence, the generation of the knowledge to the 'field' is one of the most prominent aims in ethnographic research. The current study is inclined to the interactionism as the focus of the study is on the interpersonal relations and processes within a social context and their relationships to the wider social framework.

There has been great debate surrounding the theoretical and methodological suppositions of ethnography as it cannot be easily distinguished from the broader theoretical and philosophical frameworks that give authority to this way of collecting data (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995; Hitchcock & Hughes 1995; Brewer 2000). Many of the controversies have moved from its

legitimacy as a research approach to social science in the early days to its application in different areas at the present time. The issues of representation and legitimation have been hotly contested over the years (Geertz 1973: 1983; LeCompte & Goetz 1982; Clifford & Marcus 1986; Hammersley 1992; LeCompte & Preissle 1993; Fielding 1993; Denzin & Lincoln 1994: 1998: 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). On the one hand, the issue of representation considers whether or not the 'thick description', the 'setting down the meaning particular social actions have for the actors whose actions they are' (Geertz 1973, p. 27), of the researched context demonstrates the reality. This issue is further concerned with theory-building. Like Geertz (1973), Hammersley (1992) is highly critical of extending the practical sides of ethnography too far, especially on the extent to which a theory can be developed from the empirical evidence. 'Theoretical statements' are possible, in Hammersley's view (1992), if the research design permits generalisations to be made, in the sense that ethnographic data do permit the formulation of abstract explanation propositions, but the same cannot be warranted on developing universalistic theories.

On the other hand, the issue of legitimation is concerned with whether proper procedures are followed in order to capture the accurate data. This issue may have relevance in the other important use of the ethnographic data, in the area of applied ethnography, as the accuracy of the data may have further implications on practical issues. The applied ethnography is generally linked with decision and policy options or programmes of directed change (Walker 1985; Atkinson & Hammersley 1998;

Chambers 2000). The emphasis of applied ethnography, as pointed out by Chambers (2000), should be its intention in developing within a context of decision making and its direct aim towards promoting the interests of the clients.

The way the above issues relate to the current study is discussed in Section 4.2 where triangulation, validity and reliability of the study are discussed. The remainder of the present section looks at how the methodology is applied in the current study.

Although in recent years there is a growing interest in learning Chinese as a foreign language (for example, McGinnis 1996), the area of teaching and learning Chinese as a community language is still an area under-explored. This study adopts an ethnographic approach in the hope of taking advantage of applying the three uses of the methodology discussed above. To generate knowledge, the intention of the study is to create as clear a reconstruction as possible of the 'culture' of the participants – be it the interactions observed in the classroom or elements the participants brought into the context and reported in the interviews. Theoretical concepts and models were also introduced into the study in order to produce 'theoretical statements'. Furthermore, the ultimate aim for the study will be the contribution it may provide to the practice in the field of teaching Chinese as a community language.

It is worth noting here that although the current study intends to follow the ethnographic tradition adopting the interactionist approach, there is a limitation to what can be achieved in the scale of the current study. In particular, the circumstances of the situation under study – Chinese schools scattered across the country which take place mainly on Saturdays or on Sundays – make it difficult to carry out fieldwork involving ‘the prolonged, intensive and direct involvement of the researcher in the lives and activities of the group in question’ as described by Hitchcock & Huges (1995, p. 119). Instead, I try to compensate the situation by including two types of involvement with the subjects in this study: I taught and observed in one of the Chinese schools in the North West of England for three years, I also arranged visits to five other schools for observation, and other methods of data collection were also employed. (Details of the data collection methods are discussed in Chapter 5.) In the present study, I try to find emerging patterns of specific situations rather than providing the kind of fine-grained account, the ‘thick description’, of all the ‘happenings’ in the British Chinese classrooms. However, it is still the aim of the study to capture what Woods (1996) highlights as ‘a common feature of all teaching situations’:

... construction of meanings and perspectives, the adaptation to circumstances, the management of interests in the ebb and flow of countless interactions containing many ambiguities and conflicts, the strategies devised to promote those interests, and the negotiation with others’ interests ... (p. 7)

As discussed so far, the use of the ethnographic approach brings about debates in many different aspects. Gordon *et al.* (2001) note in their review of research in educational settings that the researchers in these settings may be more involved in

their field as the researchers have usually experienced schooling as a participant themselves and that in ethnographic research. As a result, 'issues of authenticity and authority are particularly poignant' (p. 188). The current study adopts a multi-method approach to explore the situation studied from different data sources. The following section examines the issues of triangulation, validity and reliability.

4.2 TRIANGULATION, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The nature of ethnographic research means that objective reality may never be captured in the research. The use of triangulation reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. The discussion in this section is in two parts. The first section discusses the use of triangulation in the research design. An analysis of potential problems of validity and reliability will follow.

4.2.1 Triangulation

Denzin (1970: 1989) has long pointed out the importance of triangulation in research. The purpose of triangulation is to provide trustworthy data to test one source of information against other sources, or in Brewer's words (2000), triangulation is a 'procedure for improving the correspondence between the analysis and the 'reality' it sought to represent faithfully' (p. 75). Denzin (1970: 1989) argued that triangulation should involve not just multiple methods, but also multiple investigators and multiple methodological and theoretical frameworks (data,

investigator, methodological and theory triangulation). Furthermore, the concept of triangulation is not only as a tool or strategy of validation, it has shifted towards 'further enriching and completing knowledge and towards transgressing the (always limited) epistemological potentials of the individual method' (Flick 1998, p. 230). It is, as Flick (ibid.) suggests, 'an alternative to validation'.

The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry. (p. 231)

In this study, the researcher adopted a multi-method approach to triangulate the research, using questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. Questionnaires were given to the teachers as well as the students to explore the teachers' teaching style and the students' learning strategies. The questionnaire data was reinforced by interview data from the Chinese teachers and the students. In conjunction with this, classroom observations were carried out to provide detailed descriptions of the Chinese classrooms in real life. The conceptual framework for the research is set to explore and present the cultural characteristics in the different data sources and to identify the relationships between these characteristics. Triangulation is therefore as useful in its primary purpose as it is to validate information. It improves the quality of data and in consequence the accuracy of findings.

However, words of caution are sounded by researchers against adopting what Hammersley & Atkinson called 'a naively 'optimistic' view' on triangulation and

automatically assuming the aggregation of data from different sources will add up to produce a more complete picture (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995; Silverman 1993). As Cohen & Manion (1994) point out, '[t]he chief problem confronting researchers using triangulation is that of validity' (p. 241). The remainder of this section discusses issues of validity and reliability in this study.

4.2.2 Validity and Reliability

In order to establish trustworthiness of a piece of research, certain criteria are often applied to evaluate data presented. Terms like 'validity', 'reliability' and 'generalisability/representativeness' are suggested (for example, Robson 1993; Hitchcock & Hughes 1995; Brewer 2000). In certain respects the issues of validity and reliability overlap – issues affecting reliability may also have an impact on the validity of the study. These issues are first discussed separately in this subsection while the final part of this subsection addresses them in the context of this study.

Validity

Validity is important to a piece of research as it represents 'the degree to which the researcher has measured what she/he set out to measure' (Smith 1991, p. 106). It can be viewed from two broad terms originally introduced by Campbell and Stanley (1963) for experimental studies, and now widely accepted in the research community: internal validity and external validity. Internal validity seeks to 'demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a

piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data' (Cohen *et al.* 2000, p. 107). External validity refers to 'the degree to which the results can be generalized to the wider population, cases or situations' (Cohen *et al.* *ibid.*, p. 109). However, as pointed out by Cohen *et al.* (2000), there are several different kinds of validity and it needs to be faithful to its own premises and principles (such as positivistic and naturalistic principles). Maxwell (1992) suggests that 'understanding' is a more suitable term than 'validity' in qualitative research. He argues that the researchers, as part of the world they are researching, cannot be completely objective, hence other people's perspectives are equally as valid as the researcher's own, and the task of research is to uncover these different perspectives. Data selected for the research must be representative of the sample and the field. According to Maxwell (*ibid.*), there are five ways to explore his notion of 'understanding': descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, generalisability and evaluative validity.

Firstly, there is 'descriptive validity' which refers to the factual accuracy of the account. Secondly, 'interpretive validity' is the extent to which the research catches the meaning, interpretations, terms, intentions that situations and events have for the participants themselves, in their terms. Thirdly, 'theoretical validity' is the extent to which the research explains phenomena. A cautious view is placed on the term 'generalizability' used here. It refers to generalising within specific groups or communities, in other words, internal validity is emphasised over external validity. Finally, 'evaluative validity' concerns the application of an evaluative framework

which introduces a critical-theoretical perspective into the research. These five ways are used to assess the accuracy, and to measure the quality of a particular research's methodology, evidence and claims.

Reliability

In contrast to validity, reliability of a piece of research concerns 'the extent to which a particular technique will produce the same kinds of results, however, whenever and by whoever it is carried out' (Hitchcock & Hughes 1995, p. 107). It is difficult to claim reliability particularly when it involves a piece of qualitative research due to the nature of data collection. The study of naturalistic behaviour or experiences of unique phenomena which is central to a qualitative research cannot be reconstructed exactly even in the most accurate replication of research methods. Cohen *et al.* (2000) suggest that there are three principle types of reliability: reliability as stability, reliability as equivalence and reliability as internal consistency.

To increase the external reliability of qualitative research, LeCompte & Preissle (LeCompte & Goetz 1982; LeCompte & Preissle 1993) suggest recognising five major problems: researcher status position, informant choices, social situations and conditions, analytic constructs and premises, methods of data collection and analysis. The first concern is the status position of the researcher as ethnographic conclusions are qualified by the investigator's social role within the research site. The second element concerning the reliability is the choice of informant. Different informants represent different groups and provide different insights to a piece of

research. In order to achieve reliability, the researcher must provide full details and descriptions of the participants who provided data and how the data was selected. The third element influencing the reliability is the social situations and conditions. A detailed description of the physical, social, and interpersonal contexts within which data are gathered enhances the replicability of a research. The analytic constructs and premises that are used are the fourth element influencing the reliability. 'Replication requires explicit identification of the assumptions and metatheories that underlie choice of terminology and methods of analysis' (LeCompte & Goetz 1982, p. 39). The final element in securing reliability is the method of data collection and analysis. To enable the replication of the research, precise identification and thorough description of the methods used for data collection and analysis is essential. In short, a thorough description of the research and commonly understood descriptors are necessary to ensure reliability in qualitative research.

So far in this section, three of the criteria in evaluating qualitative research, triangulation, validity and reliability, have been discussed. The following paragraphs examine the issues of validity and reliability in the specific context of the current study.

Issues of validity and reliability in this study

As argued by Hammersley (1992), there is not only divergence of opinion as to what the terms used to assess qualitative research mean, but there is also a question of the appropriateness of using these terms, originally developed for scientific

research, on qualitative research. However, Hitchcock & Hughes (1995) stress that 'it is always important to scrutinize research, to ask how convincing the evidence is' (p. 105). With the above discussion in mind, the study can take a critical look at the methods and principles employed and the data collected.

The validity and reliability of the current study was sought by three interacting methods. First, a multi-method approach is adopted for the study by using questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations which generated the data and findings from their contexts. Second, the subjects in this study were described in some detail (Section 5.1.3) to provide insights into the varied nature of the participants in the Chinese schools. Finally, care was taken to make sure the collection of data includes information available during the research period even if there are inconsistencies in the data.

Ethical issues have an impact on collecting as well as analysing data collected in the field. Details on the collection of data are described in Chapter 5, but the final subsection of this chapter considers ethical issues in the present study.

4.3 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical issues are pervasive particularly in the area where fieldwork is involved, as the involvement from the subjects is sought, there grows the needs to respect their rights and privacy. As pointed out by Fetterman (1998), researchers carrying out qualitative research cannot work 'as if in a vacuum' (p. 129). They are involved in

people's lives in several different ways which means they must operate a code of ethics that respects their informants. In other words, it is clear that the very nature of qualitative research will give rise to certain kinds of ethical issue.

In order to safeguard the rights and confidence of the subjects in a study, one of the ethical issues of most concern to all researchers in the field is the maintenance of confidentiality. As discussed in the previous section, in order to assure validity and reliability to a study, the researcher is required to provide a detailed description of the sampling procedure and data collection. It is argued that place names, together with a description of certain characteristics about an individual, may make it possible to discover a subject's identity (Berg 1998). Therefore, it is important for this study to take extreme care in discussing the participants and their settings. In this study, some degree of confidentiality was assured as the researcher explained clearly to the participants before they completed the questionnaire that only the researcher would have access to the data and the results would be treated in confidence. Public confidentiality could be assured by concealing the identities of the participants in the data analysis figures and in the text.

In addition, there is an ethical issue involving the student participants in this study. During the process of the research, I noticed that Chinese teachers offered to involve their students in the study (as a few of them expressed the view that they hoped that by doing so, they were helping their students) either in answering the student questionnaires or participating interviews with the researcher, with little

formal consent from the students. However, no students seemed to object to such practice, even though the students were given opportunity to express their unwillingness before being interviewed by the researcher, all the interviewees appeared to be willing to talk about their situations. It is worth noting that this practice may be due to the powerful status of the teachers in the Chinese classrooms and it is part of the British Chinese classroom culture.

Those interviewed agreed to the use of the tape recorder. After the formal interview was concluded, the interviewees were given the opportunity to question the interviewer and to discuss any matters of concern, on some occasions, with the tape recorder turned off. The matters raised by the interviewees ranged from information about teaching resources and concerns about the running of the Chinese schools and the usefulness of the current research towards the field of teaching Chinese as a community language. Other ethical issues about researching in the classrooms were also raised by the teachers and confidentiality was reconfirmed. Transcripts from the tapes were identifiable only by the use of a letter to represent each teacher and a number for each child interviewed. No respondents' name or school was mentioned in the transcripts.

In return for the participation of the teachers in answering questionnaires and taking part in interviews, it was also agreed that a brief summary of the current research would be made available to the teachers participating in this research. A copy of a

conference paper (Wu 2000) was sent in its original form [in Chinese] to the UKFCS (UK Federation of Chinese Schools).

4.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the theoretical aspects concerning methodology in this study have been discussed. Section 4.1 firstly looks at ethnography as a methodology adopted for the current study. Issues regarding triangulation, validity and reliability are also raised. Finally, some ethical issues underlying the study are also discussed. It inevitably touches on methods of data collection, but only briefly. Issues on the collection of data are examined in more detail in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

COLLECTION OF DATA

This chapter is concerned with describing the methods chosen to collect data for the study. The chapter will begin with a discussion of a few considerations underlying the research including obtaining information on the background of the participants in this study. The subsequent sections of this chapter will look at the methods employed in this study: questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. The rationale and procedures for using these methods will also be discussed in detail.

5.1 CONSIDERATIONS UNDERLYING THE RESEARCH

In this section, a few considerations underlying the research will be discussed before examining the methods used for data collection in the subsequent sections. Firstly, obstacles encountered during this study will be discussed. As briefly noted in Chapter 1, the process of collecting data took many turns and different data collection methods were used in overlapping periods. In the second part of this section, work carried out during the pre-fieldwork phase, which in turn influenced the whole research, will also be highlighted briefly. The final part of this section is a description of the participants in this study.

5.1.1 Obstacles Encountered during this Study

There were three main obstacles in carrying out the current study. The first such obstacle was gaining access to the field. This was difficult due to the scattered nature of the Chinese community in the UK, a problem noted in Chapter 2. As a result, although the number of Chinese schools in the country may exceed one hundred, the size of the majority of them is small and there were limited communications between schools. It was difficult to find schools which were willing to participate in the study.

A second obstacle in the study was to identify teachers and students who were willing to co-operate and to find the right time to ask for their participation. Even if the school administration showed a little interest in the study, it was not always guaranteed the co-operation from their teachers. Many teachers in the Chinese schools, according to the surveys into the UK Chinese schools (see Chapter 2) and that reported by the teachers in this study, have full-time work in the catering business and in other professions, or they are students. Chinese teachers who taught at weekends in Chinese schools were usually very busy and found it difficult to find time apart from what they had already contributed into teaching at the Chinese schools. On the other hand, students at Chinese schools only attended the classes two to three hours each time and once a week, and the geographical distances between each student's family can sometimes be far apart. There is a need to consider the economical reason by involving the students in their Chinese school setting but not to disturb too much their learning patterns. However, it is important

to note here, the majority of the teachers and students who offered to participate in the current study were enthusiastic and very forthcoming in the research process.

The third obstacle in the study may have been that of 'face' which might have caused potential subjects not to want to take part in the study. Although effort was made to explain the purpose of the study, in a few interviews, I sensed that some of interviewees demonstrated an air of caution at the beginning of the interviews as they were not sure whether they were being 'evaluated'.

Some of the problems referred to above have important ethical implications, as noted at the end of Chapter Four. However, some of the obstacles were practical problems which unavoidably derived from the field and reflected the situation of the 'real world' (Robson, 1993).

Being of the same minority group facilitated my approach to some of the participants on different occasions. However, efforts had also to be made not to take for granted my personal culture and experience and the perception of what is generalised as common sense.

Additionally, the generalisability of this study is limited due to the small sample size. Although efforts were made to involve to include different 'kinds' of Chinese schools in the observations, such as schools with only one class, with many classes, in rural areas as well as in cities, the generalisability of the results to all the Chinese

schools in the UK or to the learning of Chinese in similar context outside the UK may be limited. Fuller discussion on the selection of the research sample is provided in this chapter (5.1.3).

Bearing in mind the above considerations all the way through the research, the current study still took many turns before it reached its final form. One of the stages crucial to this study is what Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) termed as the 'pre-fieldwork phase'. As they point out, the aim of such a phase in the early stages of data collection is to turn the set of issues that provide an opportunity to explore some unusual occurrence or to test a theory into 'a set of questions to which an answer can be given' (p. 29). They also point out the possibility of the need to change the original problems in this process. My experience in this study confirms this view. The following sub-section will describe what was involved in the pre-fieldwork phase and highlight some of the outcomes from the phase of this research.

5.1.2 Pre-Fieldwork Phase: Study in the UK and in Taiwan

As noted above, what emerged from the pre-fieldwork stage had a bearing on setting up the methodology for the next stage, it is necessary to provide some of the data that emerged from the pre-fieldwork phase. This section looks at this particular phase of the study, the findings from the phase, and how these findings feedback to the methodology of the main study.

In the first year of the study, I spent most of my time reviewing literature mainly in the area of second language learning and teaching and learning community language/mother tongue in the UK. Part of my time was also spent in Taiwan on reviewing literature regarding teaching Chinese as a foreign/second/community language. While I was in Taiwan, I also decided to carry out a few pilot interviews with teachers who had previous experience in teaching in this area. By including this phase to the study, I was hoping that by the time I entered the field, I would have some background information of the people I was going to meet and the issues regarding their situation: I would know what have been talked about and in which area I would like to explore further. I would also have some experience in interviewing teachers. Moreover, the findings from the pre-fieldwork phase were used to construct a conceptual framework in which elements contributing to the learning in the British Chinese classrooms are presented in Fig. 5.1. As the findings from this phase and the conceptual framework have both fed into the research design of this study, I choose to discuss these findings in this chapter. The following paragraphs report the main findings including the literature reviewed at this stage and the pilot interviews carried out during this period of time. I conclude the discussion with a highlight on the methodological implications emerging from this stage before introducing the conceptual framework and discussing how it affects the direction of the study.

After spending a year searching for and reading the literature on the Chinese community in the UK and teaching at Tang school, I went back to Taiwan to look

for more literature on Chinese language teaching and Chinese students' learning styles/strategies. I also interviewed four teachers in Taiwan about their views on their students' learning strategies and styles and their views of a successful lesson, particularly asking the teachers to consider cultural differences. The interviews were carried out using semi-structured interview questions. The interview schedule (Chinese, and English translation) is in Appendix A. All four teachers are language teachers (1 Chinese language teacher, 1 English language teacher – at senior high school level; 2 teachers teach Mandarin Chinese to non-native-speakers in Taiwan). The interviews were taped and transcribed. It is important to emphasise several points emerging from these interviews as these points re-shaped my direction of research into what seemed to be more important and interesting issues for me to carry out exploration in the current study.

(1) The existence of the National Examinations (which are held each year for final year Junior High School students to take before they go to Senior High School and for final year Senior High School students to take before they can enter the Universities) puts huge pressure on both students and teachers in Taiwan. Constant tests within classrooms in preparation for the National Examination seem to direct students' ways of learning. Teachers on different occasions spontaneously offered comments like the following:

Teacher A: ...Because there is an examination ahead, it deeply affects students' learning attitude ... not to mention their strategies. The main focus of their study is to 'memorise' all the vocabulary and grammar correctly.

(Teacher Interview Taiwan)

Teacher B: Students are under such a pressure that they would rather not do any activity in the classroom but ask the teacher to tell them everything that the teacher recognises as important [i.e. to achieve good grade in the exams] for them to learn [for the examinations]. And then they just want to memorise all those points identified by the teacher and try to make the best of them [when they sit in exams].

(Teacher Interview Taiwan)

Interestingly, a trace of the importance of 'examination skills' could also be found while reading papers about studying Taiwanese students' learning strategies. In S. Tsai's summary (1995) of instruments for assessing students' learning strategies, 7 out of 9 studies include variables such as 'preparing for examinations' or 'skills for answering questions at examinations', and some studies include both. Teachers interviewed believed that their students were full of potential to develop different learning skills but worried that students' learning strategies might be limited by the need to be able to pass the examination.

(2) All the teachers interviewed stressed the importance of the teachers' role in leading the class as the most essential to make a successful class. This, however, in some cases meant that some teachers would have done a lot of work for their students under the pressure of National Examination, as one teacher claimed:

I just could not bear to see them under such pressure. Sometimes I have to find all the main points from each lesson (in the textbook). All I ask for my students to do was to take notes of them. They will only have to revise these main points when they get to the final stage of their preparation for the exam. ... There are so many subjects for them to study ... Asking them to do preliminary reading, I think is too much to ask for.

(3) Teachers would like to see their students using communicative strategies to learn. However, they would not force students to do so as they are aware of the pressure the students are facing. This also implies that the importance of the exams outweighs the practical goal of learning a language.

(4) Even at the institution in which foreigners learn Chinese, foreign students there were asked to do a lot of ‘homework’ – go to the language lab everyday for 20 minutes at least, watching videos, writing characters, writing sentences and so on. There exists a very different learning style to what the students may be used to.

(5) All four teachers noticed that the differences in cultural background would affect students’ learning (both when Chinese students are learning English and when foreign students are learning Chinese) especially when they were dealing with language structures and with expressions that involve cultural and historical background. A similar notion is raised by Hudson-Ross & Dong (1990) as they compare literacy learning in two settings – the USA and China. They come to the conclusion that:

‘the nature of our languages and the cultural patterns within which our schools function influence both what we teach and how we teach our respective languages (p.111)

Although some of these differences result from the nature of our languages, others grow out of our very different cultural traditions (p.122)
...

As the current study aims to explore the culture of learning in the British Chinese schools, it came to my attention at this stage that the role of literacy and literacy practices should be included in the main study. As the study moved on, there were indeed patterns emerging from the data that the issue of literacy is important to the culture of learning in learning Chinese as a community language. However, it is not the intention of this study to make a cross-cultural comparison. Teachers and students in Chinese schools have been placed in a special context – they come from very different personal and ‘cultural’ backgrounds (many of the students are UK national with Chinese origin), had different learning experience, and came to learn Chinese within a context of ‘foreign community’.

Several methodological implications emerging from the findings of the pre-fieldwork phase need to be noted here. First, findings from this phase directed the focus of the current study to place more emphasis on the issues of culture in different learning contexts (that is, the culture of learning in the British Chinese classrooms) rather than looking into the management of British Chinese schools as the study was originally intended (discussed in Chapter 1). Additionally, the issues brought up by the teachers in the pilot interviews, the importance of examinations, the role of the teachers in their classrooms, teaching strategies/styles, the issue of homework, and cultural differences, were issues of main concerns. These concerns were developed into the research question 2 and part of the research question 3. These issues were also raised as interview questions to the British Chinese teachers in the main study. Finally, the teachers’ insightful responses also encouraged the

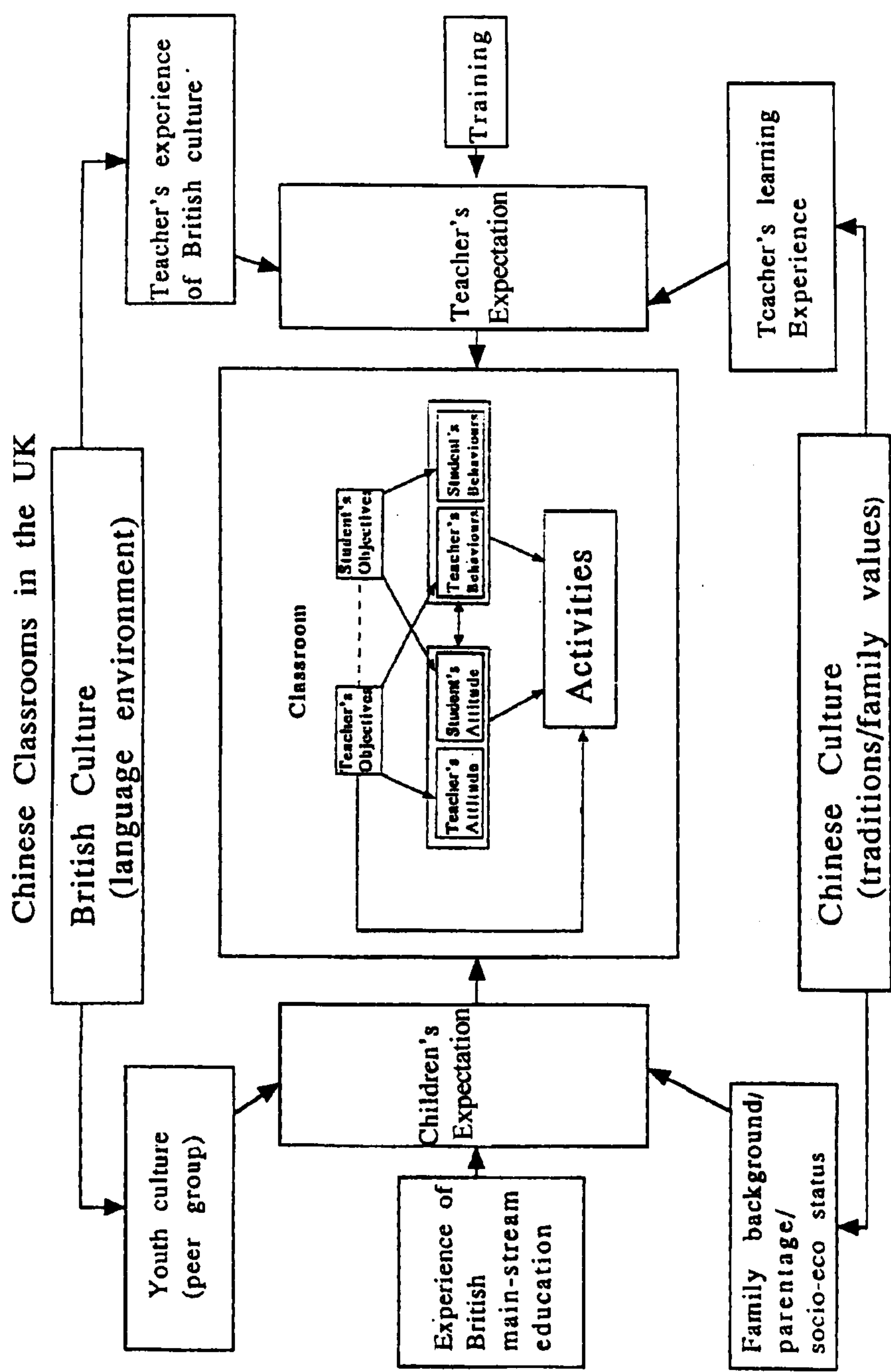
researcher to include more fieldwork (interviews with teachers and students, and classroom observations) in the study, in order to obtain more 'first-hand experience' through the eyes of the teachers, the students and the researcher herself. The practice of interview skills in this phase also strengthened the researcher's confidence in entering the field.

As noted earlier, at the end of the pre-fieldwork phase, a conceptual framework was developed for the current study to include many of the aspects discussed so far including the literature reviewed in Part I. The conceptual framework is developed to present the elements considered to be contributing to the British Chinese classroom graphically. This framework is shown in Fig. 5.1 and a brief description of the framework will follow below.

In Fig. 5.1, the conceptual framework was drawn to envelop different dimensions relevant to the culture of the Chinese schools in the UK. It takes into account theories of language learning and teaching, and aspects that emerged from the pre-fieldwork phase interviews such as possible cultural elements that affect the participants. The centre of the framework represents the interactions within classrooms where the activities took place. The activities are the starting point for the investigation in the current study: a multi-method approach is adopted to collect data from the classrooms and the participants to illustrate these activities and their meanings to the participants. Activities in the classrooms may reflect objectives, attitudes and behaviours of the teachers and the students. In turn, the objectives,

attitudes and behaviours of the participants may have influence on each other and lead to a different ‘culture of learning’ (as discussed in Chapter 3).

Fig.5.1 Conceptual framework: Chinese classrooms in the UK



It is important to bear in mind that the background knowledge that participants bring with them into the classrooms also contributes to the culture of learning. In the present framework, both British and Chinese cultures are considered. Both cultures may have a strong impact on the participants as they influence the way the participants view their experience and affect the participants' expectations as they enter the classrooms. From the students' point of view, the Chinese culture may mean, at the very least, the traditions and family values that they were brought up with. This may vary as the students' family background, parentage or socio-economic status differ. As the students were living in the UK, they were also strongly influenced by their environment. The language spoken around them, their peer group, and their experience of British main-stream education all play parts in influencing their beliefs and attitudes towards the Chinese classroom environment. On the other hand, the Chinese teachers were also influenced by both Chinese and British culture. As will be discussed further in the next subsection (5.1.3), almost all the Chinese teachers in the British Chinese schools were Chinese native speakers. The way the teachers were brought up and their own learning experience are important factors in what they do and expect in the classrooms. The framework in Fig. 5.1 also considers the training experience teachers had as these experiences (whether they were trained in the Chinese or British context) may also be reflected in their teaching. However, to add to the complicated picture, the experience of the teachers living in the UK should not be overlooked as it also adds a dimension to how teachers view themselves and their students in their joint construction of the 'culture of learning'.

So far, aspects concerning data collection prior to entering the field have been discussed. Obstacles encountered in the study and the methodological considerations taken into account from the pre-fieldwork phase have been examined. However, there is another important consideration underlying this study, that is, the issue of sampling. Sampling considerations, as stressed by Robson (1993), 'pervade all aspects of research and crop up in various forms no matter what research strategy or investigatory technique we use' (p. 135). The following subsection looks at the selection of samples in the present study. Details about each method used will be discussed separately in subsequent sections.

5.1.3 Selection of Sample in the Main Study

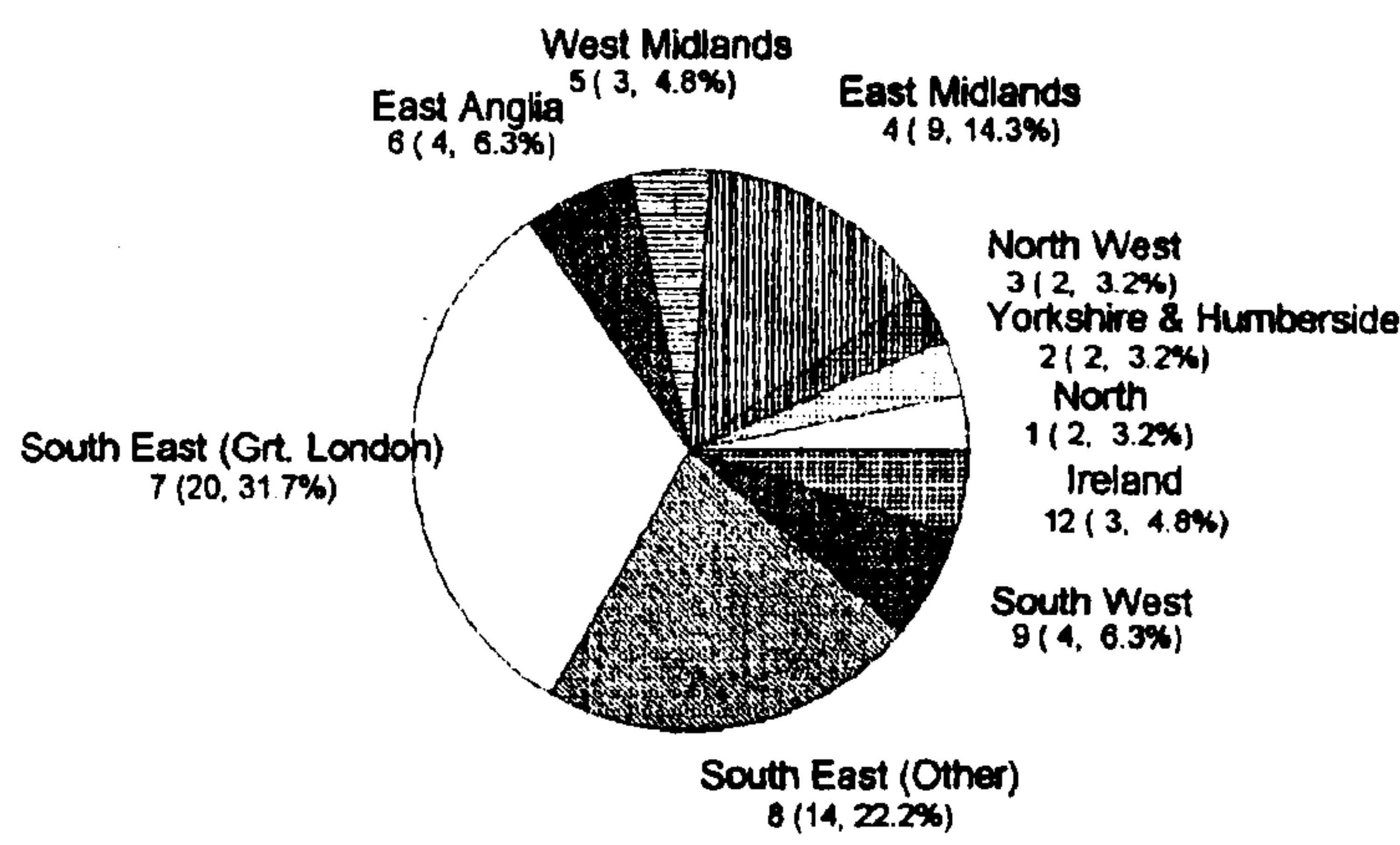
So far, some of the issues underlying the current study and the results from the pre-fieldwork phase which contributed to the design of the main research have been discussed. However, I feel that it is important to give a brief description to the participants in the actual study before discussing the methods employed. Thus, before discussing the methods in the following sections, this sub-section will focus on the participants in the study.

Sampling is a crucial step in carrying out research. Miles and Huberman's work (1994, also Huberman & Miles 1998) address issues of qualitative data analysis and they stress the importance of sampling as below:

Sampling choices within and across cases are powerfully determinative of just which data will be considered and used in analysis. (Huberman & Miles 1998, p. 204)

The sampling for this research was in two stages. The first stage involved questionnaires sent out to Chinese teachers at Chinese schools listed in the UKFCS report and in *Handbook for Overseas Chinese in the UK* (You 1996). The questionnaire packages, which include cover letters, two copies of questionnaires and pre-paid return envelopes, were addressed to the contact person listed in the above sources and the questionnaires were then passed on to Chinese teachers by the contact person. One of the packages were returned unanswered, and it contained a note by the contact person which stated that “The teachers at the school were not willing to participate in the study”. There were 63 teachers in total who returned the questionnaire. Fig. 5.2 shows the geographical distribution of the teachers surveyed. The geographical regions are defined by Department for Education and Employment (1996) in *Statistics of Education: Teachers. England and Wales* (Appendix G).

Fig. 5.2 Geographical distribution of the teachers surveyed



Out of the 63 teachers who responded to the questionnaires, 15 agreed to take part in interviews and 7 of the 15 also indicated that they would like to involve their students for further research whilst 7 other teachers of the 63 responded to the questionnaire, although they did not agree to be interviewed, but indicated their willingness to involve their students for further research. (Here, there is a potential ethical issue involved. The discussion on ethical issues in this study is in Chapter 4 (4.3)). In total, student questionnaires were sent to 14 different teachers. Details of the design and distribution of the questionnaires are in Section 5.2.

The second stage of the research concentrated on observations and interviews with the participants identified from the previous stage of the study. Participants for the observations and interviews were limited to teachers and students from the school in which I taught, the Greater London area and the Midlands due to the restricted resources available. Details about the specific methods used for data collection are discussed in subsequent sections.

There were thirteen teachers, one headteacher and one parent helper from ten Chinese schools participating in the interviews, five of the thirteen teachers were male and eight female. Two of the teachers had experience in teaching both Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese. The other teachers only teach either Cantonese or Mandarin Chinese. The selection of interviewees was based on teachers who indicated their willingness to participate in the interview from their returned

questionnaires (Section 5.2.1), and those volunteering themselves during the research.

As discussed in Chapter 4 (4.2.2), to improve the validity and reliability of a piece of research, it is important for the researcher to address the different positions of and the possible insights which may be provided by the participants. This is particularly relevant to the present study. As each teacher interviewed in the study may have slightly different ideas regarding the research of this nature and issues being discussed as a result of their different background and experience, the following paragraphs do not only give a general background description of the teachers involved, but also discuss some of the interviewees' person circumstances and the settings in which the interviews took place in more detail.

ID	Sex	Age ¹	School	Country of Origin	Language Use ²		Language Teach		Years of Teaching	Occupation
					L1	L2	L1	L2		
K	M	21+	T	Taiwan	M	C	M	C	4	Student
Y	M	41+	O	HK	C	M	C		9	Computing
B	F	21+	C	Taiwan	M	T	M		1	Student
S	F	31+	S	HK	C	M	C		1.5	Translator
L	F	41+	Z	HK	C		C		10	Homemaker
J	M	31+	T	HK	C	M	C		3	Catering
G	M	41+	G	HK	C	M	C	M	8	Lecturer
H	F	31+	G	HK	C		C		3.5	Homemaker
M	F	31+	B	HK	C	M	C		1	Cashier
I	F	--	S	HK	C		C		--	--
D	F	31+	L	China	M		M		--	Homemaker
A	F	41+	M	China	M		M		1	Homemaker
R	M	41+	H	HK	C		C		4	Banking

Table 5.1 Background information of teachers interviewed

¹ 21+ represents that the participant was age between 21 and 30.
² Language used as identified by the teachers themselves (L1 is used most often): C = Cantonese, M = Mandarin, T = Taiwanese.

Table 5.1 provides background details on the teachers who were interviewed. The teachers' background information is provided in chronological order of the interviews, as some interview questions were refined after concerns expressed by other teachers. The Teacher's ID will be used throughout the discussions in this chapter. Some of the teachers did not provide all the information about themselves. There are thus some blank spaces in the table. As each teacher's circumstance varied considerably and the variation may in turn affect their response, a brief description of each participant is provided below.

During the course of the interview, Teacher K indicated that he was in the job because of direct pressure from the headteacher who is a close friend of his family. As a consequence of taking up the teaching post under the social pressure, he showed limited enthusiasm to his class. Like many other teachers interviewed, Teacher J first started teaching at the Chinese school at the recommendation of some members of the Chinese community and as a favour to the headteacher. Teacher J explained to me that he enjoyed teaching at the Chinese school, but at the same time felt the strain of giving up many weekends. Both Teacher K and J left the school within two years after the interviews.

Teacher B, was introduced to me by a friend. She belonged to a religious group and the school she taught in was run by the same group of people. As Teacher B came to the UK soon after she finished her junior high school education in Taiwan, she normally taught students of lower primary school level (in the UK age between 7

and 13), or acted as substitute teacher stepping in occasionally for classes which were in need of teachers. Teacher Y was particularly keen to invite me to visit his school and his class. Teacher Y was everything of the Chinese school rolled into one: the headteacher, the class teacher, and the administrator. He also picked up some students from their home and the station and took them to the Chinese school. As the student number decreased over the years, Teacher Y took over the whole school and taught the remaining students in one class (12 students of various ages at most).

The interview with Teacher S was carried out at a McDonald's restaurant in London. Teacher S was originally from Hong Kong, and she worked as a freelance translator while her husband worked in the UK for a British company. She later invited me to visit her class where I observed her give a test. I was introduced to Teacher I while visiting Teacher S's school. On that occasion, I also met the headteacher from her school, Mr. O, who was one of the organisers of the UKFCS [UK Federation of Chinese Schools].

I interviewed Teacher L at her school where they were having an end-of-term and Dragon boat festival celebration. During the interview, the headteacher insisted in sitting with us, occasionally adding comments to the interview questions. Although the atmosphere of the interview was friendly, the headteacher's presence may have had a certain influence on the teacher's response. At this visit, I was also introduced to a parent helper at the school, Ms N, who had a personal interest in my research

topic. Ms N was originally from Hong Kong and married to a Japanese gentleman. With two children of her own, she expressed to me her views on the differences between Chinese schools and Japanese schools in the UK.

Teacher G and Teacher H were teaching at the same school. I met Teacher G at the university where he taught aerodynamics during the week. He speaks both Mandarin and Cantonese, and teaches both languages at the school depending on the position needed to be filled at the school. Although with the teaching experience he felt comfortable teaching any class he was asked to, he was often asked to teach teenage students. Teacher H was interviewed at her house. She mainly taught children of younger age and had two children of her own. Like a few other female teachers I met, Teacher H told me explicitly that her experience of bringing up her children and her children's experience in the British mainstream education had influenced her teaching at the Chinese school.

Teacher A and Teacher D were both from Mainland China. They taught at different schools, which were distinctively different from many others as they focused on providing Mandarin Chinese classes. Teacher A had some teaching experience when she was in China. Like many teachers I observed during this research, Teacher A was in a hurry to leave after the class, and only a short interview was possible. Teacher D had had teacher training and was an experienced teacher in China. With previous teacher training, Teacher D appeared to be slightly different from other teachers. She was able to present to me lesson plans and other systematically

organised teaching materials she used for various Mandarin Chinese classes she was teaching – something I had not come across with other teachers. The last teacher I interviewed was Teacher R whose school had a distinctively different policy where he, as a teacher, would be asked to teach different groups each year.

It is clear from the above discussion that the thirteen teachers come from a wide range of backgrounds. This study has sought the views of both male and female teachers of a wide age range and different occupational and linguistic backgrounds. The teachers were teaching at ten different schools in different parts of the country. Four of these schools, all based in the Greater London area, offer many classes while the others only offer one or two. The teachers themselves have come from different Chinese-speaking countries: China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and also varied in their experience to teaching and their attitudes towards their students. More about the interviews with the teachers and how their attitudes contribute to the culture of learning will be discussed in the results section in Part III. The following paragraphs look at the students interviewed in this study.

In this study, interviews were carried out with fourteen students from three Chinese schools in London, Oxfordshire and Shropshire. Ten of the students were Cantonese speakers and four of them are Mandarin Chinese-speakers. Some interviews were carried out with only one child, while other were with groups of two or three children at a time. Interviews with children who are Cantonese speakers were carried out in English due to the difference in dialects spoken by the

interviewer (Mandarin Chinese) and the interviewees (Cantonese). However, interviews with Mandarin Chinese-speaking children started in English, but the interviews invariably switched to Mandarin Chinese as the children kept using Mandarin Chinese to the interviewer. After interviewing, each of the interviews was transcribed and then the Chinese interviews were translated into English before the data analysis.

It was realised that the research findings would be restricted to a small sample of areas, but it was hoped that they would be wide ranging enough to give some indication of a general picture about Community language learning at Chinese schools in the UK and have some validity in a wider field. The schools concerned covered both rural and urban areas and areas with large and small Chinese populations. A further restriction to the study may be the fact that I, the researcher, did not speak Cantonese and interviews with Cantonese-speaking subjects had to be carried out in English. During the research period, however, I found that most of the time the conversation flowed easily regardless of the language used to conduct the interview. When there were more complicated ideas or expressions to be communicated, which occurred most of time during discussion with Chinese teachers, terms were said in Cantonese (which is often similar to Mandarin Chinese or Taiwanese, the researcher's mother tongues and can easily be deducted). The terms would then be written down by the researcher or the interviewees in Chinese characters to confirm the ideas having been communicated successfully. Although the language issue may not appear to be problematic for carrying out the interviews,

it is nonetheless a limitation to the current study. The subsequent sections examine separately each of the research methods employed in the study.

In order to examine particular issues which may affect the learning in UK Chinese schools, questionnaires were devised and employed to investigate the research questions. In order to provide as balanced and in depth a picture of the UK Chinese schools as possible, interviews and classroom observations were also organised. The use of the questionnaires will be discussed first in the following section.

5.2 THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Two questionnaires were used for this research: one was devised by the researcher to use with the Chinese teachers (Appendix C). The other one was the SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) developed by Oxford (1990), and used with the Chinese students (Appendix D). Details of both two questionnaires are provided below. As this section looks at the use of questionnaires in the actual methodology, it is useful at this stage to highlight some of the potential issues in applying questionnaires in the research.

Munn and Drever (1995) list the advantages of using a questionnaire. They include: an efficient use of time, anonymity (for the respondent), the possibility of a high return rate and standardised questions. A few of the points are particularly relevant to this study. One of the advantages is the efficient use not only of time, but also financial resources available for the study. As noted before, it was impossible for the

researcher to reach Chinese schools that are scattered across the whole country. It is, therefore, possible for me to collect more information and to find out more about Chinese schools in a short space of time by sending out questionnaires.

Additionally, with Chinese teachers generally busy in their own professions, it was also appropriate to use the questionnaire technique as it can be completed by the respondents in their own time. The respondents could also choose to remain anonymous. In all, the respondents could have some control over their participation in this study. The procedure for distributing and collecting the questionnaires will be described in the next subsection.

I am, nonetheless, aware that the use of questionnaires has certain limitations. Munn and Drever (1995) stressed at least three main limitations. The first limitation is that 'the information collected tends to *describe* rather than *explain* why things are the way they are' (p.5). In addition, there can be a level of superficiality. It also takes time to draft and pilot the questionnaire for it to be useful and adequate. To overcome the third limitation, effort was put into carefully drafting and piloting the questionnaires in this study. To overcome superficiality and explain the occurrence of events, it was decided that interviews with teachers and students at Chinese schools and observations of classrooms other than my own were necessary for the current study. The use of interviews and observations will be discussed in subsequent sections. Here, the use of the two questionnaires are discussed below.

Teacher questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire in this study was designed to explore and investigate a number of areas which helped the researcher to address the aims posed in the study:

- Background information about individual teachers and the schools in which they were teaching.
- Those activities carried out in Chinese classes.
- The teachers' views on how their students deal with social and classroom matters and how they believe these situations should be handled.
- Teachers' view about learning Chinese at UK Chinese schools.
- Chinese teachers' knowledge of Chinese/British culture, society and education.

In short, the investigation using the teacher questionnaire aimed at achieving the first broad aim of this study.

1. To explore current practice in UK Chinese schools in order to provide contextual information for understanding current issues involved in learning Chinese as a community language, especially, in the context of Chinese schools in the UK.

The teacher questionnaire is divided into five parts. The first part seeks details of the teachers' background such as gender, age group, mother tongue, language use, and educational qualification. All the teachers participating are Chinese native

speakers but many of them speak more than one Chinese dialect. In the second part, teachers were asked to report any training they had for teaching. It is followed by the third part which asks for details about the teachers' actual teaching experience. The fourth part explores the activities teachers used in their classrooms. Respondents were asked to answer questions by putting a tick in the appropriate box to indicate the frequency of their usage of those activities – ranging from 'A great deal of time (several times in a lesson)' to 'Never'. A list of 28 different activities was randomly arranged to strengthen validity and reduce the possibility of respondents ticking without reading the items carefully. There are two open-ended questions at the end of this section asking teachers about their students' learning strategies and their view on Chinese schools in general. The final part of the questionnaire consists of open-ended questions for teachers to express their opinions on the culture of teaching and learning. It asked teachers to reflect on their own experience of learning and teaching and to give thoughts to the influence of British and Chinese cultures on their teaching and their students' learning. A copy of the teacher questionnaire including the cover letters to the teachers is in Appendix C.

A Chinese translation alongside the English questions in the questionnaire was to help Chinese respondents to have an accurate comprehension of the instructions, variables and other question items and to avoid possible misunderstanding of the technical terms which might affect their decision when choosing answers. For instance, the items in the list of activities, 'writing sentences', 'filling worksheets',

‘copying new characters’, are all writing activities with subtle differences. Although efforts had been made to choose the most appropriate wording in English, it is in effect most obvious when the Chinese terms are present alongside the item. The translation helps to ensure that respondents understand the meanings of items and questions in the same way as the questionnaire designer.

For the sake of confidentiality, the teachers were not asked to provide names and addresses. However, an extra column was created at the end of the teacher questionnaire asking teachers who are willing to participate in interviews at a later stage to give out their contact name and addresses.

Student questionnaire

The second questionnaire in this study was for students in Chinese schools. The main part of the questionnaire is the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Version 5.1 (for English speakers learning a new language) developed by R. Oxford (1990). Literature regarding learning strategies and the use of SILL is examined in Chapter 3. As the use of SILL was a small part of the data collection procedure, no attempt was made to adapt the inventory. Permission to use the inventory was sought and gained from Oxford by e-mail communication. The author requested a copy of the result to be forward to her and I intend to do so.

The SILL employs a Likert-like scale to ascertain student perceptions of their strategy use (1 = very low use, 5 = high use). Students scored on the answer sheets

to indicate individual strategy use within Oxford's 6 categories: 3 of them are direct strategies (memory, cognitive, and compensation) and the others are indirect strategies (metacognitive, social, and affective). To cater for the need of the students in this study, a separate 'background questionnaire' was created asking for the students' basic information about gender, age, as well as the extent of contact the students experienced regarding the Chinese language and culture. A large part of the background questionnaire was devoted to exploring students' language use as these experiences may have an effect on the strategies and attitudes of the subjects on their learning of Chinese. A copy of the student questionnaire is in Appendix D.

5.2.1 Distributing Questionnaires

In order to gather information relevant to the research and to make sure the wording of the questionnaires can be understood by all respondents, it is crucial for the questionnaire design to go through draft and piloting stages (Bell 1993; Munn & Drever 1995). The information gathered from the pilot questionnaires enabled me then to focus on interesting themes and to draw up further questions to follow up with teachers, with students, and with other interested parties.

At the end of the first year in this research, a questionnaire with open-ended questions for teachers was designed for this purpose and informally tried with 4 teachers at Tang School to determine that the questions and instructions were clear and readily understood. The information gathered was used as the basis for the

present questionnaire. Nine university students from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan were asked by the researcher to pilot the questionnaire. None of them were included in the main part of the study. The nine students were chosen because of their different background (country of origin, area of professions) and their level of education (above high school certificate). As university students were often targeted for recruitment for Chinese schools, it was my hope that the respondents in the pilot would be able to view the questions in a similar way to the Chinese teachers. The questionnaires together with the evaluation forms (which were given to the respondents to comment on the wordings and the presentation of the questions) were collected and the data were used to make the alterations for the second version of the questionnaire which was given out to 4 teachers who had experience in teaching Chinese in the UK. The questionnaires were sent out in the spring term, 1997, and returned for analysis. Further revisions were made to refine the final questionnaire before being sent out to teachers at Chinese schools.

Two copies of teacher questionnaires were sent by post to each of the 95 listed Chinese schools around the UK (addresses of which were obtained from the lists provided by UK Federation of Chinese schools (UKFCS) and You (1996)). As the return rate for the questionnaires was not high initially, a reminder was sent to the schools which had not replied within two months. With the reminder, there was a request for the schools to send back a reply slip indicating if either they did not wish to participate or the school did not receive the questionnaire sent to them originally. Apart from 2 packages being returned due to the wrong address, eventually, 52

schools responded. Most of the schools only returned one of two questionnaires included in the package. A total of 7 schools declined to participate because they 'had no personnel to respond to the questionnaire', 'the school is too small', or 'not interested'. In total, 63 teachers had answered the questionnaire, 15 of the 63 teachers agreed to further interview, and 14 of the 63 teachers indicated they would like to involve their students for further research (the ethical issue involved in such practice is discussed in Chapter 4 (4.3)).

Teachers (14 in total) who indicated their willingness to involve their students were sent a copy of the student questionnaire as well as a letter to explain the aim and the usage of the questionnaire. It was recommended to the teachers in the letter that they make copies of the inventories or write back and ask for copies to be sent to them by the researcher. As the researcher was not able to administer the questionnaires to the students herself, it is possible that the procedures the teachers adopted were slightly different from those listed in the instruction and questions of how the questionnaire was used may arise. It was possible that students may be disrupted when filling in the questionnaires, or they may discuss the questions and therefore influence each other's answers. There was also possibility that students may not look at the questions carefully and only score each answer with any number. In order to monitor the use of the student questionnaire, the students (aged between 13 to 22) were encouraged to record the time they started answering the questionnaire and the time they completed it in the space provided at the top and the bottom of the answer sheet. Generally, it took around 15 minutes to carefully

complete the questionnaire. It was decided that if the time frame recorded by the students was much longer or shorter than the average, the answer sheets would be treated with extreme caution. Most of the teachers participating in this part of the study reported that they had used some of their class time for their students to fill in the inventory to prevent the students losing the papers. This had also an indirect effect of ensuring the students focused on answering the questionnaire due to the presence of their teachers.

In total, 97 student questionnaires were sent out to the 14 teachers participating in this part of the study, and 82 questionnaires were returned. However, there was one questionnaire which was answered incompletely and had to be discarded.

With the awareness that closed questionnaires may lead to generalised and stereotyped answers, the researcher asked respondents to comment on the questionnaire during interviews. A detailed description of the interviews will be covered in the next section (5.3). Furthermore, in educational, linguistic or social science research it is important to recognise that the respondents may have particular attitudes towards the type of style of research method used which may affect their responses.

5.2.2 Analysis Data from Questionnaires

This sub-section describes the tools used for the analysis of the data from both the teacher and the student questionnaires. The quantitative analysis here only deals

with the issues related to the culture of learning in the UK Chinese classrooms. Analyses on other aspects using the data set cannot be carried out here because the focus of this research is on the perceptions, expectations of the teachers of Chinese schools in the UK. Further research could, however, be carried out on the present data if time and finance permitted. Results from the analysis are discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter. In this sub-section, the discussion is on the procedure of analysing the questionnaire data.

The questionnaire data were processed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). There were two stages of analysis. The first stage of the analysis included calculating means and basic statistics of variables. The results were compared and contrasted to show interesting patterns in the students' strategy use. Insightful results were also obtained from both the students' and the teachers' questionnaires. Detailed results are discussed in Part III.

The second stage of the analysis used Factor analysis to pull together items in the teacher questionnaire that co-related with each other. Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to build up an acceptable taxonomy by which to classify an interaction sequence on the basis of empirically quantifiable characteristics. As described in the beginning of this section, the teachers in this study were asked to rate a series of classroom activities according to their own use in their class from a list drawn from literature review and pilot studies. Factor analysis is chosen to be used in this study to reduce the large set of variables (28 items in total) with a small

and easily understood number of factors. The technique is particularly useful for the research as its nature is clearly described by Cohen and Manion (1994) in the following statement.

[Factor analysis] is a way of determining the nature of underlying patterns among a large number of variables. It is particularly appropriate in research where investigators aim to impose an 'orderly simplification' upon a number of interrelated measures.
(p. 330)

The findings from both questionnaires were used to compare and contrast with data gathered in this study using other research method, that is, interviews and classroom observations. The following section looks at the second data collection method – the interviews.

5.3 INTERVIEW DESIGN AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The purpose of carrying out interviews in this case is to clarify some of teachers' concepts reflected in the returned questionnaires. It also provided an opportunity to express ideas and to point out angles that may have been overlooked by the researcher. The interview type used was a semi-structured one with open questions, to contrast with the mainly closed question style in the teacher questionnaire (in fact, many open-ended questions in the questionnaires had been left blank). A copy of the teacher interview schedule is in Appendix E. The interview questions to the teachers focus on:

- attitudes/expectations of Chinese teachers towards their students,

- the Chinese teachers' understanding of their roles and relationships of the time they spend in UK Chinese schools, and
- difference, difficulties or problems the teachers encountered and possible reasons for them.

A series of questions for students was developed following a few interviews with teachers. It is the interest of this study to gain a full picture of the culture of learning in these UK Chinese schools. Hence, it is reasonable to believe that the students' perspective will provide insightful information in building up such a picture. The questions in the student interview schedule (Appendix F) aimed to explore:

- the extent of the students' Chinese language use, and the students' learning activities at home,
- students' views about learning Chinese at UK Chinese school,
- students' knowledge of Chinese/British culture, society and education,
- attitudes/expectations of students towards their Chinese/British teachers,
- the students' understanding of their roles and relationships of the time they spend in UK Chinese schools, and
- difference, difficulties or problems they encountered and possible reasons for them.

In sum, the use of the interview technique is to explore the area which is set out in the second broad aim of the study.

2. To examine the relationships between culture and learning – cultures (that is, British and Chinese cultures) that teachers and learners bring with them into their interaction and the culture of learning in the UK Chinese classes.

There are two main features in these interviews. The first is that the interview is semi-structured rather than completely open. The intention was to let the participants say anything unexpressed in the questionnaire, especially about their feelings, attitudes, experiences, evaluations of different aspects regarding the teaching in Chinese schools. The second feature is that the interview became a resource for suggestions. Interviewees naturally provided some suggestions to problems posed or sought advice and suggestions to problems which concerned them. This was another kind of two-way communication. Many interviewees expressed a wish for more opportunity for this kind of discussion.

5.3.1 Carrying out Interviews

Interviews with teachers were arranged as soon as the questionnaires began to be returned and were carried out at the same time as I was trying to trace back the other questionnaires. Appointments with teachers were made by phone to meet at either the Chinese schools at which they were teaching, at their homes or sometimes at mutual meeting places near to the city where the teachers were. The interviews lasted between 30 to 90 minutes. One of the reasons for some of the interviews being longer than average was that the teachers seemed keen to emphasise their points in great detail. One teacher stated explicitly that the interview was a good

opportunity for him to express his concerns about teaching the Chinese language in the UK Chinese schools. Both the researcher and the interviewee tried to limit the disturbance during the course of the interview. However, in some cases, some interruption (e.g. by the participants' family members) could not be avoided.

All interviews with students were carried out at their Chinese schools. The age of the students interviewed was not limited, unlike those who answered the questionnaires (students aged between 13 to 22). The student interviewees covered a wide range of age from 6 to 18 and were selected by the teachers who 'volunteered' to involve their students (only in one occasion the headteacher asked the teacher to 'select a couple of students for interviewing'). Although there was an ethical issue involved, it seemed natural for the teachers to do so and the students did not show any sign of objection. In fact, it appears that this is part of the culture of learning in the Chinese classrooms. Furthermore, the authoritarian positions the Chinese teachers took in their classrooms may have reflected the way the students responded to the researcher in the interviews. Chinese students interviewed in this study seemed to regard the researcher as having the role of a teacher or a teacher assistant. I shall return to discuss this point in Chapter 7.

The questions used in the interviews with the students were fewer and shorter concentrating on two areas: the students' experiences of learning Chinese at Chinese schools and their views on learning the Chinese language. Some interviews

were carried out one to one with the students, but in many cases, with two or three students at a time. Each student interview lasted between 20 to 40 minutes.

Group interview as a research tool has been found to be popular in educational research. Cohen *et al.* (2000) summarise from a review of the writings on the use of group interviews (Simons 1982; Watts & Ebbutt 1987; Lewis 1992). They list several advantages of the technique, such as the potential for yielding a wide range of response, timesaving and preventing disruption, and less intimidating for child interviewees. Many of these advantages were considerations for choosing this technique as a method of data collection in this study. For example, Lewis' investigation (1992) on primary-aged children and Watt & Ebbutt's work (1987) with first-year sixth-formers both provide insightful discussion on the use of group interview with children of similar age range to those participating in the current study. As the study aims to explore the culture of learning in the British Chinese classrooms, group interviews are advantageous in this study as they 'produce statements which are in line with group norms to a much greater extent than will happen in individual interviews' (Lewis 1992, p. 414). The technique has helped to facilitate the interview process. In fact, the students interviewed in groups in this research appeared to be more forthcoming with their responses and contributed ideas prompted by other students' responses. It was also easier for the teachers to manage their class as there was less disruption for students leaving the classrooms to be interviewed, and the students were also absent from classwork for only relatively short periods.

However, some of the disadvantages of using group interview with children listed by Cohen *et al.* (2000) could not be avoided. A few of the issues raised above are particularly relevant and observed in the current study. In this study, I observed in interviews with the students several of the features noted by Cohen *et al.* (ibid.). The students were sometimes easily distracted and it was difficult keeping the interview relevant. I also noticed that I was seen as an authority figure by many of the students I interviewed. On a few occasions, it was not easy to find an appropriate way to ask the students' teacher to be away from the children (this may be due to the shortage of classroom available to be used in the school) and in turn this affected the responses from the students. It was also difficult to make sure that the responses elicited from the students were genuine rather than simply responses to the interview situation. Finally, keeping the students to the point, preventing the students becoming destructive of each other's views, and the problem that some of the students dominated the conversation often occurred during the course of the interviews in this study.

The use of the group interview is not meant to replace individual interviewing. In some cases, particular negative points of view, which may not be as extreme if the subject was interviewed individually, may derive as a result of group dynamic. For instance, in Watts & Ebbutt's study (1987) of the first-year sixth-formers for their view on science education in their secondary schools, one of the interview sessions became in the authors' term, a 'moan session' (p. 32). There were occasions during the group interview sessions in this study that the conversations with the students

steered closely in this direction. These occasions may sometimes provide some telling issues, but were controlled as to the length of time spending on discussing the issue so the interview would not be dragged on for too long.

However, this study does include individual interviews with the students for two reasons. One of the reasons was the circumstance in the classroom situation as I felt the need to respect the willingness of the teacher and the students. The other reason for employing both individual and group interviews was to take advantage of the potential in verifying data across the two sources.

All the interviews were recorded with the interviewees' permission and analysed after each visit. Results from the early stage of the analysis also contributed to fine-tuning interview questions for later interviews. The following subsection looks at the way the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Issues regarding the analysis of interview data are also discussed.

5.3.2 Recording and Analysis the Interview Data

A large quantity of interview data provides a problem for analysis. Some data are not significant for the purpose of this research. This subsection describes how the data in the interviews was recorded and analysed for further discussion.

There are two stages in analysing the interview data. In the first stage, all interviews were taped (with the consent of the participants), and transcribed into the original

language in which the interviews took place. In the case of the Chinese interviews, transcripts were then translated into English for the purpose of data analysis. During the process of analysis, a pattern of certain questions, remarks and ideas emerged, revealing the major interests or the discussion focus in the interview. The researcher also made use of the factors drawn from the quantitative analysis to compare with the emerging themes. These results will be reported in Chapter 6.

In interview analysis, understanding and interpretation of questions and answers given by both the interviewers and their respondents are problems for researchers, especially for cross-cultural studies (Pareek & Rao 1980). In the present case, the interview questions were explicit but open, allowing respondents to be clear about the question and to have space to express and explain their experience or to ask the interviewer for clarification.

The interviews had a conversational quality (especially those with Chinese teachers). All respondents knew the interviewer was herself a teacher. By sharing relevant experience and information with the teacher interviewees, the researcher found them more forthcoming about their experiences. Most of the student interviewees appeared happy to talk about their experiences and were not afraid of expressing their opinions. However, in two cases where the teachers insisted the interviews to be carried out in the same room, two of the older participants showed hesitation in answering questions where their answers were related to their teacher's style or the content of the lessons.

Data was also gathered by using observation techniques to supplement the information gathered through questionnaires and interviews with teachers and students at Chinese schools, and I discuss this in the next section.

5.4 OBSERVATIONS

Generally, there is a distinction between participant and non-participant observation defined by the role adopted by the researcher. The typology of participant roles developed by Gold (1958) is often cited (Atkinson & Hammersley 1998; Flick 1998). Gold (ibid.) distinguishes four types of participant role: the complete participant, the participant-as-observer, the observer-as-participant, and the complete observer (Flick 1998, p. 137). The distinctions between the different types of observation were made taking into account the involvement of the researchers and the context being researched. In other words, in the case of ‘complete participant’, the researcher is ‘playing an established participant role in the scene studied’ (Atkinson & Hammersley 1998, p. 111).

Two of the roles identified above were employed in this study. The role as a ‘complete participant’ was taken by the researcher from the beginning of this study and the role of a ‘complete observer’ was taken at the later stage of the study. Both roles and the observation procedures are described in detail in the following paragraphs. The final subsection looks at the how the data was recorded and issues regarding the use of observation as a research tool.

Observation as a complete participant

As I was the class-teacher in one of the Chinese schools, and it was my intention to learn more from the teaching experience, I used the opportunity to observe the students in my class and noted down significant events in the research diary after class. The method of participant observation was used in order to gain more insight not only in the classes I taught, but also into the activities in Chinese schools. During the time I was teaching at Tang school, I also devoted some of my time to help with the administrative side of the school. I was involved in enrolment of the students, preparation of teaching materials, social events and even teacher training. Such an experience is invaluable as I was able to gain an impressionistic view of not only the interactions in the classrooms, but also the running of a Chinese school.

Observation as a complete observer

To reduce the possible biased view from observing only one school, I took advantage of the invitations from the teachers interviewed to observe classes in their schools. In these cases, I adopted a different observation strategy. The other observation method used in this study is classroom observation where I acted as a 'complete observer' in classes I was invited into. The observations concentrated on one school term during which time I was able to observe 10 classes in 5 Chinese schools. The length of observation in each class varied from 30 minutes to a whole 3 hours session depending on the tasks carried out in the class. It was my intention to be as unobtrusive as possible during these classroom visits as I attempted to observe each class as it would be normally.

5.4.1 Recording and Using Observation Data

Simpson and Tuson (1995) identify the strengths of using observation as a data-gathering technique. They note that observation can give direct access to social interactions, give permanent and systematic records of social interactions, enrich and supplement data gathered by other techniques and the techniques are extremely varied. Observation was chosen as one of the methods for collecting data in this research to take advantages of all the strengths in the technique: to give a fuller picture to the research, to help the researcher make sense and take record of the context, to enrich the data gathered. I made field notes of my observations. The field notes, which also included a record of incidents that occurred in Tang school and the casual meetings I had with Chinese community members, was used as part of the data for this research. Because I did not want to analyse the fine-tuned interaction within the classroom, and I tried to avoid impinging too much on the subjects' space, I decided not to use audio or video recording in this study. Data was collected by means of note-taking.

Using observation also has its weaknesses, as Simpson and Tuson (1995) point out. These include its high demand on time, effort and resources, and its susceptibility to observer bias (p. 18). Furthermore, the presence of the observer can also have an impact on the classroom situation. This is often termed as the 'observers' paradox' or 'Hawthorn effect'. The presence of the researcher, noted by Cohen *et al.* (2000), 'influences on the classroom situation as the participants may wish to avoid, impress, direct, deny the researcher' (p. 156). They further the argument by stating

that in order to reduce the effect, the researchers should carefully and gradually negotiate access into the field. Although it was my intention to be as discreet as possible while in the classrooms, as I could only be in the classes for one visit it was not possible to totally eliminate the effect I had on the classes visited in the study.

5.5 Summary

Questionnaire, interview and observation techniques were chosen to collect data in this study in order to obtain an in depth understanding of the context and of the views and attitudes of the participants. The analysis of the collected data is used to achieve both of the broad aims set out for this research.

1. To explore current practice in UK Chinese schools in order to provide contextual information for understanding current issues involved in learning Chinese as a community language, especially in the context of Chinese schools in the UK.
2. To examine the relationships between culture and learning – cultures (that is, British and Chinese cultures) that teachers and learners bring with them into their interaction and the culture of learning in the UK Chinese classes.

This chapter examined issues concerning data collection in this research. It looked at the obstacles encountered during this research, the outcome from the pre-fieldwork phase, and the sampling of the research. Discussions on each method

used for data collection were also included. The result from the data collection will be presented in the next part of the thesis.

PART III

CULTURE OF LEARNING

OVERVIEW

In Part III, results of the current study will be presented. As noted in Chapter 5 (5.1.2), a conceptual framework was developed in the early stage of the study to present graphically elements possibly contributing to the study (Fig. 5.1). I then, in the following stages of the study, proposed an Ecology Model of Learning Cultures adopted from Bronfenbrenner's ecology paradigm as a framework to organise various themes of the findings from this study (Fig. 3.2). A discussion of Bronfenbrenner's ecology model and how it is appropriate to adapt the analogy of cognitive development to a framework of cultural development for the current study is in Section 3.3.

As discussed in the previous chapter (5.1), a conceptual framework was developed early on in this study to provide direction for collecting the data and relating the themes together, as shown in Fig. 5.1. It illustrates possible aspects that may contribute to the participants' expectations about the 'culture of learning', including family background, their experience in the mainstream society including the students' British schools, and the teachers' workplace, even their training. To complete the whole framework, it is also necessary to take into account the influences of British and Chinese cultures which affect the context researched in this

study directly from many aspects: the language use, traditions, values and attitudes embedded in these cultures.

To organise the data collected in the study, the Ecology Model of Learning Cultures is used as a theoretical framework for the current study. In Chapter 3 (3.3), I have detailed why I find this framework useful and why I decided to apply it for this study. The ecology model is based on a four-part hierarchy of systems: micro-, meso-, exo- and macro-systems. Briefly, in this study, each micro-system can be any of the specific events/interactions that occurs in the research. A meso-system consists of interactions between and among two or more micro-systems. An exo-system comprises the environment which has an impact on the individuals but does not always contain the individuals. The macro-system is the totality of the micro-, meso- and exo-systems, and entails the entire realm of developmental possibilities. The scope of this study only allowed more detailed exploration on micro- and meso-systems level. The data in this study includes interviews with teachers and students, observations of classrooms, meetings and conversations with parents recorded in the research diary. The data collected in this study was organised into three chapters. The following is an outline of these chapters.

Outline of Part III

Part III is divided into three chapters. Chapters 6 and 7 examine a number of the 'micro-systems', including classroom activities, mixed-ability/age groups, students' language learning strategies, the role of texts and textbooks, the roles of the

teachers and the students, and Chinese schools as a place of learning. For purposes of clarity, I decided to divide these micro-systems into two chapters. In Chapter 6, I look at classroom activities and the mixed-ability/age groups, as they provide a general understanding of the British Chinese classrooms. Chapter 7 then looks at other elements that contributed to the development of the 'culture of learning' in classrooms. It examines how students' language learning strategies, the role of texts and textbooks, the relationship between teachers and their students, and the different Chinese school settings impact on the learning culture.

Chapter 8 considers the relationships between meso-systems: the Chinese schools and the Chinese families/community. In Chapter 8, influences of the participants' family cultures, several language issues, the role Chinese schools played in the Chinese communities are discussed. Chapter 8 also looks at the characteristics of Chinese school children from different family background.

Throughout these chapters, I provide extracts from interviews and my observation diary which show ongoing activities in the class and my comments of them. In order to exemplify what is going on in the classrooms, I provide extracts from this diary. To help the reader, I have used line numbers in these extracts as the extracts are generally longer than the extracts of the interviews. To give some indication of the length of these activities, the extracts also give some idea of the time-frame in the second column. For example, in Extract 1 (Chapter 6 (6.1), pp. 159-160), the activity the teacher started at 2:10 (line 2) and this particular activity continues for 8

minutes. In the extracts, statements in the participants' own words are underlined. If the statements were made in Chinese, a translation is provided in { }. Dates of observation are also provided at the end of each extract. This is followed by the number for identifying the classroom observed. For example, in Extract 1, the classroom observed is L2 which refers to the second class in School L. For the interview extracts, the speakers in each dialogue are represented by a letter. The student interviewees were identified with the letter followed by their age and whether they are male (M) or female (F). The teacher interviewees are only represented with a single letter in the interview extracts. Details of the teacher interviewees and the letters representing them are in Table 5.1 (Section 5.1.3). Words and expressions originally in Chinese, including those in observation notes, interviews and questionnaires, are presented in *Pinyin* and followed by English translations to distinguish them from statements originally made in English. A full list of transcription conventions is provided in Appendix A.

The focus of the main part of this study is on achieving the second broad aim stated in Chapter 1:

2. To examine the relationships between culture and learning – cultures (that is, British and Chinese cultures) that teachers and learners bring with them into their interaction and the culture of learning in the UK Chinese classes.

Using the ecology model proposed for the study, it is the interest of this study to explore whether micro-systems which constitute the meso-system are in conflict, in harmony or are involved in some kind of synergistic relationship. The relationship between the systems discussed in Part III will be examined again in Chapter 9 putting the current study into the wider research context.

CHAPTER 6

THE CHINESE CLASSROOMS: A HOLISTIC VIEW

Chapters 6 and 7 look at mainly features present in Chinese classrooms and Chinese schools. From the aspect of the ecology model, these are micro-systems that are at the centre of the model. In this chapter, aspects are examined which are most closely related to the participants, the teachers and the students in classrooms. The first section provides a holistic picture of the activities which took place and how they happen within the lesson context in the Chinese classrooms observed. In Section 6.2, classroom activities are discussed in more detail with a comparison and contrast with the results from the teacher's questionnaire. The final section looks at the situation of having hugely mixed-ability/age groups in the Chinese schools and its effect on the classroom activities.

6.1 A DAY IN CHINESE CLASSROOMS

In order to provide a holistic picture of the range of classroom activities in the British Chinese classrooms, I start this chapter with a section which describes in general activities observed in the Chinese schools studied. In this section, I draw predominantly on my observations in three classrooms (L2, Q1 and Q2) in two different schools (School L and School Q). Extracts were selected as they represented different work sessions in the timetable of the Chinese schools: the start

of the school day, a session after break, a session which include the end of the school day. Classes in the Chinese schools I observed were normally in two 50-minute-to-an-hour sessions, which was also the basic unit for my observation. The lessons described below were conducted in Chinese. The first session was beginning at the start of the day in School L, Class L1. The following two classes were in School Q. They each represent the session after a break (Class Q1) and before the end of the school day (Class Q 2). However, I also bring in observations from other classrooms.

The first session described here took place in one of the schools in the Greater London area. The class had nine students on that day. According to my observation, there were students of mixed-age (from about 9 to 15) in this class. As the observation progressed, it became apparent that the students were also a mixed-ability group. The observation started at the beginning of the particular school day.

According to the teacher, one or two students were absent from the previous lesson, a common occurrence. There were some parents sitting in silence in the corner of the classroom. They did not participate in any of the classroom activities.

Extract 1

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Teacher wait for the class to quieten down. |
| 2:10 | Teacher (T) asked the students to read out the rhyme they learned in the previous week.
Rhyming continues. The students were paired to recite the rhyme at the same time clapping with their neighbour according to the rhythm. |
| 6 | |
| 2: 18 | T: <u>Those who came last week, write these new words</u>
[teacher pointed to the students what they should |

write]. Those who didn't come last week, read the rhyme again.

Those of the second group started to recite the rhyme. The teacher started to distribute new materials.

T: Those who didn't come, please read more when you go home.

Observation Diary: 03/05/1998, Class: L2

In this study, I observed that almost all the teachers started their class with a brief review of what children had learned in the previous week as there was a long break between the lessons every week. Since the time at school was limited already and there were often progress delays caused by the students' absence, teaching themes were sometimes repeated in the following week or even weeks. Teachers had to arrange activities suitable for children who had learned the material before and those who were learning it for the first time. As I also observed in other classrooms, the teaching material was divided to be learned at different levels to overcome this problem. In this case, the children were firstly asked to learn to read the rhyme fluently at the same time recognising the characters in the rhyme (line 2-6). Secondly, children were guided to learn the characters in detail. The teacher explained to the students the meaning of each new character, as well as the way the characters are written. In this stage, children have to copy the characters down on a piece of exercise paper (see Appendix M for an example) and copy the same characters a few times. Children will then, at a later stage, be tested to show how well they have learned the material. They may be asked to recite the piece to the teacher as a group or individually. They may also be asked to write the piece out from memory. Some examples of these follow-up activities will be described later in

this section. The following observation extract is a continuous description of the same lesson in Extract 1.

Extract 2

14 2: 28 T: This lesson is: *rì* 'sun, day', *yuè* 'moon, month', *shuǐ* 'water', *huǒ* 'fire'.

[Chinese characters already written on the paper chart].

T: Can any of you write wǔyùe sānrì 'the 3rd of May'?

20 One student went to the board to write.

A second student went forward to write on the board.

2: 29 T write on the board the four characters, and asked the students to 'look carefully' when she does strokes.

2: 31 One child went on the board to write. T asked others to watch.

2: 33 One child plays around with his things, T asked him to stop.

T: What other characters contain *rì*, *yuè*, *shuǐ*, *huǒ* as radicals?

30 Students volunteered some answers such as *hé* 'river',
hǎi 'sea'.

2:35 T wrote the characters suggested on the board slowly.

2:38 T asked students to make phrases.

Examples such as *xǎohé* 'little river' and *hǎibīān* 'seaside' were suggested by the students.

35 'seaside' were suggested by the students.
2: 40 T wrote associated words on the board, and talked to
the students in Mandarin of how words should related
to each other [as they share the semantic radical].

Students were listening, ...

Observation Diary: 03/05/1998, Class: L2

In this instance, new characters were introduced to the students. In lines 14-15, the focus of the lesson as stated by the teacher was to introduce 4 new characters: “*rì* ‘sun, day’, *yuè* ‘moon, month’, *shuǐ* ‘water’, *huǒ* ‘fire’”. These characters are all pictographs and they are basic radicals for many Chinese characters and often used on their own in daily activities. The teacher helped the students to put the newly learned characters in context by asking the students to use them. In line 17, the request for the students to write *wǔyuè sānrì* ‘the 3rd of May’ was an opportunity

for the students to use the character “*rì* ‘sun, day’ and *yuè* ‘moon, month’ together with the numbers which the students had already learned.

In order to provide variety to the classrooms, students were introduced to a different text, asked to look at different lessons in the classroom or to have a game, to do other writing or speaking activities. This is one of the points that was stressed by a number of teachers as of great importance in their choice of classroom activities.

In this case, after students doing individual work for some time, the teacher asked them to put away what they were doing, and started a new session which aimed to introduce four Chinese radicals. This is an activity particularly relevant to the nature of the Chinese characters (discussed in Chapter 2). As there is a high priority in literacy, sessions such as this were observed very often. After the students were introduced to the new characters, the teacher asked them to experiment using the newly learned characters: copy them down, make associations, compound them – make new words and phrases using the new and some old characters, make sentences and so forth. This kind of practice was also observed in this class as below.

Extract 3

- 38 2:41 T: Let’s make some *jùzi* ‘sentences’.
 Student C: What is *jùzi* ‘a sentence’?
 T: Put the new words into the sentence you want to
41 say.
 Students then tried to make sentences and say them
 out loudly for the whole class to hear.
 [For example, *Wǒmen qù hǎibīan wánr.* ‘we went to

- 46 seaside to play.’ was a sentence suggested by one of
the students.]
- 2: 48 Teacher asked children to repeat after her, read out loud
from a sheet of paper twice. [The paper contains a text
49 of about 10 lines using characters related to the topic
of ‘sun, moon, water and fire’.]
- 51 2: 51 T: Listen carefully, we are going to have a *tīngxǐe*
‘dictation’ later.
T then called out a few names.
T [to the above students]: You’ll have to memorise
this and write it out.
- 56 T: Others, you’ll have to copy this text and do the
dictation.
T (to one student): This particular student doesn’t
understand what we are saying, you have to do your
best according to your ability.
... (seat work)

Observation Diary: 03/05/1998, Class: L2

The introduction of the new characters/words was followed by the introduction of a new piece of text to be studied. This is a practice I observed across different classrooms. In this case, a text written by the teacher was photocopied and distributed to each student. The teachers then introduced a piece of text by reading it out once or twice themselves to provide students time to annotate characters with appropriate sounds. This was followed by the whole class reading the text out loud after the teacher. Then the class read out aloud without the teacher. This was followed by students volunteering or being asked by the teacher to read out paragraphs from the text individually. Again, a series of activities that was aimed to accommodate the different mixture of the students were carried out once the text had been introduced. In this example, the teacher used *tīngxǐe* ‘dictation’ as an exercise to evaluate whether the students had learned the new characters/word/text. It was done in different degrees. Some students (Group A), supposedly those who are most capable in the class, were asked to memorise the whole text and write it

out from memory. Some (Group B students) were asked to firstly copy the text and were told that they would be tested on items later by *tīngxǐe*. The teacher seemed to demand less from Group B as she stressed to one student in this group that he only needed to do his best.

In fact, all the students in the class took part in the *tīngxǐe* exercise later. The teacher firstly read out 20 items for all the class members to do. After that, she gave out more items for Group A students to do and told the rest of the class to “have another look at what you did and think more thoroughly”. This differential treatment to the Group B students provided them more time to answer fewer questions than the other group. The students were able to participate in similar activities but not feel frustrated by the exercise. The observed session ended after a discussion with the students on the items dictated.

The other two observed classes included here took place in a different school also in the Greater London area, and involved children of younger age sharing a big teaching space separated only by blackboard and a narrow corridor. In both classes, the teachers conducted their teaching mainly in Chinese and only used short English instruction to direct those children who seemed completely lost. The first class described here has the youngest pupils in the school, having ten students on that day, between 6 and 8 years old. As also observed in other Chinese schools, young age groups often had more students within the similar age range. Thus, the variation between the group members’ age and their ability was less obvious. When I started

This kind of activity was also observed in other classrooms. It is not unusual for classes with young age children to spend some time singing and acting according to nursery rhymes in Chinese schools as these were some of the activities identified by the teachers in this study as more suitable for younger children. Frequently used activities identified by the teachers are discussed in the next section (6.2).

While the above group was engaging in singing, I turned to observe the other class nearby. The class in the following example was one level (age-wise) above the previous one described in the same school. That is, the students were also young – about 8 to 10 years old – and the differences of levels between them were not obvious, either. There were thirteen students in the class on that day.

Extract 6

- 14 11:35 Children were reading characters from their own textbooks.
 11:39 T: Put everything in the bag except pencil case.
 11:40 T: Let's read this.
 [The teacher had written the piece of nursery rhyme –
 Yueliang hé xīngxīng 'Moon and stars' on a flip
 20 chart.]
 The students repeated after the teacher.
 11:41 T read through and explain words new to the students.
 11:42 T read again; children actively joined in loudly when
 there were words they already knew.
 11:43 All read again together.
 26 11:44 T asked two students to stand up and read out loud
 individually.
 11:46 Another student was pointed by T to read. [T gave
 him clues from time to time.]
 One student put her hand up after this one finished
 31 reading.
 11:48 T asked the volunteer to read. [The child sat next to
 her read together with her in very low voice almost to
 herself.]
 11:50 All read together. ...

Observation Diary: 02/05/1998, Class: Q2

In this episode, the students were introduced to a nursery rhyme for the first time. The teacher did not specifically ask the students to learn the characters or to write them. However, she pointed to each character on the board as she read through the rhyme in the hope that the students would make association between the sounds and the characters and even recognise some of the easier characters that they had previously.

At this point, there were more and more parents arriving at the school waiting to take their children home. The parents all stood outside the classroom: some further away talking to each other, a few of them were standing close to the classroom's big glass windows. A few students looked out to smile at their parents then back to participate in the class activity. The teacher may have sensed the change and started the following activity which seemed to be her ritual of 'final activity'.

Extract 7

- 35 11:51 T gave back the students their own homework book.
As she was doing so, those who received their books
opened them and started to write in their books.
[The teacher had already written characters in them
for the students to copy.]
- 41 T walked around to check students' progress, and
occasionally held the students' hands to show them
how to do certain strokes.
- 46 11:53 One student complained that he did not have his book
and started to talk to other students. The teacher
promptly gave him a new book while others sat and
wrote in their own books.
Students sometimes talked to their neighbours in low
voice [in English].
- 51 12:00 There was a school bell outside. Students started to
tidy up – putting chairs underneath the table.
T: Say “zàijiàn, X lǎoshī” before you go.
{ Say “Goodbye, X Teacher” before you go.}
The students said goodbye to the teacher and started to
leave with their parents. Some still sat in their chairs

The writing practice described in Line 36-48 shows another episode often observed in the Chinese classrooms during this study. Although not necessarily at the end of the class. For example, in Extract 2, similar activity was introduced early on in the lesson. In this case, Lines 35-37 show that the students started writing their *gōngkè* in the exercise book without any instruction from the teacher. As the children are still quite young, they are not yet expected to write extensively. Most of the children I observed in this class were learning to write their own names. Some more advanced students were learning to write words that contained *yǔ* ‘rain’ radical – words such as thunder, electric, and snow. I asked the teacher about what the students were writing. She told me that she had written in their books beforehand when she had collected items from the students and taken them home to correct. It is also an opportunity for the teacher to accommodate an individual student’s ability and to facilitate their learning.

Some classes, especially those with older children, included a routine of writing compositions [short stories on topics related to the text or topic given by the teacher], and other exercise related activities. This is where the variety was evident from each teacher. Some teachers asked the students to do written exercises that were provided in the form of printed exercise books (Appendix L provides an example) or copy certain words that were chosen by the teacher ‘for ten times’. Some teachers invented word games such as Chinese scrabble [for practice of

compounding words], Chinese crosswords, or group competitions to write Chinese characters on the board. Exercises in traditional Chinese exercise books sometimes were also used to add variety to the classroom activity. For example, it was observed in a few classes in this study that teachers provided their students with word lists or sentences that included jumbled-up words, created by the teachers or textbook publishers. Students were asked to make sentences using words from the word lists or to rearrange them into sentences. These can be done individually in the exercise book although sometimes the students find this particular activity boring. Some teachers manage to redesign the exercises into classroom activities and find them very useful.

Apart from spending time in writing practice, most teachers interviewed said that they tried to speak Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin Chinese) to their students for the majority of the class time. Students were asked to use Chinese as much as possible in the class. Teachers reported that they tried to use English as a last resort. According to the teachers in this study, students should learn to speak the Chinese language at home and through classroom activities. This may have reflected on their classroom practice. During the course of the study, I did not observe any occasion in which students practised conversations in Chinese the way one may expect to observe in foreign language classrooms, that is, conversing about specific topics. Practice of dialogues was observed only when the texts come in the form of drama scripts then the class members were asked to recite them taking the parts of the characters in the texts. It may be due to the fact that because the students were

already spending a lot of time listening to the teachers, and reading out loud the texts themselves, the teachers do not see much need for separate speaking and listening activities. In the above case where the text studied was in the form of a drama script, some of the teacher interviewees noted that they would take advantage of it and ask the students to act it out to provide variety to the classroom activities if the time allows. Many of the teachers also stated that they frequently combined such an activity with the preparation for the ‘end of term performance’ required by their schools.

In the above discussion, I have attempted to present a holistic picture of what it is like in Chinese classrooms. The three cases showed a series of activities in the Chinese classrooms observed a number of times in the study. These include review work from the previous week, the introduction of new learning materials (new characters, sentences), assigning individual work (memorising, writing exercises), carrying out *tīngxǐe* ‘dictation’, distribute *gōngkè*, practising drama, and singing songs. The observations also included traditional practices of starting and ending a lesson such as rearranging/tidying up the classrooms and paying courtesy to the teachers (lines 49-54).

In an educational setting, teachers may feel that it is necessary to set up routines in the classroom. However, when the routines became too rigid, it can sometimes lead to boredom. In one interview, the students concerned identified that the thing they

feel bored with is the ‘class routine’ and not any particular classroom activity. The following is a description of their class routine.

A: Because every time it’s the same thing .. over and over again ..

...

A: For example, the first lesson .. would be reading texts [from the textbook].

V: Reading texts.

A: The second lesson .. is also discussion. Then the third lesson, would be writing compositions [in Chinese].

(A 14, V 14, M)

The two interviewees reported that the situation was worse than it would have been as they had to share the teachers with a group of students whose language ability are different. And the fact that sometimes they had to go through exactly the same routine several times before a piece of text could eventually be thoroughly discussed with them. Many students and teachers I met during the period of research reported a similar situation of highly mixed ability group. These two girls’ situation was not unique.

So far in this section, general classroom activities have been illustrated using mainly the observation notes to present a holistic picture. The following section looks at some of the activities described above in more detail.

6.2 CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

This section looks at activities in the Chinese classrooms in more detail. Results from the teacher’s questionnaire are discussed first in order to examine the teachers’ views of classroom activities systematically. As described in Chapter 5 (5.2), the

teachers in this study were asked to rate a list of 28 classroom activities according to the frequency that they are applied in their classrooms. Factor analysis is used to examine the interrelationships among these variables. The results of factor analysis in this study identified three main categories from the activities rated by the teachers, namely, for ease of discussion, everyday activities, interactive activities and traditional language classroom activities. Classroom activities in each of the three groups are then discussed in the three subsequent sub-sections. The final part of this section looks at one activity that does not particular co-relate with any of the three groups of activities discussed, yet the activity is often observed in classrooms and mentioned by the participants interviewed: tests.

Teachers in this study were asked to rate frequencies of activities they used in their classrooms in the teacher's questionnaire (Appendix C). Responses from these were then analysed using Factor analysis. The technique of factor analysis is employed for the study to take advantage of the technique and to reduce the size of the original data set. As explained by Kim & Mueller (1994), factor analysis 'refers to a variety of statistical techniques whose common objective is to represent a set of variables in terms of a smaller number of hypothetical variables' (p. 3). There are 28 items of activities in the questionnaire. 22 of the 28 items fell into three sub-scales, as shown in Table 6.1.

Scale-1.	Learning through everyday activities	ITEM
Item no.		CORELATION
23	Listen to Chinese songs	.6197
5	Listen to stories	.6075
21	Drawing pictures	.6055
4	Reading Chinese books other than textbooks	.5081
24	Singing songs	.5059
28	Using word cards with pictures and characters (flash cards)	.4650
27	Solving problems	.4263
6	Listen to tapes	.3932

Scale reliability 0.8033

Scale-2.	Interactive activities	ITEM
Item no.		CORELATION
9	Group work	.7612
8	Pair work	.6802
17	Role play	.5730
26	Playing language games	.5442

Scale reliability 0.8161

Scale-3.	Traditional language learning activities	ITEM
Item no.		CORELATION
13	Writing letters	.6196
16	Translation	.5739
2	Listen to you [the teacher]	.5676
14	Writing stories	.5649
12	Writing sentences	.5619
22	Learning language patterns	.5333
11	Speaking Chinese to others	.4676
25	Reading poems	.4602
1	Using supplementary materials created by the teacher	.4235
10	Speak to you in Chinese	.3613

Scale reliability 0.8251

Table 6.1 Results of factor analysis from the teacher questionnaire.

Alpha for internal reliability for the total 28 items was 0.87. There are 6 items which are apparent from the above three sub-scales which indicate that they do not co-relate closely to the items listed above into any of the three categories. These items are using a textbook (item 3), watching videos (item 7), filling worksheets (item

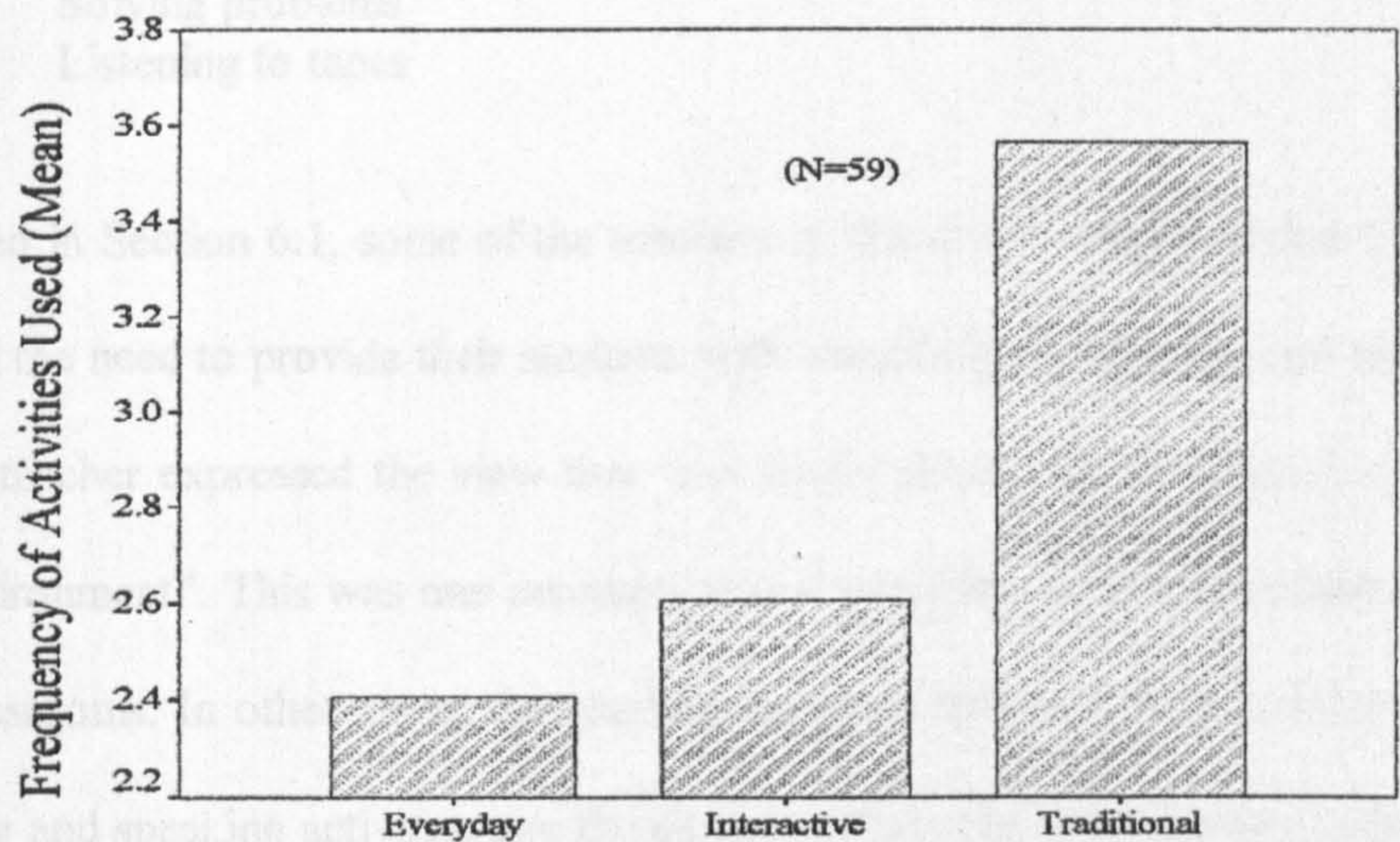
15), copying new characters (item 18), using computers (item 19) and tests (item 20). The following brief discussion of information from other sources in this study may give some indication to the cause of this non-correlation.

Use of other resources, such as computers, videos, cassettes and over-head projectors was reported and rarely observed to be as most Chinese schools could not afford them. Thus, all but one teacher responded to variables related to the use of such resources were the same (1 = Never). However, it is worth noting that when the resources were reported to be available, they were also reported to be immensely popular with the students. Teachers found that it was easy to communicate with their students with the help of the audio-visual aids as these activities could also provide variety in the classrooms. The other four activities that were found to be apparent from the above sub-scales are using textbook, filling worksheets, copying new characters, and tests. I found that in this study, these four activities were present in all of the Chinese classrooms I visited and reported to be used by the teachers 'all the time'. This may be a reason why they do not co-relate with other particular activities in the sub-scales. These elements will be discussed in later sections (Section 6.2.4 and Section 7.2). The immediate discussion, however, focuses on the activities identified in the three main categories.

The groups of activities from the most (rated 5) to the least (rated 1) frequently used are traditional language classroom activities (3.63), interactive activities

(2.61), and learning through everyday activities (2.46). The result is shown in Fig. 6.1.

Fig. 6.1 Activities used by teachers in the classrooms



Alpha for the 22 items, excluding those apparent from the sub-scales, for the three sub-scales was 0.88. The subsequent three sub-sections look at each group of activities accordingly. The final part of this section focuses the discussion on the use of tests and *tīngxǐe* ‘dictation’ in the classrooms.

6.2.1 Everyday Activities

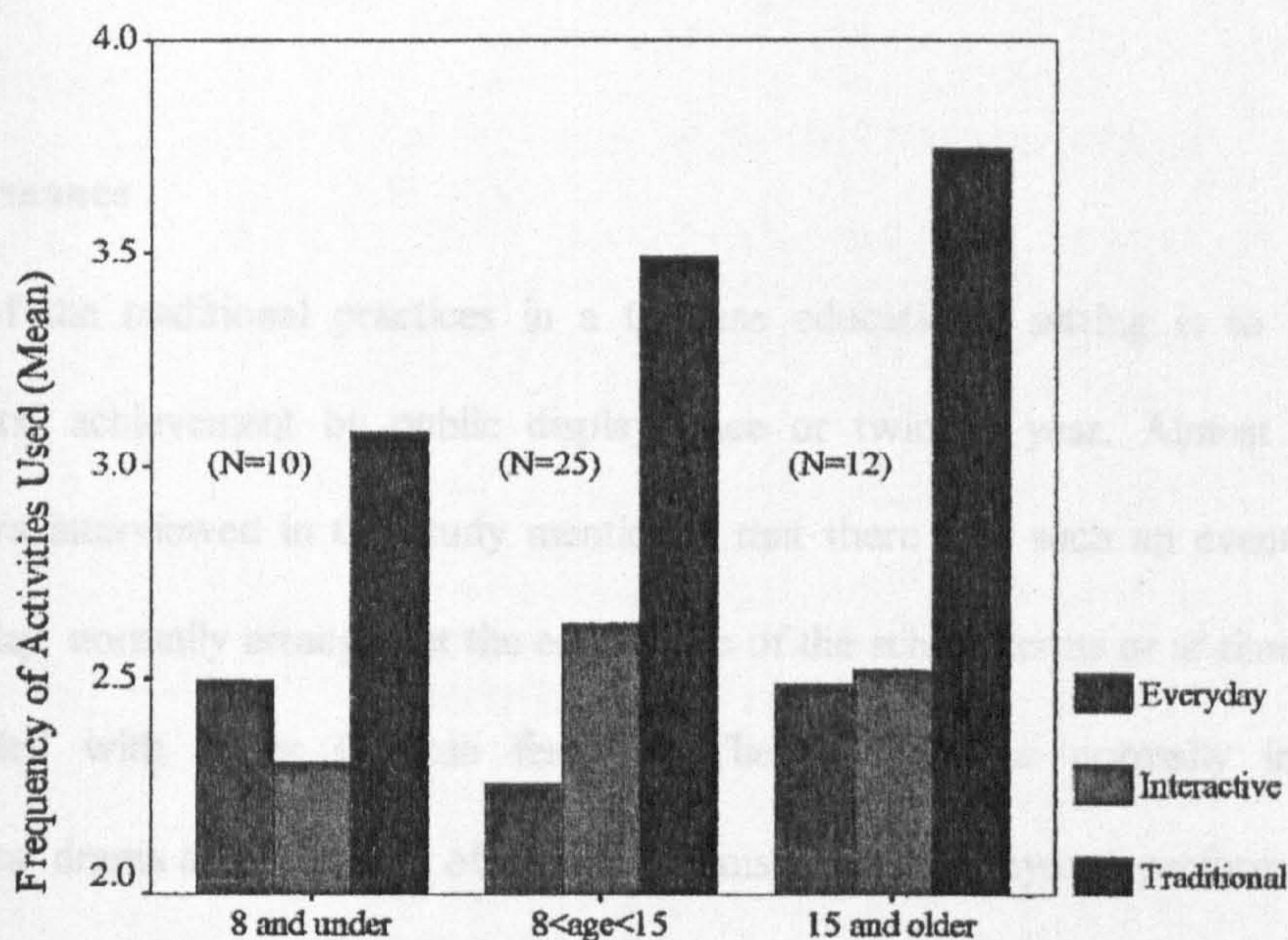
As noted earlier, out of the three sub-scales, ‘learning through everyday activities’ was the one rated to be used the least frequent. The scale was given its name because the variables explained by the factor are those activities that are common everyday activities. The sub-scale includes 8 activities.

- Listening to Chinese songs
- Listening to stories
- Drawing pictures
- Reading Chinese books other than textbooks
- Singing songs
- Using word cards with pictures and characters (flash cards)
- Solving problems
- Listening to tapes

As noted in Section 6.1, some of the teachers in this study suggested that they did not feel the need to provide their students with extra help for listening and speaking as one teacher expressed the view that “the family should be the place to provide the environment”. This was one assumption that may have serious consequences in the classrooms. In other cases, the teachers reported that they tried to incorporate listening and speaking activities into the classroom by using listening comprehension test-material for GCSE Chinese. The difference may be due to individual differences between the teachers, their background of learning, teaching and training.

A few of the teachers in this study expressed to me their view that some of the activities in this category seemed to them more suitable for children of younger age. Teachers expressed their concerns that some of their teenage students might feel embarrassed if they were asked to sing songs or draw pictures in the class. This is reflected in Fig. 6.2.

Fig. 6.2 Students' age and the classroom activities



Although the differences are not statistically significant, the result shows that the teachers with teenage students generally rated lower use of this group of activities (everyday activities) as there were certain expectations from the teachers for the students' family to provide support in strengthening this group of activities, whilst teachers with the other two groups of students reported more frequent use of the activities.

On several occasions during my study, I observed the activities in this scale being used when the students were preparing for public performances which were often arranged to take place once a year at the end of a term. The following paragraphs

look at this particular event and how the activities were combined for use in the classrooms when preparing for a performance.

Performance

One of the traditional practices in a Chinese educational setting is to present students' achievement by public display once or twice a year. Almost all the teachers interviewed in the study mentioned that there was such an event on an open day, normally arranged at the end of one of the school terms or at time which coincided with major Chinese festivals. The performance normally involved students' drama act, recitation of Chinese poems or nursery rhymes, performance of Chinese songs and Chinese musical instruments and other cultural activities.

The preparation of performance involved several 'everyday activities'. For example, Section 6.1 described how the group of children rehearsed the drama they prepared for the performance. Before that stage, the students had heard the story which they were acting from their teachers and prepared animal masks with help of their parents.

Several teachers interviewed stated that it was a good opportunity for their students to practise speaking. In due process, the students also learn to appreciate the piece of text chosen by the teacher or even learn "the way to read poems". The following is an extract from my observation notes of one class preparing for a performance in the following week at the Chinese school. There were thirteen students in the class,

mainly teenagers: most of whom speaking and understanding Mandarin Chinese well. The teacher spoke to the students in Chinese all the time.

Extract 8

- 1 2:49 T: zhè shì yì shǒu shīgē. Xià xīngqí wǒmenbān de jítǐ jiēmù.
 {This is a poem [contemporary]. It's our class' programme for next week's group performance.}
6 T then explained the marks on the photocopied text and appointed students who would be reading those lines.
 T: wǒmen bǎ zhè yíduàn niàn yíbiàn. Ràng dàjiā bǎ bú rènshì de zì xiě yíxià.
 {Let's read this paragraph once. Everyone writes down those words that you don't know.}
11 T played the tape recorder.
 2:53 T: bú rènshì de zì gǎnkùai bǎ zì zhùshàng.
 {Note down those words you don't know quickly.}
16 There were some disputes between students. T asked them to quiet down.
 T: xiànzài wǒmen dàjiā fēnkāi jiāosè.
 {Now, let's separate our parts.}
21 ... [The class then divided to smaller groups each practise different parts. Some students were preparing for individual performance of singing and other programmes.]
23 After spending some time with individual groups, T came back to the main group and helped them with the recitation of the poem.
26 3:50 T: hǎo, shīgē.
 {OK, the poem.}
 The students were still chatting, T signal them to quite down.
31 T: gāngcái dàjiā jiēde bú tài hǎo. Shīgē yào yǒu shīgē de yǔdiào.
 {Just now, the link was not done too well. Poems should [be read] with poetic tunes.}
 The students started again.
36 T went on to stress to students while they recite the poem at places where and how the poem needed to be emphasised..

Observation Diary: 16/07/1998, Class L6

On this occasion, the students were introduced to a piece of literature rather than another text from their textbook. In order to demonstrate the point made that poems should be read differently (Lines 31-32), the teacher played a tape-recording of a recitation of the poem the students were practising later in the lesson.

There were, however, conflicting points of view expressed by the teachers and the students about the event in the interviews. On one hand, teachers reported that they viewed the performances as important and one of the ways to demonstrate to parents and committee members their effort of helping the students to learn. On the other hand, the students expressed their views in the interviews that performances sometimes caused them huge embarrassment and they did not always enjoy them.

6.2.2 Interactive Activities

‘Interactive activities’ included the following four different variables from the teacher questionnaire.

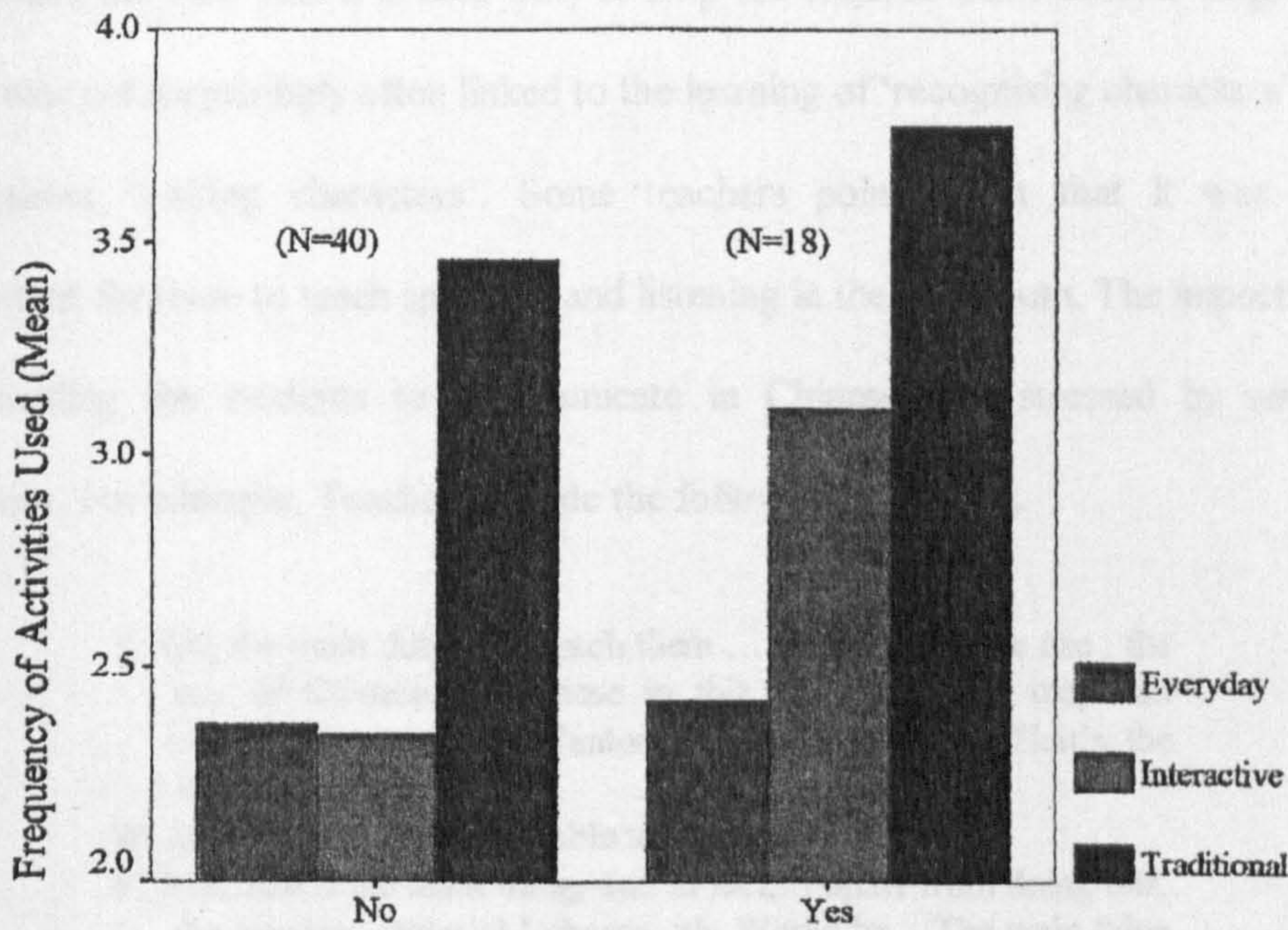
- Group work
- Pair work
- Role play
- Language games

The name was given to the scale because it contains activities commonly observed in (language) classrooms and they require interactive involvement of the students. In the Chinese classrooms in this study, these activities shared another feature, they were not applied very frequently in classrooms. This group of activities was

reported by the teachers during interviews as used less frequently for the reasons that they generally took up more of their time and made the management of the classroom more difficult than other activities.

It seemed that teachers' background training also affected their choice of activities in their classrooms. Significantly (sig. = 0.006), more teachers with some teacher training chose to use this group of activities. Graphs of the results are in Fig. 6.3.

Fig. 6.3 Teacher training and classroom activities



Many of the students interviewed compared their experience of Chinese learning with their experience in learning German, French or other languages in mainstream schools and expressed the view that there was little interaction between the students

in their Chinese classrooms. For example, one boy compared the Chinese lessons with the French learning at his British school.

S: // .. I can only compare it to French.

W: Uhm ..

S: Well .. French is more practising on the speech ...

W: Right ..

S: And listening, but we mainly do reading and writing here.

[The conversation then went on to explore the difference in teaching style.]

(M 17, C)

As already noted in Chapter 2, the teaching of literacy has a strong position in the teaching of the Chinese language. The majority of the teachers interviewed expressed the view that it is their duty to help the children learn Chinese language. This was not surprisingly often linked to the learning of 'recognising characters' and sometimes 'writing characters'. Some teachers pointed out that it was also important for them to teach speaking and listening in the classroom. The importance of enabling the students to communicate in Chinese was stressed by several teachers. For example, Teacher Y made the following statement.

Y: Oh, the main duty is to teach them ... well, mainly the use . the use of Chinese, Cantonese in this case. So that, they can communicate with /// Cantonese-speaking people. That's the main thing. But..

W: So you want them to be able to speak ..

Y: Yah, that's the main thing, and in fact, .. apart from doing this, the teaching material I choose, uh. Would be .. The main thing is to . uh (.) make them aware of the importance of Chinese so that they can use it to communicate with Cantonese speaking people, in particular, their parents.

However, the teaching of speaking and listening observed in this study was mostly carried out by reading out loud the texts from the textbooks (by teachers and the students in turns) and by listening to the teachers' speech. There were few

incidences when the students were encouraged to engage in conversational-type activities.

As stated at the beginning of this section, activities in the group are common in classrooms but were used less frequently in the Chinese classrooms. Nevertheless, in this study, students were observed to be working in pairs or small groups dependent on the ability of the students and the nature of the task. They are described in more detail within the classroom setting in Section 6.3.

During the research period, I observed participants in the Chinese classrooms carrying out role play only a few times and they were mainly in preparation for the ‘performance’ which has been discussed previously. The following discussion focuses on the kind of language games played in the Chinese classrooms.

Language games

Exercises in traditional Chinese exercise books were often used to provide variety to the classroom activity. For example, it was common to see word lists or sentences that have words but not in the correct word order. This requires students to make sentences using words from the word lists or to rearrange the sentences to make sense. These could be done individually in the exercise book although students sometimes found such a task boring. Some teachers managed to redesign the exercises into word games such as Chinese scrabble, Chinese cross words,

group competitions to write Chinese characters on the board, and found more positive student response these activities.

For instance, a group of children felt strongly the impact of changes in their classroom activity as a result of changing their classroom teacher. The previous teacher was described as ‘more fun’, ‘less forceful’. From the children’s descriptions, I am able to gather that the previous class teacher used to play games with the children. He asked students to rearrange mixed-up sentences, played ‘Chinese scrabble’ and other word games with students. While the new teacher relied more on the school textbooks and most of the time followed the routine similar to the one described in the first case in Section 6.1. The differences may be due to teachers’ own style as well as their experience.

In this case, the fact that the children volunteered the above information shows that the different styles between the present teacher and the previous teacher is a matter of interest to them. On the one hand, the children are expressing that the typical way of learning the lesson in a Chinese school is sometimes ‘boring’. And they prefer it when the teachers are more imaginative. On the other hand, the same group of children also have mixed feelings about whether or not to work hard in the class. One of the students (M) in this class admitted during the interview that he (and his classmates) “probably learn a lot more now”. It is interesting for the discussion to turn to look at the group of activities that are categorised as traditional language classroom activities.

6.2.3 Traditional Language Classroom Activities

An analysis of the teachers' background information against their choice of activity found no particular elements (such as training for the previous group) that would distinctively influence teachers' choice in this group of activities. The use of this group of activities, however, grew as the students' age group increased, as demonstrated in Fig 6.2 (p. 177). The group of students age 15 and older has a higher average (3.75) in involving in activities included in this category than those students of age 8 and under (3.1).

This group includes activities such as writing letters, translation, listening to the teacher, writing stories, writing sentences, learning language patterns, speaking Chinese to others, reading poems, using supplementary materials created by the teacher, and speaking to the teacher in Chinese. Many of these activities were described in Section 6.1.

During the course of the study, I realised that there was one traditional language classroom activity often carried out in the Chinese classrooms that had not been included in the teacher's questionnaire. It was so often observed and mentioned by the teachers and the students interviewed, and the following paragraphs will discuss this activity in some detail.

Gōngkè

A strong feature observed in the British Chinese classroom was *gongkè* ‘schoolwork and homework’. As indicated by its translation, the term ‘*gōngkè*’ is used to refer to both schoolwork and homework in traditional Chinese schools. A similar practice was also observed in the British Chinese classrooms. It was pointed out by the students as something distinctively different from their British schools. The term *gōngkè* often refers to the written exercises to be done by the students. On many occasions, *gōngkè* was given to be done during the class time by the students. And as mentioned earlier, when the students did not finish their *gōngkè* in the class, they were expected to take it home to finish in their own time. Students at the British Chinese schools were occasionally (as opposed to ‘always’ for students in the Chinese context) given *gōngkè* to do at home. In order to do so, children in many Chinese classes had two or more ‘homework books’ of their own (for a sample page, see Appendix M). These ‘homework books’ are different from those exercise books accompanying textbooks described earlier. They are thin notebooks, A5 size and about 48 pages, with squares instead of only lines. The size of squares on a page gets smaller and the number of squares on each page increases depending on the student’s age. Children do most of their written work in such a notebook. For example, for beginning learners of school age, their written task is often copying the newly learned characters from the board or the textbooks on top of each line and then copying the same characters several times along the line (in the case of Appendix M, students would be copying each character ten times).

Even though most students observed seemed to be familiar with such a practice, it must be a very different experience for new students at Chinese schools. In my own experience of teaching Chinese to British students, age 16 to 18, in mainstream schools, I had several times given different groups of students these sample pages and encouraged them to do what they like with the piece of paper. In the period of four years, there was only one student who had recently come to the UK from Japan to study, who spontaneously started to copy characters taught in the session along the line without being asked to do so (although it was not my intention either). Other students just treated the sheets the way they liked, such as abandoning it altogether, writing several characters in one square, or writing one character using several squares. Even students who were British-born with one-Chinese parentage had never attempted to use the exercise sheet in the same way. The particular meaning of the exercise sheets and *gōngkè* appeared to be a distinctively different activity of the British Chinese classrooms.

As students grow older, they might not be asked to copy one single characters as many times. Instead, they will be asked to copy phrases or to write compositions using the space. The idea of doing *gōngkè* might not always be a bad one as some students realise that practice helps them improve their learning of Chinese characters.

So far in this section, three categories of activities frequently used by the teachers in this study have been discussed. The following sub-section looks at activities

apparent from the above three groups but referred to by the teachers and the students as *tīngxiě* ‘dictation’ and tests.

6.2.4 Tests

In the context of the Chinese schools, tests are significant as they reveal a great deal about the formal aspect of the curriculum in terms of how it is implemented, how it is monitored, and how success is judged and evaluated. The content of tests used in the Chinese classrooms also indicates that there is a strong emphasis on literacy at the Chinese school. It also reveals the Chinese teachers’ ‘theory of learning’, that is, the role of memorisation, learning as receiving knowledge from the models (teachers, texts and textbooks), learning through one’s own mistakes, and learning as a modelling process rather than an exploration. Because tests have multiple purposes, the teachers in this study may have used tests much of the time without focusing on any of the particular aspects. The following paragraphs describe how tests were used in the Chinese classrooms by the teachers observed and discuss different functions of the activity of testing.

Although tests and exams are common in all kind of educational institutions, tests are regularly taken at Chinese schools in a formal way. In other words, there is class time set aside to hold formal tests. During my visits to the Chinese schools, there were several occasions when I observed teachers carrying out tests as one of the main classroom activities. The main reason for this may be that some of the visits were set at a time near the end of the school term. However, it is still interesting to

note that many Chinese classes have formal tests as a part of the curriculum despite the constant complaints from the teachers on the lack of time for teaching. Thus, testing appears to be one of the activities recognised easily by the teachers and the students.

The education system in Chinese-speaking regions has long had the reputation of being highly ‘examination-oriented’. This originated from the historical background of Chinese society, where the one and only way to achieve social mobility was by passing the different exams set out by the Emperor (Cleverley 1991). This is still the case in modern Chinese society. For example, a recent article in a newspaper’s children’s page was titled *Kǎoshì ràng wǒmen gèng cōngmíng* {Tests make us clever}. The article starts by stressing that tests are difficult. It then argues that *kǎoshì shì wèi le zēngjiā wǒmen duì zhīshì de jìyì ...* {Tests are for increasing our memorisation of knowledge ...}. It then goes on to give examples of the advantage of having tests and concludes *Kǎoshì kě zēngjiā wǒmen de sīkǎo nénglì, ràng wǒmen gèng cōngmíng* {Tests can increase our ability to think, make us clever}. The statement has its potential pitfalls. However, this kind of statement is something frequently included in Chinese children’s reading materials.

Testing seemed to be an important part of the curriculum in many of the Chinese schools I visited. In one interview, for example, Teacher G, explaining why there could not have been more ‘active’ activities, reported that several weeks of his class

time had to be set aside for tests and it had reduced the already limited teaching time.

G: Because if you think [of it this way] (.) Every year, from September to just before the Chinese New Year (.) There are about (.) 16 weeks, 15 weeks.

W: In fact, here aren't that many.

G: Yes. Say there're 16 weeks. You spend one week in exam, one week for induction, one week reviewing, and one week test.

The above statement indicated the agenda and the priorities of many of the Chinese teachers. The activities in the classrooms were mainly aimed at helping the students to learn Chinese literacy. The teachers sometimes felt they were under pressure to rush through lessons in the textbook to achieve two goals: (1) to show to the party interested (parents, headteacher, committee members) that progress was made in each school term, and (2) to keep up the students motivation as it would be discouraging to stay on the same piece of text for several weeks.

There are at least two 'types' of test-related activities in Chinese schools: dictation and formal testing. In an interview, I asked a group of children, T, D and S to explain to me their difference. T volunteered the answer:

T: Test .. you get this paper and there are some words .. and there're some mis .. and words muddled up and .. With dictation, you got to write it completely down.

(T 10, C)

Dictation, which in Chinese was referred to as *tīngxiě* 'listen and write' by the teachers and the students in this study, was a common practice in many Chinese classrooms. Teachers and students talked about it as part of the classroom norm,

though, for some classes, dictation only takes place occasionally. Dictation normally takes place at the start of each lesson. In the classes observed, the teacher read out words and phrases from the designated texts and gave the students enough time to write them down. As the use of texts and textbooks was found to be extensive, a separate section in Chapter 7 (7.2.3) is devoted to discuss the role of their use. In some cases, teachers asked their students to hand in the answer sheets after the dictation for the teacher to take home to correct. In most cases, teachers presented the correct answers on the board immediately after the dictation – either by writing the answers by themselves or asking students to come out and write the answers on the board. The students could then compare their answers with those written on the board to identify their own mistakes and make the corrections.

The purpose of this practice was to check the students' understanding of those words and phrases as well as to make sure that the students make the correct correspondence between the sounds and the Chinese characters. It was also a procedure to set a baseline for the lesson ahead. If all the students did well in the dictation, the lesson could move smoothly on and the following activities could make use of these words and phrases with which the students were familiar. If most of the students seemed to struggle with certain words, it was also a good opportunity to identify and clarify them. If the task seemed too difficult for the whole class, though this rarely happened according to my observation, the teacher had to stop the activity and some other activities or teaching were introduced to

keep the flow of the lesson. Dictation was also used for the summative evaluation as part of the formal test discussed below.

Many Chinese classes in this study had a formal testing time which is a period of time set aside especially for tests in each school term. Unlike dictation, there was a more marked differentiation between the ‘lesson’ and the ‘test’. These tests normally take place at the beginning or at the end of the term as placement tests or achievement tests for the previous term. The students were normally notified in advance. However, due to the varied nature of the classroom members, the results of either placement tests or achievement tests were only used as guidelines for the participants. The formal testing time was sometimes divided into smaller parts. The major part of the test was the test paper; but dictations and oral tests were sometimes also included in these tests. Here is an example from my observation, a record of the ‘rituals’ for the formal test that took place in the Chinese classrooms.

Extract 9

- 1 1:05 The teacher (T) arranged the seats for students to sit down in a certain order.
- 1: 08 T: jǔxíng zhè yì xuéqí de cèyàn.
 {The test for this term is now taking place. }
- 1.:10 T: chéngdù bùtóng de fēnkāi lái zuò.
6 { [Students] of different level should sit separately. }
- T: nádào juǎnzi yǐhòu, bǎochí ānjìng. Xiě shàng míngzì.
 { When you receive your test paper, keep quiet. Write down your name. }
- T distributed the papers.
- 11 T: qǐng bǎochí ānjìng.
 { Please keep quiet. }
- 1: 11 T: xiànzài yídiǎn shífēn. Xiān zuò tīngxǐe.
 { Now it's 10 past one. Let's do *tīngxǐe* ‘dictation’ first. }
- 16 T: dìyī: Yīnxiàng.
 { First: *Yīnxiàng* ‘impression’ ... }
- The dictation continues.

19

1:18 T finished dictating.

T: *hǎo. Jīezhe zuò xià qù.*

{OK. Continue and do the rest [of the test paper].}

Observation Diary: 16/07/1998, Class L6

Once the students settled down, the teacher handed out test papers and asked the students to fill in their name. If there was a dictation involved in the test, as in this case, there was often space provided somewhere on the test paper for the students to write their answers down. The dictation took place early on in the test time, as soon as all the students in the class were present, to avoid interruption once students started to answer the written questions on their test paper.

In the above sequence, the teacher first read out the phrase to be dictated twice. She then put the phrase into context by quoting from texts students had studied before, using examples that were familiar to the students or reminding the students of the chapter where the term appears in their textbooks. There were fifteen phrases in total. After the dictation, the teacher walked around to supervise students answering the test paper which the teacher had prepared and photocopied beforehand. The test paper included sections such as *tiánkòng* ‘fill in the blanks’ (which was an extract from one of the text students studied before), *jīeshì* ‘explain the phrases’ (students need to give definitions to the phrases asked), *gǎicùo* ‘find the wrong words’ (students have to single out characters that are miswritten or misplaced), and *chóngzǔ jùzi* ‘rebuild the sentence’ (where phrases in a sentence are placed in a random order, the students are required to rewrite the sentence in the correct word order).

The class teacher prepared the test paper to give to their students. The tests generally aimed at testing the students' ability to read and write Chinese characters. The format of the test paper was similar to that of the exercises in the students' textbooks and sometimes their exercise books in which the students often practise as part of their *gōngkè* (Section 6.2.3). These exercises are an important feature of the Chinese textbooks and are designed to 'exercise the various linguistic points more thoroughly' (Price, 1980). In one teacher training workshop I attended during the period of my research, one of the lecturers Mr. Z led the discussion on syllabus design and gave out a list of more than 38 possible formats for test paper questions. For example, some of them are to help students recognise characters including recognising strokes, counting strokes, matching characters with pictures, and finding correct or incorrect characters. Some are tests on grammatical items such as measure words, reduplicated words (noun, verb, or even adjectives) and compound words. There are also exercises on sentence structure level. For example, students are encouraged to complete an incomplete sentence, or to manipulate sentences in several different ways. Frequently used exercises include: *Chóngzǔ* 're-construct', where students are asked to re-arrange and complete a sentence using randomly mixed-up words, *Jùxíng liànxí* 'sentence pattern practice' and *Zàojù* 'make sentences', in which sentence writing based on the model sentence structures and the new characters learned in the text is required. Filling in blanks and translations of Chinese/English words/passages into English/Chinese are also common. Oral tests are not common in Chinese classrooms although several ways of testing were also suggested by the same lecturer (including story telling using pictures, reading

out loud words, phrases, and sentences, reciting texts and poems, and using conversations).

During the period of this research, only one teacher, Teacher S, was observed to give her students verbal tests. Teacher S made use of the time when her students were completing their written test papers to carry out the oral test. The students were asked to go to sit with Teacher S at a desk at the corner of the classroom. Teacher S then pointed at words and sometimes paragraphs in the textbook randomly for individual students to read aloud. The teacher would mark a grade in her book to add to the students' test result.

The contents of the written test papers were always related to what the students had learned to the point of the test. In other words, students were generally tested on the content of the texts which they had been studying: the characters, the sentence patterns, and the grammar points. On more than one occasion the students complained about the tests being 'too difficult' and the objections were rejected by their teachers, pointing out to the students that they should have learned all the materials in the class. Although the following episode is taken from the same lesson as the one just described, a similar situation was also observed in 'test' settings in other Chinese classrooms and this did not appear to be unique for this class.

Extract 10

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | 12:18 The teacher walked round the students' desks and read some questions out with the students [to clarify the students' problem]. |
| 4 | 12:19 T: <u>10 more minutes.</u> |
| | 12:20 The teacher found that there is a common question |

- 6 students kept asking her.
T [to the whole class]: What is *mobiuo* 'Cantonese: aim/goal'.
Some students answered.
Some of the students kept chatting to people sitting next
11 to each other, at the same time doing their paper. Some of
them laughed at the questions being not understandable.
Some students complained to the teacher that the
questions are too difficult to do.
12:23 T: All the questions are from your books, they are not
new things.

Observation Diary: 20/06/1998, Class Z

After the test, it was common for teachers to discuss the test results with the students, not so much the scores but the errors common to the students' answers. For example, I observed in one class the teacher spent about 10 minutes going through the test paper with her students.

Extract 11

- 1 ... [The teacher wrote the common mistakes and the
corrections on the board.]
2: 43 T: *hǎo, kàn xià yí tí.*
{OK, look at the next one.}
Student 6: *dì yī ge cuòle.*
6 {The first one is wrong.}
Student 3: " " *cuòle, yīnggāi shì* " "
{ " " is wrong, it should be " ".}
T: *zhè ge yǒu qī ge rén xiě cuò le: gèzhǒng gèyàng.*
{There are 7 people got this one wrong: all sorts of
[Teacher read out the phrase discussed.]...}
11 ... The process continued.
T: *gěi dàjiā gēngzhèng le yǐhòu, dàjiā kàn yí xià a!*
{We've made the corrections here. Every one should
have a look [at your paper for the mistakes later].}

Observation Diary: 16/07/1998, Class L6

During this process, the teaching and learning are shared by the teacher and the students. It is a strong Chinese belief that one should learn the most from one's own mistakes. Thus, the teacher stressed here the need for the students to go back and

review their errors on the test papers (Lines 13-16). It is interesting but not surprising to observe that there is a strong emphasis on literacy considering the long historic background of the Chinese script. This can also serve as an indication of the Chinese school's priorities. Even with the verbal test, it still involves reading aloud parts of texts: again testing of literacy – rather than a communicative type of test. It is important to note that tests and dictations at Chinese schools also have pedagogical/diagnostic functions. As stressed earlier, test results were rarely used for grouping children at Chinese schools. They were used by the teachers to help detect the children's progress and as a guideline for children's parents to help them make improvements while they are at home.

In sum, tests at Chinese schools had multiple purposes. Apart from using the tests to assess students' level in the Chinese language, tests were also used very much for their diagnostic function, that is, teachers use tests to monitor students' learning and to adapt and improve their teaching. The following episode is an example. The instance took place in a small mixed-ability class of five students. The student (Y) described here was the youngest in the class. Y was so much younger than the rest of the class, so the teacher spent time teaching her individually while the rest of the class were undertaking activities under the same teacher's supervision at the same time.

Extract 12

- 1 10:50 Teacher (T) went up to Y and discussed with her. T Then decided to give Y a dictation. T read out a few phrases [from Y's homework book] and asked Y to write them out on a piece of paper.
- 10:54 Y didn't do too well. T gave her back her homework book

- 6 and asked Y to copy the words and phrases again and learn them.
... The teacher carried out other activities with the other students in the class.
- 11 11:20 Y finished writing. T asked her to read those words and phrases she'd written out loud.
... [At the same time, the teacher was still working with the other students.]
- 16 11:22 Y was asked to put her homework book away and to write on a separate piece of paper [as a test] what she'd just written.
- ...
11:29 Y finished writing. T asked her to read it out.
11:30 T read out a poem from Y's homework book. Y repeated each sentence after T.

Observation Diary: 23/05/1998, Class: O1

In this instance, despite the fact that Y's learning was limited to copy and to learn the few words and phrases in her exercise book, dictation/test was used to determine the direction of learning.

It is worth noting though, from the above descriptions of the use of tests in Chinese classrooms, teachers also used the opportunities to teach their students as a whole group, explaining terms that were not familiar to most of the students, providing clues as to when the students had come across with such terms – even if they almost gave away the answers to the test questions. The main point was not really how many points the students score but the process of revision and learning. In other words, testing was an integral part of the teaching method, particularly where literacy was concerned.

The first two sections in this chapter have examined activities which took place in the Chinese classrooms. One of the factors affecting the variety of classroom

activities was time. With the very limited time available to the teachers, I observed many classrooms with similar routines, described in Section 6.1. Many teachers claimed that they were aware of the fact that the students preferred more interactive ways of learning (interactive activities or using other resources) but to do so would take them too much learning time. As noted earlier, most of the teachers claimed that they try to build some variety into the classroom activities and find these activities ‘very useful’ and ‘stimulating’ for the students. However, almost all the teachers followed their comments with statements such as “but there is very little time” or “it is impossible to do this every week”.

After exploring one micro-system, classroom activities, in the previous two sections, it seemed that the choices of the activities in the Chinese classrooms were influenced by one important factor, the make up of the students. The following section discusses one of issues related to the students, which is identified as basic and problematic in Chinese schools in the literature, the issue of mixed-ability/age group students.

6.3 MIXED-ABILITY/AGE GROUPS

As discussed in Chapter 2, the scattered nature of Chinese people in the UK meant that there were often not enough students of the same age and ability to be grouped into a desirable class size. Apart from a few large Chinese schools in London, most Chinese schools in this study reported that they had classes which often had students of varied ability and age. The Chinese schools, no matter large or small,

often have little choice of their intake of students. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Chinese schools normally take in students from the age of four, five or six. There is hardly any school which sets a maximum age limit. Depending on the size of the school, classes are organised roughly according to age at the same time considering the level of the students. In most cases, children at the Chinese schools are divided into classes numbered numerically. Class one is the class of students that are youngest in age and lowest at their level in the school, and Class two is one class above in both age and level of the students. It is evident that children will start from class one if they start their Chinese education at the same time as they start going to British schools. In the following year, these children would move up to the next level within that school smoothly as their progress can be closely monitored by the teachers. However, the variation in the level of language of the students increases in higher level classes as the students learn at a different pace. In larger schools, some students may be considered to be asked to repeat a year as they failed to catch up with the rest of the group. While in smaller schools, the students might be staying with their group year after year and the differences within each learning group gradually increases as they move on.

Not only does the above description illustrate the situation in the Chinese classrooms, but it also reveals issues that require consideration in any setting where mixed-ability/age groups are concerned. First of all, it is important to find out how the different students' needs can be accommodated when the variations between the students are considerable. Elaborating the case of the Chinese schools, whenever

there were new students registering at the school, there was a problem locating them into appropriate groups. It became a dilemma whether the new students should be placed according to their age or ability especially if they were not young children. The new students may be placed in a group suitable to their level with the risk of being in a group where the activities seem too childish for their age, whilst if the students were placed in a group of their own age, they may find the class too advanced for them. Another alternative was for the new students to join a group in between the two described. For Chinese schools that were not in areas with a big Chinese population, the third alternative may be impossible. Although differences between students in classrooms is usual, it is important to assess the differences carefully and try to find a remedy. Donaldson (1978) has shown that,

[i]t is universally recognized that when children come to school, there is a wide gap between those who are best prepared and those who are least prepared for school learning. The question then is how to close the gap early, for if it is not soon closed it will widen. This is the way with gaps of such kind. (p. 98)

In the case of the Chinese classrooms, such a gap may be narrowed by the culture of learning 'collectively'. Chapter 7 (7.1.1) will discuss this point in some detail.

6.3.1 Learning Collectively

In traditional Chinese teaching and learning, the 'collective' emphasis that is described or even stressed in much of the literature regarding the Chinese culture of learning is evident in this respect (Hofstede 1986; Bond 1986; Cortazzi 1990; Cleverley 1991; Biggs 1996; Cortazzi & Jin 1996a; Jin & Cortazzi 1998). A

discussion of this emphasis is in Chapter 2. Despite the existence of mixed-age/ability groups in the classrooms, there was whole class teaching for the majority of the class time in the Chinese classrooms in this study. One reason is that it is believed that children can learn from not only the books and the teacher, but each other. Children were encouraged to attempt answers, to correct each other (without disturbing the rest of the class), to self-monitor and to learn from each other's mistakes. Students were expected to keep up with the class in all aspects of learning in order for the whole class to progress at a similar pace. Classroom discussions were often observed as they provided opportunities for the whole class to learn while questions to the teacher/other students were common for the slower learners to catch up with the others. If not participating directly, the students would be observing the teacher or other members of the class who were carrying out the tasks. As part of a school day, this practice was described in Section 6.1.

The aim of putting students in one class is not only to close the gaps between the students, but also to help them progress at more or less the same pace. The teachers in this study were facing a tougher task. With the differences between their students already huge, the resources, such as assistants or parent helps, available to the teachers were scarce.

Some of the teachers tried to overcome this situation by delegating some of the responsibilities to their students (also a practice common in traditional Chinese context which is renowned for large size classes). Students acting as 'helpers' to

their teachers were observed both in the whole class situation and also in smaller groups. The following two extracts of the student and the teacher interviews illustrate the kind of help the teachers often rely on from the students.

Q: I've always been the translator [for the class].

...

W: So, what do you translate?

Q: I translate English for them [the members of the class].

W: Right. So the teacher say something (.) and if other people don't understand and they go .. like that.

D: Ya ..

Q: She asked me what XXX uh (.) like. She asked me what's the (.) What type (.) which part of body (.) What is something that machine do (.) The mower and I just tell them 'the mower' the word [in Cantonese].

(D 11, Q 10, C)

The teacher of this class is a native Cantonese speaker. There is no doubt that she knew what 'the mower' is in Cantonese. Still, the students are encouraged to use and practise Cantonese as 'a translator' or sometimes answering the teachers' question silently in cases with students who are shy. It seems that there is a natural acceptance that some children know more than the others and the teachers use that as a way to help both groups of students, and it directly reflects in the way Chinese teachers organise their classrooms. The next extract is from Teacher H's interview. In the interview, Teacher H repeatedly told me how she encouraged help from her students to facilitate students working in groups.

H: But they do (.) pick up [learn things in groups] (.) Even if they are shy .. If they've got the right leader.

W: Uhm.

H: Sometimes, some children are more (.) forward than the others. And that child could actually be a leader. (.) And when you get a good leader (.) Then, the children who are normally shy can become very forward as well.

W: Uhm. So, you actually support the leader to be the leader.

H: You do. (.) They (.) they're naturally shining through (.) Some of them just (.) you know, they may not be the very best (.) you know, but they've got their personality.

W: Uhm.

H: They know how to (.) you know, create that group feeling.

The teacher's comment brought back memories from my own school days in Taiwan. Through the nine years of primary and secondary schools, members in my class (and in many other classes at my school) were often grouped into *pái* 'a line' where there was a *páizhǎng* 'line leader' to help teachers in many aspects: from collecting exercise books, helping members from the *pái* on problems in different lessons after the class, and even sometimes helping the teachers to mark test papers. It was an honour to be selected by the class teacher as a *páizhǎng* although it very often meant spending the break time and staying in after the school to help other children in the *pái* voluntarily. Sometimes teachers would leave the right of selection to the students. A good *páizhǎng*, from my experience, is someone who is friendly, willing to help, and most importantly, someone who performs well academically. However, this is not necessarily the case in the British Chinese classroom due to the difference in circumstances. As there were large size classes for us (50-60 students in a class) most of the time, and we rarely saw any 'assistant teacher' or any other adult except our classroom teacher in the class, the existence of the small group leaders naturally became the main source of help in the classroom. A similar scheme is also practised in the People's Republic of China, as Dong described in their comparative study (Hudson-Ross & Dong 1990):

In after-class study groups organized with the participation of parents, teachers, and children, children are grouped by different

levels so that they can help each other. All children are simply expected to maintain the same level of achievement. ...

(Hudson-Ross & Dong 1990, p. 122)

It appeared that this characteristic feature of the culture of the Chinese classroom was adopted by many Chinese teachers at the British Chinese schools in this study. In this aspect, the teachers at Chinese schools seemed to me working closely to their Chinese tradition. This may be due to the fact that, as explained in Chapter 4 (4.3), many teachers did not have much training in this particular area and had very little idea about British schools. Thus, it was natural for them to fall back on their own experience at school and try their best to create an effective learning environment under sometimes very difficult circumstances.

There are two implications in this practice. First, there is a strong emphasis on the whole class progressing together and on collective responsibility in these Chinese classrooms. As a result, the older/ more able children are involved in supporting others in the class. Second, it shows that some features of Chinese education can be used in a very positive way. If this type of tutoring is operated carefully, the benefit is all round. For example, Cummings (1988) reported the use of junior students as helpers in teaching bilingual children (including a few Cantonese speaking children) at a very young age (age 3-4). In evaluating the programme, Cummings claims that there are three important/positive results for enlisting students' help:

1. The confidence of the older children has increased considerably.
2. They are more willing to talk generally about what goes on outside school ...

3. Members of their own class are becoming more interested in learning about other languages.

(Cummings 1998, p. 163)

What the British Chinese teachers were concerned with was finding a style that was appropriate for them to cope with and for their students to be able to learn. Some of the issues and practices raised above may be in a way unique to the British Chinese school context, yet they provide possibilities for looking at discipline and learning in the classroom in a different light. There are things to be learned from both the Chinese and the British learning culture in order to promote learning in the world where boundaries seem to be blurring.

The above sub-section looks at the students in these groups. As discussed in the previous two sections, mixed-age/ability groups appeared to be one of the factors offering choice of activities for different groups in Chinese classrooms. Chapter 7 (7.1.2) will elaborate on this particular point.

6.3.2 Influences of Mixed-Ability/Age Groups on the Classroom Activities

From my observation, there was a wide diversity of teaching styles in Chinese classrooms. It was partly due to teachers having to cope with mixed-ability and the wide variation in the proficiency of the children. Some of the students could hardly read and write Chinese at all; others were fluent in spoken Chinese with good level of literacy. Most of the students could speak very well but variation still existed. With very limited resources available, some teachers at Chinese schools related to

their experience in the Chinese context and introduced more able students to help facilitate students' learning in the classrooms. Mixed-ability classes are an issue that is difficult to face for teachers as well as the students. In the case of the British Chinese schools here, both British and Chinese educational concepts are used, and the teachers used a wide variety of teaching activities (Section 6.2).

The more homogeneous a group, the easier it is for the teacher to carry out one activity at a time. When I observed the teachers in this study dealing with the wide variation between their students' age and ability, I found that they tended to use certain activities and to avoid using others. As noted in the previous sub-section, most of the teachers in this study chose to teach their class in a whole group. However, groups of students working in small groups were also observed.

Group work can free time for the teachers to work with specific, smaller groups of students giving specific guidance where required. Some of the teachers in this study relied on their students to provide support in teaching groups more effectively. For example, Teacher H was particularly happy with the quality help she received from her students, as she reported:

H: Uh (2) Yes. I do use group work. (2) Uhm (2) Not very often I must admit. It's only whenever I've got something quite difficult to explain to (2) as a whole class. When I haven't got time to (2) explain to each and every of them. And I try to (2) ask someone who would say (2) And I've given them assignment to do.

W: Uhm.

H: Some finish in no time. (laugh) The others (2) (laugh) they don't know what to do. I try to use (2) I try to ask (2) the one

that finished go and help the younger one and explain to them.
If they still can't do it, then they come to me.

In most cases, the students were grouped to work together on tasks given by the teacher under the teacher's supervision. Sometimes, the class fell into different groups naturally as the students started to work in groups that were of a similar age and ability. For instance, the following episode is from one small school which has only one class. On this occasion, there were only five students: Y is a 6 year-old girl. A is a 22 year-old girl. B is a 18 year-old boy (A and B are brother and sister). C is a 17 year-old boy. And there is another girl who is 16 years old.

Extract 13

- 1 10:42 The teacher was working with A, B and C. Y and S joined the group. [They sat down opposite to the teacher.] The teacher asked A, B, C and S to do some written exercise.
- 10:45 Teacher went to Y, asked what she'd written. The teacher gave Y some more instruction.
- 6 10:50 After clarifying some questions from A, B, C and S, the teacher went to sit with Y and gave her a dictation. There were some questions occasionally from the other group, the teacher answered.
- ...
- 11 11:00 Teacher asked A to read out what she has written down. The teacher checked and corrected the mistakes found in her work. Teacher then did the same with B. C and S were discussing and making up their answer together.
- 16 Y was copying some characters on her exercise book.
- 11:04 The teacher worked with A, B, C and S on ..
- ...

Observation Diary: 23/05/1998, Class O1

It was unavoidable that teachers in this kind of situation spend more time with the majority of the students in the class. However, if the situation is not controlled carefully, it may lead to reducing the students' motivation in learning Chinese. In

one instance, two student interviewees described to me their classroom activity as ‘doing the same thing repeatedly’. I asked them to clarify the point.

V: *yīnwèi, (.) dúle yíci guòqù (1). Zhè táng kè méiyǒu tándào. Yòu xià lǐbài zài dú yíci.*

Because, (.) after reading it once (1) We didn’t discuss it in this lesson. We’ll have to read it again next time.

...

W: *nà (.) zěnmē huì dú le yǐhòu méiyǒu tándào? Nǐmen méiyǒu mǎshàng tāolùn shìbúshì?*

Then, (.) How come you did not discuss it after reading it? Didn’t you discuss it straight away?

...

V: *nà (.) yīnwèi wǒmen shì gēn nà ge sì niánjí yìqǐ de.*

Then (.) because we are in the same class with the Year 4 students.

A: *sǔoyǐ, lǎoshī qíshí jiāo xiǎobān de.*

So, the teacher was teaching the younger ones.

V: *xīan jiāo xiǎobān de, zài jiāo wǒmen.*

She teaches the younger ones first, then us.

W: *ou.*

Oh.

V: *wǒmen jiù zuòzài nàbian ..*

We’d be sitting there ..

A: (laugh)

W: *sǔoyǐ (.) lǎoshī tāmen (.) lǎoshī zài jiāo xiǎobān de shíhòu, nǐmen jiù méi shìqíng zuò.*

So (.) The teachers they (.) when the teacher is teaching the younger ones, you don’t have anything to do.

A: *dú kèwén.*

Reading the text.

V: *jiù dú kèwén.*

Reading the text.

(A 14, V 14; M)

As discussed in Section 6.2, students’ age could sometimes affect the activities teachers chose to use in the classrooms. It was therefore not surprising to sense conflicts when older students were asked to work with a group of much younger ones. The conflict was more serious as outlined in the interview extract above. There was a sense of resentment from the above interview as the two girls were asked to do exactly the same task over and over again, especially while the task

appeared to be boring to the girls. They saw little point in reading the same texts several times without further input or stimuli for them to develop the task further.

Apart from the use of group work, mixed-age/ability groups also affected the arrangements in the classrooms. Several teachers pointed out that they had to limit the use of pair-work in their classes for this reason. For example, Teacher S explained to me in the interview the reason that she had never used pair-work in her class.

S: /// Maybe I should, but I (3) just never considered it. You know, because I mean, we didn't (2) the thing is, how they sit now. It's like they sit with their good friend.

W: Right.

S: and then, basically, they are on the same level. So, may be this pair, they could really work out fine (2) In another pair, they haven't got a clue.

W: Right (3) So it doesn't seem appropriate to put this one and that ...

S: Ya, and if you sort of mix them up, and the boys don't want to talk with the girls.

W: Ya. It's the teenager thing.

S: You know what I mean, it's really hard. I think it's to do with their age. Also, you know. If it's an adult class, it would be much much mature (2) You can always do pair work with adults.

In this extract, there were several concerns. First, as will be discussed in Chapter 8 (8.3), the Chinese school was also a place for the students to socialise. The teachers in the Chinese classrooms seldom paired their students but allowed the students to form groups themselves. As a consequence, not all groups would function effectively. The teacher was also concerned about students' age and the suitability of activities especially when it was a mixed-ability group situation. In other interviews, the teachers also voiced their concern as they considered activities

such as group work would require much more attention from the teachers to be divided and talked about the possibility of introducing class assistant, as some of them observed, from mainstream classrooms. On the other hand, the teachers themselves also pointed out that in the case of the Chinese schools where even class teachers were difficult to find, it was hardly an option to consider the introduction of any class assistant.

6.4 Summary

This chapter was divided into three sections to examine two micro-systems in the ecology model developed in this study, classroom activities and the mixed-ability/age groups of students. Extracts of classroom observations and discussions were put together to provide a general picture of events and activities in the Chinese classrooms and the Chinese schools. The second section discussed three groups of activities frequently observed in the Chinese classroom, everyday activities, interactive activities and traditional language classroom activities. It also considered one activity that was often observed and noted by the participants in every classroom but did not fall into any of the above groups: the use of tests in the classrooms. The micro-system of mixed-age/ability group contributes to the development of culture as the participants, the teachers and the students, were learning to negotiate their roles and activities in the classroom. Section 6.3 has looked at two of the aspects of this micro-system: the students learning collectively and how the nature of the groups affected the teachers' choice of activities in the classrooms.

CHAPTER 7

ELEMENTS OF THE CHINESE CLASSROOMS

Chapter 6 has presented a picture of the British Chinese classrooms by discussing two micro-systems in the adopted ecology model in this study: classroom activities and the mixed-ability/age groups. Classroom routines in Chinese schools as well as activities carried out in the Chinese classrooms were highlighted. The impact of always having mixed-ability/age groups in classrooms was also discussed. As discussed in Part I, many factors contribute to the situation in British Chinese schools. To say the least, the involvement of the people and the importance of literacy are both crucial in the development of culture of the school/classrooms. In this study, these factors are discussed in a further four 'micro-systems' in the Ecology Model of Learning Cultures. This chapter examines these micro-systems in separate sections. The first section of this chapter examines the students' learning strategies using the results from the students' SILL questionnaire. The second part of this chapter considers the role of texts and textbooks and how it relates to the culture of learning in the Chinese classrooms. The third section discusses the role of the teachers and the students, before the micro-system of the Chinese school as a place of learning is examined in the final section.

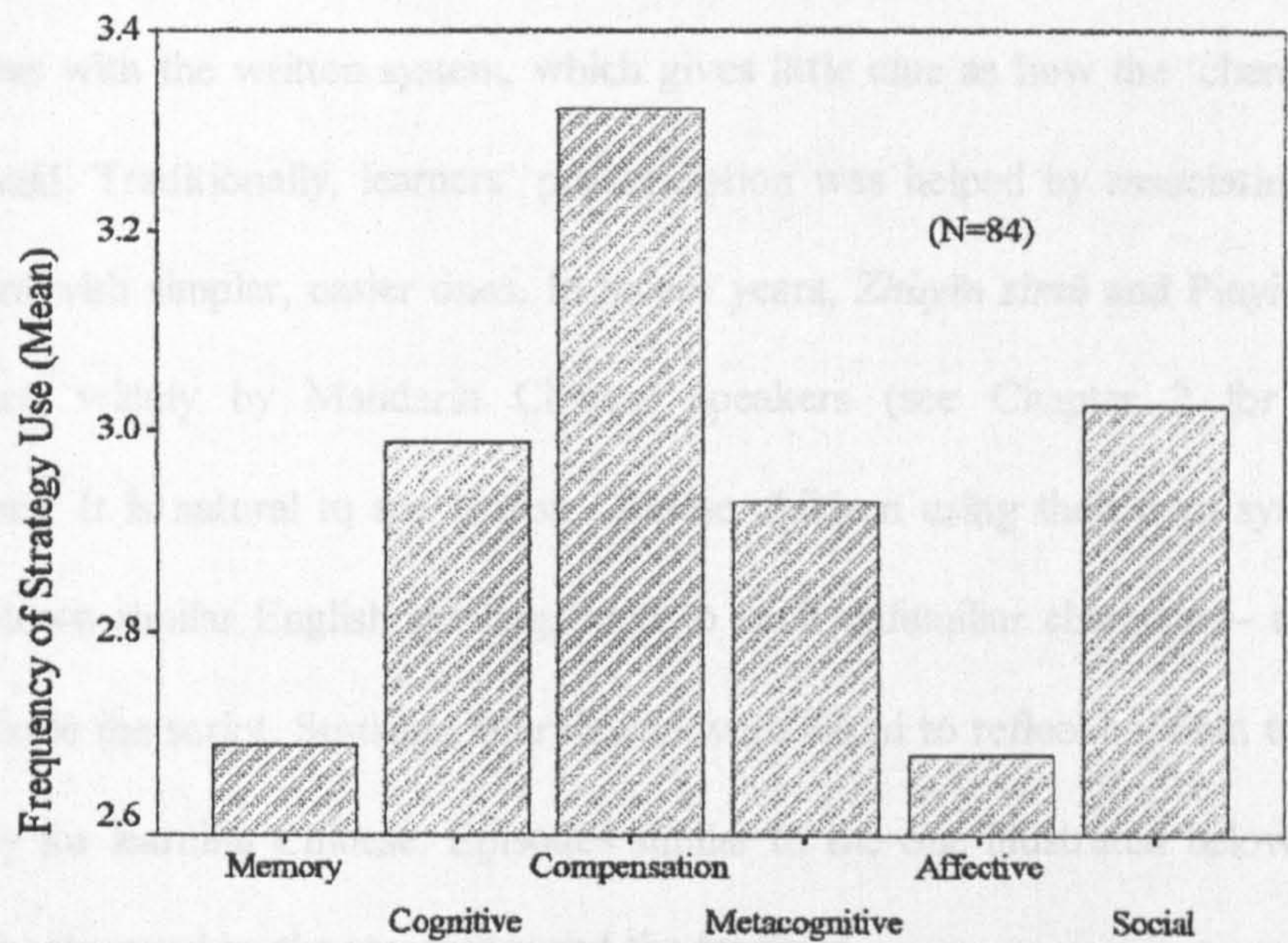
7.1 STUDENTS' LEARNING STRATEGIES

As discussed in detail in Chapter 5 (5.3), the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 5.1 developed by Oxford in 1989 was used in this study for analysing the students' strategy use when they were learning the Chinese language (Oxford 1990). A copy of SILL is provided in Appendix D. There are a total of 80 items in the inventory. Students were asked to rate the statements about their use of strategies listed from 1 (never or almost never true) to 5 (always or almost always true). The strategies listed are in 6 categories: memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective, and social. The categories have been discussed in Chapter 3 (3.1.1). The results gathered from the use of the inventory can be understood by comparing the means to the scores of categories: the higher the mean to each group of strategies, the higher the use of strategies is reflected. The mean score ranging from 1.0 to 2.4 indicates low use of strategies while 2.5 to 3.4 shows medium use of strategies. The mean score above 3.5 suggests high use of learning strategies.

In this study, the overall SILL mean was 2.94, with a standard deviation of 0.50. This indicates that the subjects' overall use of strategies was in the medium range. The reliability of the 80 items was counted ($\text{Alpha} = 0.94$). Reliability coefficients of the SILL sub-scales are acceptable (memory: 0.72; cognitive: 0.84; compensation: 0.59; metacognitive: 0.86; affective: 0.68; social: 0.79). The groups of strategies ordered from the most to the least frequently used are compensation (3.32), social (3.03), cognitive (2.99), metacognitive (2.93), memory (2.69), and affective (2.68).

The result is shown graphically in Fig. 7.1. Each group of strategies will be discussed following the way they are ordered in the SILL.

Fig. 7.1 Strategies used by the students



Memory strategies

Memory strategies were ranked second lowest in this study. Several strategies in this group were rarely used, such as physically acting out the new word (1.76), listing all the other words related to the new word (1.86), using flashcards (1.87), scheduling learner's own schedule of reviewing (2.37) or using rhyming to remember (2.38). The most frequently used memory strategy was associating the sound of a new word with a familiar word (3.50). The last strategy has reached the high level (above 3.5).

Although memory strategies were not used frequently by the students, they were most often spontaneously discussed by the students themselves in the interviews during the study. One of the reasons may be that Chinese is not an alphabetical language. In order to operate the four skills in Chinese, learners need to familiarise themselves with the written system, which gives little clue as how the ‘characters’ will be said. Traditionally, learners’ pronunciation was helped by associating new characters with simpler, easier ones. In recent years, *Zhùyīn zìmǔ* and Pinyin have been used widely by Mandarin Chinese speakers (see Chapter 2 for more discussion). It is natural to see British Chinese children using their own system – writing down similar English spellings next to each unfamiliar characters– to help them decode the script. Students interviewed were asked to reflect on what they do especially for learning Chinese. Episodes similar to the one illustrated below were frequently observed by the researcher and the teachers.

A: Yes. Other language, you can sort of say it, or guess when you look at it. But you have to remember Chinese [characters] in order to use it.

W: What do you mean?

A: I sometimes have to write English on the side to help me remember it.

B: Me too.

...

C: I write down English as well.

(A 22, B 18, C 17, C)

This is also echoed in many other interviews and, as a consequence, suggests that there might be the need to memorise, for example:

L: (1) It’s just the way the Chinese is. Uh (.) Like in English. Well, in uh (.) the Western languages, you get the alphabets and you

can read your words through the alphabets .. But in Chinese,
you have to ... you know, remember the characters ...

(L18, C)

Many of the students noticed that they had to spend a lot of their time trying to
'learn' things that have been taught. For example,

L: You have to learn (.) you learn, learn to read, learn to
pronounce the words (1) It's actually quite similar (.) to learn a
language.

(L18, M)

However, some of them argued that it was not exclusive to the learning of the
Chinese language.

W: For example, when you are learning French or Spanish, (.) do
you also need to memorise again and again?

A: Yes, (.) we also need to memorise vocabularies.

V: Uhm ...

(A 14, V 14, M)

This echoes some of the participating teachers' opinion that both 'memorising' or
'learning new words' are part of the process of learning any new language.
Furthermore, many teachers interviewed explained that due to the nature of the
Chinese writing system, a certain degree of memorising is necessary for learning the
Chinese language. Memorisation is only one step on the path to internalisation:
students need to understand the meaning of words in order to memorise them and
later use them. However, the acknowledgement of the need to memorise and
practise does not prevent some students from feeling that the process of continuous
memorisation is 'boring'. It is important to find the balance between effective
practising and keeping the students' interest.

Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies are strategies involving a learner's mental processes. One of the strategies reaching high frequency of use in this sub-scale was reading a story/dialogue several times until reaching understanding (3.52). This reflected in some way the beliefs shared between the teachers and the students as many of the activities described in the previous two sections (6.1 and 6.2) promoted the use of this strategy. The most frequently cited strategy in this group and the second highest in the whole SILL was using reference materials to facilitate the use of the new language (3.71). Three strategies in this group fell in the low frequency range, namely using idioms or other routines in the new language (2.31), writing personal notes, messages, letters or reports (2.36), and reading for pleasure (2.37). The results are interesting as the strategy reported here as most frequently used was never observed in the Chinese classrooms, and two of the strategies reported of low use, using idioms and other routines and writing letters and reports, were those reported to be used frequently in the classrooms. There are several implications from this finding and I list three below. (1) Some of the students may find that they need the help from their teachers to carry out certain tasks such as using idioms or writing letters. (2) Some students may find that they were often asked to use the strategies by their teachers in the Chinese classrooms which were personally unsuitable. (3) It may be a strategy learned from the students' British school or there may not be enough support in the students' family, like the constant monitoring the teachers provided in the classrooms, which resulted in the students' motivation to consult reference materials such as dictionaries.

Compensation strategies

The most commonly used strategies in this study were strategies for compensating missing knowledge in the production or comprehension of the target language (3.32). The most frequently cited strategy in this group and in the whole SILL was guessing the meaning of an unknown word by using clues such as those from the context or situation (4.17). The result was not a surprising one. As noted in Chapter 2 and Chapter 6 (6.1), many Chinese characters shared the property of ‘basic radicals’ which are pictographs and carry specific meanings, the image of the unknown word and its context can often offer clues to the meaning of the word.

The students also reported frequent use of three strategies: they used gestures or reverted temporarily to their main language when problems arose using the language they were learning (3.75), they asked another person for the right expression in a conversation (3.64), and they also used paraphrasing frequently (3.39). The strategy used least often in this group was making up new words.

Metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategies refer to the strategies which the students used to organise and evaluate their own learning. Learning from mistakes was the strategy scoring highest (3.58) in this group. The second frequently used strategy in this group was a similar strategy: noticing the student’s own language errors and the reasons for them (3.24). Concentrating when someone is speaking Chinese (3.21) was the third frequently used strategy. These three strategies linked closely to the activities

observed in the Chinese classrooms in this study as discussed in Chapter 6 (6.1 and 6.2).

There was only one strategy in this group that fell in the low frequency range. Planning schedules for studying Chinese each day/week (2.37) was the strategy used least often in this group. This may be due to the very short time the students spent at the Chinese schools. Furthermore, the casual nature of the Chinese school (students missing lessons without prior notice) which made arranging tight study schedules almost impossible for studying either by the teachers or the students.

Affective strategies

Affective strategies are strategies learners apply to manage their own emotions concerning language learning. One strategy reaching high frequency of use in this group was encouraging themselves to take risks in language learning (3.57). Keeping a language learning diary was the least used strategy (1.57). The students reported moderate use of the other strategies which helped them to adjust to the pressures arising when studying or using Chinese.

Social strategies

Social strategies are strategies learners use when learning with other people. This group of strategies scored the third highest in this study. This result is different from previous findings of research on Chinese subjects. For example, Bedell and Oxford

(1996) review 36 studies (14 using SILL, 22 using different strategy systems) and compare these studies with Bedell's study (1993) on language learning strategies and find this group to be generally unpopular among the Chinese subjects, thereby suggesting the presence of a different learning culture in this study.

The most frequently cited strategy in this group was asking people to repeat or slow down when they have difficulty understanding (3.67). The students reported moderate use of strategies concerning asking other people to verify understanding (3.26), to correct their pronunciation (3.26), and asking others for help (3.12). As for many Chinese students in this study, their Chinese learning mainly took place at Chinese schools in the Chinese classrooms, moderate use of strategies related to working with other people were also reported: working with other learners to practise and share information (3.01), asking questions in order to be involved in conversations in Chinese (2.94), and paying attention to the thoughts and feelings of other people. The activities carried out in the Chinese classrooms and the students' family environment may also promote the use of social strategies such as learning about the Chinese culture (2.88). Only one strategy in this category, having a regular language learning partner, was reported low use (2.24). This may partly be due to the geographically scattered nature of the Chinese community as discussed in Chapter 2. As a result, students in one geographically area only had little contact with other Chinese children outside their Chinese school environment.

The discussion in this section is devoted to the strategies students use when learning Chinese in order to give another dimension to the understanding of factors contributing to the development of culture in the Chinese classrooms. The next section looks at the role of texts and textbooks and how they contribute to the development of culture.

7.2 THE ROLE OF TEXTS AND TEXTBOOKS

The use of texts and textbooks in teaching is one feature of the Chinese culture of learning which has been observed by researchers over time. As described in Chapter 2 (2.3.2), teachers or potential teachers who are used to the ‘textbook/workbook culture’ may not have the opportunities to explore other resources in teaching. The issue of using textbooks in Chinese schools in the UK is even more complex: the textbooks/workbooks not being easily available, the contents not always being appropriate, and when the exercises seem to be too difficult for the students, the teachers feel strongly obliged to create their own worksheets. This section begins to examine the role of texts and textbooks by looking at some examples of texts and textbooks the teachers in this study used in their classrooms. The original copies of the texts discussed in this section are provided in Appendix H, I, J and K.

7.2.1 Texts and Textbooks Used in the Classrooms

The study of textbooks and their usage has its implications for Chinese schools in the UK. Not only were many of the textbooks used in the British Chinese classes

produced in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, but, more importantly, most teachers at Chinese schools grew up using these textbooks and were educated with the particular teaching methods and ideologies contained within them. The practice of reading and writing, dictation and tests described in Chapter 6 may have their background in the teachers' own education, which in turn influence the children in the British Chinese schools.

During the investigation, I spent time examining some of the textbooks used by Chinese schools in the UK. The textbooks discussed in the following paragraphs are included in the bibliography. It was a difficult task as most of the Chinese schools chose the textbooks used for their pupils based on several different issues such as the origin of the majority of the teachers, their access to the information, and their own experience. As a result, UK Chinese schools differ widely in the textbooks appointed for student use.

One set of textbooks I examined was supplied by the Taiwanese government for teaching Chinese children overseas (especially in English-speaking countries, as they are in Chinese and English). Generally, the lessons were organised around moral or factual themes. For example, In the *Children's Chinese Reader 4* (Children's Chinese Reader, 1991), there are 12 lessons in the book in the form of short texts. Lessons 1 to 7 are aimed to help children develop socialisation skills. Lessons 8 to 12 introduce the theme of the zoo and animal protection.

Also targeting overseas (especially English-speaking countries) Chinese children, *Ertong Hanyu* (Sinolingua, 1997), a Chinese reader privately published in Beijing, appears to be very different from the traditional ones. The texts are in the form of dialogues, and the organisation of the lessons is based on grammar points. It is notable that most of the privately published Chinese textbooks for non-native speakers are in this style, for example, *Practical Chinese Reader, Teach Yourself Series: Chinese* (Scurfield & Song, 1996).

Another set of textbooks, which was used by the majority of the Chinese schools observed and reported to be used by the teachers interviewed in this study was the one published by UKFCS, originally developed by a committee set up by the Hong Kong government and now turned over to the group of committee members in the UK. There are around 20 lessons in each book of this set. The lessons are again organised around recurring themes in these books (such as ‘my home’, ‘the four seasons’, ‘Christmas’, and ‘Chinese New Year’). However, less strong moral messages are presented than previously. Instead, the texts in these books contain comparatively simple language and short texts. As this study is not aimed at analysing the texts in detail, but to provide the readers with a sense of the texts involved in teaching at the Chinese schools, I choose the following three texts, one each from the set in Books 2, 3 and 4, to demonstrate the kind of texts used by many of the participants in this study. Some observation and interview extracts about activities involving these texts are also included to illustrate how the texts were used in the classrooms.

The first example here is the 23rd lesson in book 2, the title of which is *Shǔigǔo* ‘fruits’ (Appendix H):

hónghóng de píngguǒ
{ Apples are red,}
lùlù de xīguā
{ watermelons are green,}
yǒuyì de shǔigǔo
{ fruits are beneficial,}
wǒmen dōu ài chī
{ We all love to eat [fruits].}

In this lesson, students learn the words associated with colours and fruits. Some of the texts in these textbooks are related to holidays and festivals which can be made to relate to British Chinese children’s own experience. For instance, the next example is the 16th lesson from Book 3, titled *Fùhúojie* ‘Resurrection holiday’ (Appendix I).

fùhúojie lái le
{ Here comes Resurrection/Easter holiday.}
Gūmā sòng yì lán fùhúodàn gěi wǒmen
{ Aunt sent us one basket of Easter eggs.}
Cǎisè de fùhúodàn
{ Colourful Easter eggs,}
piàoliang yòu hǎochī
{ [They are] beautiful and delicious.}

Including the above text, many of the texts studied contain cultural content: both Chinese and British cultures are included in these textbooks. Apart from major British holidays described above, Chinese festivals are also included as study content. The texts are developed in much detail as they progress through books on more advanced levels. Some of the texts are in a form resembling short stories. The

next example is the 17th lesson in Book 4, the title of which is *Dūanwǔjié* ‘dragon boat festival’ (Appendix J).

Jīntiān fāngxué hújīa
{Today when I went home after school,}
dìdì shuō: “zhūozi shàng fāngzhe yìxiē hǎochī de dōngxī ne.”
{ [My] younger brother said: “There are some delicious things on the table”.}
Wǒ liánmáng pǎoqù kàn
{I ran promptly to have a look.}
À! Yúanlái shì zòngzi
{Ah!.[They] are zòng zi(stickly rice wrapped in bamboo leaves).}
Māma shuō: “jīntiān shì dūanwǔjié, wǒmen chī zòngzi
{Mum said: “Today is Dragon boat festival, we’ll eat “zòng zi”.}
Rúguǒ zài xiānggǎng, wǒmen hái kěyǐ kàn sàilóngchúan.
{If we were in Hong Kong, we can [even] see dragon boat competition.}

Attempts are made to link students’ experience in the UK, providing them, where possible, with extra cultural knowledge. The texts may be short and simple, and dependent on the teachers’ elaboration of the texts in the classroom. Furthermore, most of the Chinese textbooks available for Chinese schools (including those prepared for Chinese children overseas) come with sets of teachers’ manuals as well as exercise books. Wilson (1970) observed the usage of the teachers’ manuals for a particular textbook,

In order to facilitate these objectives [as described of the texts] a teacher’s guide book has been compiled. Each lesson is discussed and the teacher instructed on how to teach the relevant theme. Emphasis is placed on the points of stress, the goal of the lesson, how much time to use, how to prepare, and what teaching aids to employ. All teachers are expected to use these guides.(p. 168)

Although the texts and the guidelines apparently limited choice both to teachers and students, these texts and guidelines are generally used as ‘basics’ and the more

capable teachers and students will try to create and develop what the students already know. As Stevenson & Stigler (1992) explained in their comparative study of learning in the United States, Japan and China,

... [The texts] present the essence of the lesson, with the expectation that the teacher will elaborate and supplement the information with other materials. (p. 139)

Apart from texts in the textbooks, Chinese *chéngyǔ* 'idioms' and poems were also often observed being taught at the Chinese schools as supplementary material. Unlike the textbooks used in the Chinese context, textbooks used in the UK do not contain as many poems and texts which incorporate *chéngyǔ* 'idioms' (which is often in the literary form or involves a fixed expression required substantial background information) as they may be too difficult for some students. However, many British Chinese teachers still introduced poems and nursery rhymes in their classrooms for the benefit of practising pronunciation and helping children to appreciate the beauty of the language. In Section 7.2.2, an example of a nursery rhyme and how it was taught will be used to describe a scenario observed many times in the Chinese schools, after some of the poems and rhymes that are taught at these Chinese schools are considered.

Some easy, classical poems in literary style were observed being taught occasionally to children at Chinese schools. A well-known one is written by a famous poet, Li Bo, in the Tang Dynasty, *Yèisī* 'night thought' (Appendix K).

chuáng qián míng yuè guāng
{The bright moon light in front of the bed.}

yí shì dì shàng shuāng
{I suspect that it is the frost on the ground.}
jǔ tóu wàng míng yuè
{I raise my head to look at the bright moon.}
dī tóu sī gù xiāng
{I lower my head in the thought of my homeland.}

This poem is in fact included in the UKFCS's textbooks [the 19th lesson, book 4] but I have seen it being taught to children of a much younger age and a lower level in some schools. Normally, for children of younger age, teachers tend to choose nursery rhymes or contemporary work which is in vernacular style and contains words and patterns more familiar to the young students. For example, I observed one class of children aged about 8 to 10 learning the following piece of work entitled: *Yuèliang hàn xīngxīng* 'Moon and stars'.

yuèliang yuèliang shì māma
{The moon, the moon is the mummy.}
xīngxīng xīngxīng shì wáwá
{The stars, the stars are the babies.}
yuèliang de zǔibā xiàoyíxiào
{The moon is smiling.}
xīngxīng de yǎnjīng zhǎyìzhǎ
{The stars [twinkle like they are] blinking their eyes.}
yuèliang hǎo hǎo māma
{The moon is lovely, like [our] mummy}
xīngxīng hǎo hǎo wáwá
{The stars are lovely, like the babies [referring to children reading the nursery rhyme].}

Another form of texts observed being taught at the Chinese schools is *chéngyǔ* 'idioms'. A *chéngyǔ* is an expression which consists of 4 characters. It is close to literary style but is still used in everyday language of modern Chinese. In Chapter 2, the literary heritage maintained in modern language use in the form of mostly four characters *chéngyǔ* was emphasised. As they are 'concise yet meaningful, they

illustrate certain specific facts, carry certain moral teachings or suggest certain particular images' (*Best Chinese Idioms* 1986, foreword), Chinese *chéngyǔ* are not only a unique characteristic of the Chinese language, they are widely used in everyday conversation, speeches and writings by Chinese people from all walks of life. As the concept of *chéngyǔ* is not so familiar to non-Chinese speakers, it may be easier to introduce the *chéngyǔ* with the description of how *chéngyǔ* are taught in the classroom. The following paragraphs will discuss *chéngyǔ* and how it was observed being taught in the classroom.

I observed that there was not only one way for Chinese teachers to introduce *chéngyǔ* 'idioms' to their students. Some teachers introduced them by telling their students the background story about the *chéngyǔ*, or asked students to read texts which lead to such *chéngyǔ*. For example, one group of students were asked to read a short piece which leads to the idiom, *shǒu zhū dài tù* 'waiting by a tree for a hare to turn up'. It roughly translated as follows:

Once upon a time, there was a farmer. One day, the farmer was working in the fields when he saw a hare running past him. The hare happened to break its neck on a tree and fall dead. So the farmer got a hare for nothing.

Thenceforth, the farmer gave up working in the field and spent his time waiting by the tree all day long, hopes to get another hare in the same way. But no more hare appeared, and in time his land was filled with weeds.

It requires the elaboration on the teacher's part to guide the students to use such an idiom appropriately. In many cases, as it was in this case, the teacher would read through the piece together with the students and explain the words in the texts.

Most important of all, the teacher then explained the moral of the story to the students and used examples of how it can be used in everyday expression. In the field notes, I recorded the way the teacher explained this story to her students. The original discussion was in Mandarin Chinese, I only recorded the general meaning in English in the following extract.

Extract 14

1 2:07 Teacher wrote on the white board 10 idioms.
(Teacher gave example of how to use idiom)
T: For example, if someone wants everything without making any effort of getting them, you can say “tā zhǐhuì shǒu zhū dài tù” {The only thing he does is waiting by a tree for a hare to turn up}. And will the hare ever turns up? ...

Observation Diary: 16/07/1998, Class L6

On other occasions, teachers found themselves using *chéngyǔ* ‘idioms’ and often used such opportunities to introduce these *chéngyǔ* to the students. For instance, I observed a class with students having a reading session: the teacher called students to stand up individually to read out paragraphs from a text. After the text was read, more students were called to stand up and share their interpretation of a certain paragraph with the whole class. During this process, one student happened to explain a certain sentence literally, and missed the point of the whole paragraph. The teacher took the opportunity and explained to the students that this particular situation can be described using the idiom of *duàn zhāng qǔ yì* ‘to quote one’s word out of context’.

The discussion in this sub-section demonstrates the significance of literacy in the Chinese classrooms. From the review of literature in Chapter 2, literacy is clearly highly regarded in Chinese school culture. Bond's comment (1991) on the language issue and its effect on the psychology of the Chinese people may provide a link between the pedagogical purpose of the Chinese schools in the UK and their social-culture purpose.

Chinese is a distinctive language, and the mastery of its written form requires considerable training. It is also difficult for many non-Chinese to speak because of its tonal nature. These characteristics make language a key factor in Chinese political discussions about preserving Chineseness, because it so effectively separates the Chinese from others behind a wall of symbolic inscrutability. ... In consequence the Chinese are very attached to their language traditions, and express great concern about falling standards. This is especially true in multilingual environments where parents will coach their children in their spare time or engage language tutors to keep up their children's Chinese.

(pp. 110-111)

Thus, the maintenance of literacy is something that goes hand in hand with self-advancement, but also the maintenance of Chinese culture. The language itself is seen as an important part of the culture. The text is used as a tool for teaching literacy as well as a means to transmit a hidden curriculum, be it the political emphasis, the value of modernisation and knowledge, or the traditional values of respect, diligence and modesty. Thus, it seems to be necessary to provide texts for learning in and out of the classrooms. However, to choose the appropriate content for teaching in the British Chinese classrooms is always going to be difficult for all the parties concerned.

When asked about the activities they used in their classrooms, the Chinese teachers reported that they were mostly likely to be related to a text or even more often to the textbook. The extract from the interview with Teacher S included a few of the arguments shared by other teachers in this study. When I asked Teacher S whether she thought there was too much emphasis put on the use of the textbooks in the Chinese schools, she replied:

S: (2) But I mean, even if you learn French or German or anything, there should be some kind of textbook to be followed. // It just make it easier. // For students and teacher

W: Right.

S: There's something that they can refer to. You know, when they go home and they can prepare it. I mean, if you have totally nothing and they come in blank. (.) unprepared (.) it's a bit (.) a bit like, you know // shock (.) to both parties.

The above extract did not only give some of the reasons that the Chinese teachers believed in their choice of classroom activities, but it also reflected the ideology of the teachers.

On examining the issue of texts/textbooks in the British Chinese schools, it seems there is again a compromise between British and Chinese traditions. Teachers still rely highly on the use of the texts/textbooks but they are given more choice as to what to teach in their classrooms. As indicated earlier, there are also Chinese learning materials for non-native speakers which are adopted more and more in the Chinese classrooms in the UK as supplementary materials. As many of the textbooks and books from which teachers choose their texts are still those printed in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, some of the content of these textbooks

may not be appropriate or interesting for the students in the British context. The teachers in the Chinese schools used different approaches to make the texts more relevant to their students. The following sub-section will describe how the teachers in this study use texts and textbooks.

7.2.2 Using Textbooks and Learning New Text

When asked to identify ‘different things’ in British and Chinese schools, the most common answer volunteered by the students in this study is the difference in teaching style. One student identified the difference between his British and Chinese schools is that “... the way they [the teachers] teach us things ...”. He went on to explain:

T: For example, like (.) when they teaching us a (.) a poem or something. ...

W: Uhm..

T: Well (1) The teacher just write a little bit down.

W: Which teacher?

T: Chinese teacher write it down. And then we look at the book [the textbook]. And then (.) we have a course book and we read it. But in English school, we don’t. Cause we don’t write it all (.) in big chunks.

W: Right (.) So, what (.) would the English teachers do?

T: They (.) they give us the paragraph. They read it [the paragraph] to us, then give it to us.

(T 10, C)

The situation described by this student was observable in many Chinese classrooms.

It may be better illustrated with the following two extracts from the observation I made in two different Chinese schools. The first one was made in a Mandarin

Chinese class (part of the extract was also in Extract 3, pp. 162-163), and the second one was made in a Cantonese class.

Extract 15

- 1 2:48 Teacher asked children to repeat after her, read out loud from a sheet of paper twice. [The paper contains a text of about 10 lines using characters related to the topic of 'sun, moon, water and fire'.]
- 6 2: 51 T: Listen carefully, we are going to have a *tīngxǐe* 'dictation' later.
T then called out a few names.
T [to the above students]: You'll have to memorise this and write it out.
T: Others, you'll have to copy this text and do the dictation.
- 11 T (to one student): This particular student doesn't understand what we are saying, you have to do your best according to your ability.
- 16 2: 55 The teacher put some more pieces of paper up on the white board.
T: You'll need to be able to read these.
The students then started to copy the text from the white board. Those who seemed to have done so were still writing in their book to practice more.
- Observation Diary: 03/05/1998, Class L2

Extract 16

- 1 [After being introduced to a new lesson.]
- 6 11: 18 The teacher asked the older students to write down new phrases and said that he would dictate later.
The students started to copy phrases from the book where at the end of the text there is a section called 'new phrases'.
- ...
Several exchanges to clarify meanings of words and phrases.
- 11 11:24 After students copied characters from the book, they closed the textbook and write words out from memory.
The teacher then moved to attend to the youngest girl in the class.
- 16 11:30 The teacher read out a poem from the girl's homework book [which she copied from the teacher's copy the previous week]. The girl repeated each sentence after the teacher.

Observation Diary: 23/05/1998, Class O1

It is common practice in Chinese classrooms for teachers to write a whole piece of text (either a poem or a piece of text the teacher found suitable to teach) on the board for the students to study and later to copy in their own books. Sometimes the text may already be in the students' textbook. In this case, the students were still asked by their teacher to copy both the new characters and phrases and sometimes a short paragraph of the text out in order to practise them.

It is worth noting that some traditional Chinese language textbooks not only include the main texts, but also sections such as 'new characters', 'new phrases', 'sentence pattern' and sometimes even 'exercises'. These sections extract characters, phrases and patterns which did not appear in the previous volumes of books (as the textbook standard is set up by a government-run committee, there is not much variation even if there is more than one publisher). For example, on the original copies of texts described in the previous sub-section, *Shǔigǔo* 'fruits' (p.224) and *Fùhúojíe* 'Resurrection holiday' (p.224), there are new characters printed at the bottom of each page (Appendix H, and I).

Some children complained about the need to copy things over and over again when I asked them if they do anything at Chinese school which they do not do at British schools.

A: Copy the work out about 10 times (1) XXX would be that (.)

B: Right ..

(A13, B 14, C)

However, the learning of the Chinese language does not simply mean copying and memorising texts and Chinese characters although it may seem so to some of the students in this study.

All the teachers interviewed claimed to different extents that they think their students should learn to use Chinese characters: from being able to recognise the Chinese characters to actually write compositions. All the teachers confirmed that they think students should at least be able to recognise some characters. Hence, a lot of the class time was spent on teaching Chinese characters. Before asking the students to learn the new words and phrases, Chinese teachers were observed introducing to students elements related to the new text: either by telling them a story, carrying out activities related to the text or opening a discussion leading to the topic of the text. Sometimes teachers wrote pieces of text on the board even if they were already in the students' textbook. One teacher explained to me the reason was to focus the students on the board without distractions. The teacher pointed to each character on the board and the whole class read through the text together, several students having volunteered or been selected by the teacher to read the texts individually while the rest of the class listened to what was being read.

In this process, for those characters that the students were not familiar with, they were allowed time to write down *Zhùyīn zìmǔ*, Pinyin (phonetic systems commonly used in Taiwan and Mainland China) or the students' own symbol (often the sound equivalent) to help jog their memory in the future. Only Mandarin Chinese teachers

taught students phonetic systems – Pinyin in most cases; *Zhùyīn zìmǔ* was taught by teachers from Taiwan. All the teachers encouraged their students to write down the sound next to Chinese characters to help them recognise each character. As there was not an equivalent system in Cantonese, the Cantonese teacher just ‘let students use their own system’. One teacher explained:

T: Yah. Yah. Yah. They have their own system [to code the sound of each Chinese character]. (.) I won’t teach them. (.) Because (.) it’s there when they read it at home. (1) They would interpreted it. (.) If I impose something, they may forget about the system. (.) So, it’s useless.

After students noted down the sound of the new characters, teachers engaged their students in analysing the particular piece of text by asking students to discuss the meaning of each paragraph.

At a school which is organised mainly by Mandarin Chinese speakers, I observed teachers teaching Chinese grammar to their groups of students. The children in this school, like those at other Chinese schools, were grouped into classes in numerical order according to ability and age: ‘one’ being the lowest level and the youngest at the school. The following were two extracts from my observation notes where two classes seem to involve similar discussion on different levels.

Extract 17

- 1 13:20 The teacher starts teaching new patterns.
 T: What is a complete sentence?
 S1: It must ... It must have ... cí ‘word or phrases’.
 T: Yes ... What kind of ‘cí’?
 S2: There’s zhǔyǔ ‘subject’ ...
6 T1: That’s right. A sentence should have a zhǔyǔ ...
 and there is normally a wèiyǔ ‘predicate’. The

most common wèiyǔ 'predicate' are dòngbīn wèiyǔ 'predicates which contain verbs and objects'.

Observation Diary: 03/05/1998, Class L4

The lesson was dominated by the teacher spending most of her time explaining each sentence in a piece of text from the students' textbook. Most of the time students sat quietly and listened to the teacher. On some occasions, I also observed students exchanging between themselves explanations in English, as to what the teacher was trying to say. During this observation, the teacher also covered grammar points such as the 'disyllabic' feature of some adjective-turn-adverbial terms (see also Yip 1997) and the usage of some Chinese punctuation marks. The teacher also prompted the students from time to time to give examples which were related to the issues being discussed: an example of the adverb, a phrase that the students thought may be related. Later in a lower level class (Class 2), the teacher also asked the students to analyse the structure of a text and to discuss the nature of a sentence:

Extract 18

- 38 . 2:41 T: Let's make some jùzi 'sentences'.
 Student C: What is jùzi 'a sentence'?
 T: Put the new words into the sentence you want to
 41 say.
 Students then tried to make sentences and say them out loudly for the whole class to hear.
 [For example, *Wǒmen qù hǎibīan wánr.* 'we went to seaside to play.' was a sentence suggested by one of
 46 the students.]
 2: 48 Teacher asked children to repeat after her, read out loud from a sheet of paper twice. [The paper contains a text of about 10 lines using characters related to the topic of 'sun, moon, water and fire'.]

Observation Diary: 03/05/1998, Class: L2

Extract 19

- 1 13: 30 T: We have read the whole text. How many parts can it be divided into?
The students called out a few numbers '3' '4' ...
T: Think on your own ...
[indicating the students should spend some time think about it before trying to answer the question].
- 6 T: Think about paragraphs and parts, ... they are not the same ...
More students joined the class.
- 11 13:35 T: There are two parts. Which two parts? ...
Students put their hands up.
After the students replied, the teacher concluded on the point about parts and paragraphs and drew another point.
- 16 13: 38 The teacher asked students to think about how they would rewrite a paragraph into a sentence.
... [practice]

Observation Diary: 03/05/1998, Class L3

In Extracts 18 and 19, the teachers did not spend as much time on grammar points as the teacher in Extract 17, most likely due to the differences in levels of the students in the three classes. Instead, most of the class time in Classes L2 and L3 focused on helping students to recognise some basic Chinese characters which are also important radicals for many other more complex Chinese characters. The lesson in Extract 18 was described in detail in Chapter 6 (6.1).

However, this kind of activity was rarely observed in this study. Although many teachers mentioned the teaching of grammar during the course of the interviews, most of them stated that they did not feel they have enough knowledge about the Chinese grammar themselves. Teacher G pointed out to me that he had used his own learning experience on learning English grammar to help him teach grammar to his students at the Chinese school. Other teachers explained that they taught

students 'sentence patterns' which were included in the textbook but did not specifically break them into grammatical units for explanation.

After analysing the text, the teachers would ask the students their opinion or experience in a similar situation. For example, if the article was about a whole family's day out on a particular festival, teachers would probably ask the students how they celebrate the festival or the students' experience of going out as a family. If the article was about the courage or honesty of a child, teachers could then talk about these behaviours and ask children for their comments. The students were then encouraged to do the exercise at the end of the text or to write a composition with the same title as the text just studied. The idea being for the students to practise expressing their own opinions and experiences on a related topic. Using the new words and phrases, the story line or the text structure, the students are required to reproduce a summary or their own story on a similar event.

In one interview, two students compared how the teaching of reading is done differently in their British and Chinese schools.

A: (1) Because British people are very creative. They [the British teachers] will let you write a lot of stories (.)

W: Uhm..

A: Then (.) read a book, and write a summary for it or something. But here [at Chinese school], it's more (1) reading texts [from a textbook] (.) reading texts (.) then (.) lots of practice.

...

V: Then we start writing compositions [in Chinese school].

(Some discussions later)

V: (1) British schools (.) use different ways of teaching. You don't just sit there and keep memorising.

W: Uhm.

V: They'd use many things to learn.

...

V: For example, they'd ask you to (.) find references.

...

A: Yes, find the references to learn. ...

(A 14, V 14, M)

In other words, the British teachers allow more scope for individuality compared with the teachers at British Chinese schools. In British schools, the response to a text can be more flexible than treating it as a model. Students are allowed to react to it in individual ways. On the other hand, in Chinese classrooms students are required to spend more time learning as a whole group. Although there is also time for children to think individually at the Chinese schools, to write their own story, and their own version of events, they may feel limited by the thought that they need to closely follow the model presented by the text they were studying.

It is clear that text and textbook have a much more central place in the Chinese than they do in English classrooms. This feature of relying heavily on textbooks was not only observed during visits to Chinese schools in the UK and was described by teachers in Chapter 6 (6.1 and 6.2), but it also appeared in the student interviews. The following is one example.

A: In British schools, they don't normally ask you to read the texts
[from textbooks]. They have no textbooks [in British schools].

(A 14, M)

The term 'textbooks' used by the girl referred to the traditional role of textbook in her Chinese setting: every student has a copy of the prescribed textbook. Students take their textbooks along with their exercise books to the school and take them

home at the end of the school day. At British schools, especially at primary level, students normally share books. They usually share a library of books at school instead of using the same book all the time. There is no standardised textbook for students in the UK to go through chapter by chapter as is the case in many other educational systems in the world where the textbooks are centrally controlled. Even though appropriate textbooks are difficult to find for the special context of the British Chinese schools (See Chapter 2), the teachers still give the teaching of the text high priority in their programme. Many studies relating to the culture of Chinese classrooms also report this feature (Biggs 1996; Cortazzi 1996). Cortazzi's description (1996) provides a clear picture.

The Chinese teachers see that knowledge is fundamental and that skills will be developed later on the basis of this knowledge. Knowledge will come primarily from the teacher and the book so it is natural to centre the lesson on the teacher and the text. (p. 13)

Some teachers tried to make the introduction of texts more interesting by preceding them with stories related to the text. For example, the historical story about the poet who died for his principle against the Emperor was often told before the students are introduced to the text about the Dragon boat festival. Sometimes group discussion was also used to raise students' interest and to make connections with real life on the topics introduced.

A lot of the students' time was devoted to improving reading and writing skills. One reason for the situation was due to the assumption that since the children were of Chinese origin, they could and should have learned to speak and listen to Chinese in

their family. With only a limited amount of time available, it should be devoted to help children learning to read and write. Many of the children can understand this, but not all of them find the approach useful.

A: I think being a Chinese I want to learn more (.) I want to be able to read and write, not just able to talk.

(A 22; girl; Cantonese speaker)

M: Cause I think (.) they think we know how to speak and listen here (1) So we only need [to learn] reading and writing (.)

(M 17; boy; Cantonese speaker)

B: They push you to (.) cause they think you know, don't they? Cause we are Chinese, they think we understand bits, but they understand themselves, they don't explain it properly.

...

A: Sometimes when we copy words out but we don't know what it says ...

B: And we don't understand (.)

A: We don't know what it means (.)

B: We just copy it, really ...

(A13, B 14, C)

There was a regular diversity of opinion about the time spent on reading and writing. Some students had a positive attitude about reading and writing, others felt that they preferred to develop listening and speaking at the same time. However, there was a tendency that the older students that remained at Chinese schools tended to be those who really liked the language and showed strong interest and motivation in improving all four skills in their Chinese language.

The use of English to Anglicise pronunciation for Chinese characters also showed evidence that students in British Chinese classrooms were developing their own classroom culture. This is something particular to the British Chinese school context, Chinese students in China do not do this, and it is unlikely that the students

do so in their British schools. It may not be a very effective and efficient way to do things in the opinion of both teachers and parents, but it is just the way it works out.

The discussion so far has looked at two of the elements contributing to the development of Chinese classroom culture: students' strategy to learning and the use of texts in the Chinese classrooms in the study. The following section takes an interest in exploring the teacher/student relationship.

7.3 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND THEIR STUDENTS

From the discussion so far, including situations discussed in Chapter 6, it appeared that the Chinese teachers in this study were the centre of the classroom interaction: they lead the activities, decided on the materials to be studied, planned the schedule for learning to take place, whilst the students seemed passive in the class. However, I believe that both the teacher and students contribute in some way to what happens in the class. This section looks at the relationships between British Chinese teachers and their students and begins by examining the teacher-student interaction amongst the participants.

From the outset, it seemed that the relationship between the British Chinese teachers and their students was one-sided. The students were at the receiving end of what the teachers prepared for them. For many children, the work ethic in the Chinese classroom encouraged them to work as hard as they could; and they were prepared to work to a certain extent to improve their language ability which to them

was important. However, for the students, there often seemed to be too much repetition involved in each lesson and the students preferred more imaginative activities. Some students shared their teachers' concern that with the limited time available for learning, the 'more active' type of activities may reduce their time for learning 'more directly'. Some clearly enjoy a more relaxed way of learning and do not worry whether or not they achieve a certain level in their reading and writing. The students expressed their need for the teachers to monitor their performance more closely and to work in a more individual-centred fashion.

Another dimension to the teacher-student relationship from my observation was that the teachers felt that they should be, and were, in control of the class. For example, Teacher D, an experienced teacher who had taught Mandarin as the mother tongue to children in China for many years, stressed that the students in her class should remain well-disciplined, making this clear to her students. The following interview extract demonstrates this point. At this point of the interview, I asked Teacher D to describe her typical lesson to me.

W: *En(.) nà bǐrú shuō (1) wǒmen xiànzài (.) xiànzài shì lǐbài tiān (1) ránhòu (smile) xuéshēng jìnlái. Nà, nǐ yě jìn jiàoshì. Nín jìnle jiàoshì yǐhòu .. Nín tōng cháng dōu jiào tāmen zuò shénme?*

Uhm, suppose, we are now in the classroom. The students come in. You then come into the classroom. After you enter the classroom. What do you ask them to do?

D: *zuò hǎo.*

To sit down properly.

(Both laugh)

D: *yīnwèi tāmen zài (.) zài yīngguó de kètáng lǐmiàn dōu fāngsōng guànlē ma.*

Because they are used to be relaxed when they are at British schools.

- W: *En. Sǔoyǐ bǐjiao huì pǎoláipǎoqù de. ...*
 Uhm, so they move around more..
- D: *Dùia. (1) zài yīngguó de kètáng lǐ (.) jùshì fāngsōng guānle.*
Dànshì, dào wǒde kètáng lǐmiàn jù bùxíng le.
 That's right. They are used to be relaxed in British schools.
 But, they cannot do that in my class.
- W: *En, en.*
 Uhm.
- D: *Jiù bùnéng ràng tāmen fāngsōng nàyàng.*
 I can't allow them to be so relaxed like that.
- W: *Sǔoyǐ nínshì yì kāishǐ (.)kāishǐ jiāo (.) Nín jù gēn tā shuō le..*
"Zài wǒde kètáng lǐ, jùshì yào zuòhǎo. "
 So, did you say to them when you began to teach them: "In my
 class, you have to sit properly."
- T: *En. (.) Jùshì yào XXX (Both laugh)*
 Uhm. (.) You have to ... (Both laugh).
 (The discussion moved onto what happened when the class
 started.)

From the above interview extract, a feeling of how the teachers expected to be 'in control' may be illustrated. Thus, even though I observed on most occasions the teachers leading the class activities, many teachers interviewed expressed their feeling of powerlessness in handling their class. Reports of this kind have two implications: first, the teachers still felt the need to put discipline into their classrooms; second, the teachers also realised that the students attended Chinese schools voluntarily, thus, they were unable to put on too much pressure. The British Chinese teachers in this study in a sense were caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, they probably preferred the orderly nature of traditional Chinese classrooms, and on the other, they felt that they had to try their best to adapt to the British environment and to apply discipline that is appropriate to the context with very little outside help.

The relationship between the Chinese teachers and their students described in this section raises interesting issues in the culture of learning: the teachers appeared to have certain ideas about what should happen in a classroom and tried to achieve it in their own. Their beliefs and expectations were not likely to have been learnt through particular training, but through personal experience. This prompts the study to explore another factor, which may also contribute to the learning culture, the different school settings – the learning environment. The next section examines this factor from two different angles. First, it compares differences between schools set up by people who speak different Chinese dialects (mainly Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese). The section then looks at how participants viewed their experience of attending Chinese schools as opposed to their experience of British mainstream schools.

7.4 DIFFERENT SCHOOL SETTINGS/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Chinese community in the UK is changing rapidly. These changes have brought about the differences in the setting up of Chinese schools. In this study, I found that different schools set up by speakers of different Chinese dialects, mainly Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese, provided different learning/teaching atmospheres for the participants which may also contribute to the culture of learning. To facilitate the discussion here, I will first briefly describe people setting up the Chinese schools.

The people who set up and attend Chinese schools are also changing. Previously, the members were mainly those who came to the UK as immigrants from the South East part of China who spoke mainly dialects such as Cantonese and Hakka. Most recently, a large number of people from Mainland China and Taiwan (who use Mandarin Chinese) have arrived in the UK as overseas students and professionals working for Chinese invested businesses in the UK. This new group of people either joined in the existing Chinese schools and started organising Mandarin Chinese classes; or they set up new schools for only Mandarin Chinese speakers. This section is divided into two parts. The first looks at the differences between Chinese schools organised by different groups of British Chinese people. The second discusses the similarities observed and discussed by the interviewees in this study by looking at the place of learning.

7.4.1 Differences between the Chinese Schools

Although the aim of the schools is the same, for the Chinese children to keep up their Chinese language learning, the school cultures for these two groups are slightly different. The following paragraphs illustrate these differences between the Cantonese-speaker groups and Mandarin Chinese-speaker groups.

Schools organised by the Cantonese-speaker group

During my visits to the different British Chinese schools, there was a feeling that the Cantonese-speaker groups viewed Chinese schools as an extension of the

community. Teachers in these schools were mainly parents or voluntary helpers (normally friends of parents) from within the community who are enthusiastic about educating their next generation. Many of them did not have teacher training or experience before they were accepted as teachers at the Chinese schools. Children are encouraged to learn their mother tongue (Cantonese) and enjoy themselves while playing with their Chinese friends. Despite the time they spent in Chinese-speaking countries (the period of time prior to their arrival in the UK), many children interviewed in this study who came from Cantonese speaking families expressed their preference to their Chinese friends. However, the extreme situation reported by some Manchester students (Sham 1997) that their parents forbade them to make friends with their British classmates was not found in this study. Instead, it was the children's own choice that they felt 'more comfortable' and 'easier' amongst other Chinese children.

Schools organised by the Mandarin Chinese-speaker group

It may be due to the professional background of many of the parents that the Chinese schools run by Mandarin Chinese speakers tended to be more academically oriented, as I observed more talks about 'grade' and 'good performance [academically]' between parents and teachers in these schools whilst almost none was observed in the former group of schools. More teachers at these schools were trained, and some had many years of experience teaching in Chinese-speaking countries. As a result, they adopted a teaching style that was more similar to the traditional Chinese style than their Cantonese counterparts. Discussion of traditional

practice is in Chapter 2 (2.3.2). For example, some of the teachers in this group spent more time teaching children elements such as Chinese grammar – something the Cantonese teachers interviewed admitted that was lacking in their own teaching (Section 7.2.2).

The teachers in the Mandarin Chinese classes tried to help their students recognise characters/understand texts in an analytical way, spending more time talking to their students about the structure of Chinese characters, words and sentences. This may be the result of two main factors. The first being the different learning traditions in different Chinese-speaking regions: there was a strong emphasis on the teaching of Chinese grammar in mainland China in recent years whilst in other regions the studying of Chinese grammar was not so common. The other factor is the fact that there may be more trained and experienced Chinese language teachers in this group.

In these schools, as many of the children's parents were research students or professionals who worked in the UK, children were sometimes pressured to do as well in Chinese schools as in their British schools. The demand to finish all the homework given by class teachers was higher in comparison to the schools organised by the Cantonese-speaking group. In some instances, I observed teachers asking parents to help supervise children to do homework after school while children were sitting shame-facedly listening to their conversation. These children, however, also enjoyed friendship with other children at Chinese school. But as some of them might have been to other countries before they came to the UK due to the

nature of their parents' work, they did not seem to care much about the nationality of their friends. Less emphasis on the 'Chineseness' was observed. For example, when two girls in the study were asked whether their parents had any opinions about their friends, their answers were straightforward:

A: No. As long as they are not bad ones.

V: As long as I have friends.

(A 14, V 14, M)

Attitudes of the students differ, as do their experiences whether it is at home or in different school settings. However, for the British Chinese children in this study, the similarity of their experience in Chinese schools were greater than the differences: students were aware that Chinese schools were places for them to learn Chinese and to meet friends. And it was a different place from their everyday schools. The following subsection looks at this place of learning.

7.4.2 Differences between Chinese Schools and British Schools

Some children interviewed in this study stated that they were aware that they needed to have ability in Chinese in order to 'communicate' with other Chinese people and the Chinese school was the place for them to learn. While some high achievers enjoyed school life and saw it as a source of encouragement, some felt that they were forced to go to Chinese schools. A few of the students interviewed complained that attending Chinese school when it was holiday was no fun; especially when the mainstream school's term had finished and they still needed to

go to the Chinese school and to sit tests. For example, one student noted the following point.

V: (1) At the end of the year when the holiday starts [at the British schools]. The last lesson [at the Chinese school] when we finish the test, it will be the 18th of July. (.) It's quite late because our school has already (.) break up for holiday. (1) Yes. So, we'll still have to come to Chinese school then.

(V14, M)

Others mainly viewed going to Chinese schools as a matter of routine – things for them to do on Sundays – neither good nor bad. One student commented that he attends Chinese schools to 'pass time'. However, students were able to find a positive side to this experience. A and V, for example, although they reported that they were forced by their parents to attend Chinese school, when they were asked whether they thought it was important for them to attend gave the following comment:

A: Should be better (.) with it [going to Chinese school] (.)

V: I think there is (.) there is a place to go. I'd go.

(A 14, V 14, M)

On a different occasion, when a group of three boys were asked about whether they were eager to go home (as the youngest one was fidgeting and asking whether they would be going home soon) and whether they mind going to school on Sunday, Student Q (age 10, Cantonese speaker) made the following comment.

Q: I don't (.) I don't mind about it (.) cause our home is boring. I like to stay here [the Chinese school].

...

Q: No. I wish it [the time spent at Chinese school] was longer.

In both the above instances, T and his other two classmates went on to explain their reason for wanting to stay longer at the Chinese school.

D: I like playing at the school.

T: We like playing with each other.

(D11, T 10, S 6, C)

The three interviewees then described to me how they played at Chinese school: including chatting to each other, running down corridors and playing ball games. Many Chinese schools that I visited tried to organise sports facilities and events for children. Children could play basketball, table tennis and other games during their break time. Activities organised by the schools were some of the main features students noticed and compared to their British education.

When asked to identify the differences between Chinese and British schools, most students view Chinese schools as a place where they learn only Chinese language. Only a few students mentioned that they also learn ‘things related to Chinese culture’ such as festivals and Chinese art and craft, whilst at their British schools they will be learning more subjects, such as English, mathematics, science, technology, arts and PE.

It appeared to be difficult for children to compare and express the differences they felt in their experiences in Chinese and British schools. Apart from comments similar to these Student Q made “[Time spent at] English school’s longer” (Q 10, C), many children said that it was too difficult to compare the two as they spend most of their time at their British school and only two hours a week at Chinese

school. For example, when two of the girls were asked whether they have more homework from the Chinese school, one girl replied:

V: (1) It's difficult to compare because some of them are (.)
Because the work from school, like Maths, it will be practising
Maths. (1) And (.) At Chinese school, it will be practising
writing compositions. So you can't really compare them.
(V 14, M)

In a similar vein, two girls pointed out that it is difficult for them to compare as the subjects were different.

A: We don't really know cause ...
B: Cause they teach different things, don't they?
A: Different things ...

(A 13, B 14, C)

However, both the teachers and the students felt that the Chinese schools were more relaxed and less serious places than the students' British mainstream schools due to the nature of the Saturday/Sunday school. Going to Chinese schools, for some of the students interviewed, was a time-filler. As the students pointed out, they felt that there was or there should be less demand on them as they attended the Chinese school voluntarily, a view echoed by some of the teachers.

Most teachers interviewed noticed that children in their classroom were more 'forward', 'forthcoming' and 'eager to participate' compared to the children they knew in the traditional Chinese context. They found it made carrying out activities in the classroom easier.

On the other hand, teachers sometimes felt that their students were ‘too relaxed’, ‘lack discipline’, and *bùtīnghuà* ‘do not do things as they are told’. Many teachers acknowledged that this may be partly due to the students’ British education. However, many of the teachers admitted that they have little idea about what went on in British classrooms. It appeared that the more the teachers understand about British classrooms, whether they had themselves been students in the British schools or they had children who attend British schools, the more they were able to look at the influence on the students from a more positive viewpoint, children being active, and creative. The influence of families on the development of culture of learning will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Some students pointed out that they could ‘learn more’ by attending Chinese schools. ‘Not wasting time’ was also seen as a positive element in going to Chinese schools.

S: Ya (1) We’ve got nothing else to do otherwise. It [coming to the Chinese school] prevents us from doing mischief.

E: Yes (.) And we can learn something as well. (1) (In English) It is important for us to learn things ...

(S 13, E 12, M)

Even though some of the students noted that they felt their teachers at Chinese schools were ‘more forceful’ in asking them to ‘work hard’ at school as well as at home, the students were aware that the teachers at British Chinese schools were less serious than those in traditional Chinese contexts such as Taiwan.

A: British teachers (.) seem to (.) they sometimes (.) are less forceful. ...

W: [Chinese teachers are] more forceful (.) In what respect?

V: Writing homework.

(Some discussions on the point of writing homework is omitted here)

A: In Taiwan (.) In Taiwan, teachers are very strict.

...

V: It is because, we are (.) uh (.) voluntarily attending the school on Sunday. So, it's not so serious like it is in Taiwan.

(A 14, V 14, M)

Some of the students interviewed simply pointed out that it was difficult to compare whether Chinese teachers were stricter than their British teachers.

M: I mean (.) some of them at British school are stricter (.) some are more less (.) It depends ...

(M 17, C)

A: Some of them [teachers at British school] are quite strict (.) but

B: Ya (.) Depends on what kind of subject, isn't it?

...

A: My (.) my math teacher is [strict?] XXX

B: Ya (.) mine is (.) math's OK.

(A 13, B 14, C)

Two themes emerged from extracts of the above interviews which characterised the culture of the Chinese schools. Firstly, there is an ethic for hard work for both teachers and their students at the Chinese schools. Students talked about their Chinese teachers being 'more forceful' and 'push you to work more' while showing compliance towards the situation. One indicator was that *gōngkè* was given by the teacher to the students most weeks (if not every week). According to both the teachers and the students, *gōngkè* would generally be done by the next meeting. Some students also accepted the concept of 'practice makes perfect' as a norm. In one instance, I asked two interviewees to choose a more effective way of learning between the creative way of using different resources and the traditional way of repeating practice. The following is their response.

A: (3) I think both should work. But in Taiwan (1) It's always memorising, memorising and memorising (1) So, a lot of practice. (1) Then (.) If we keep practising, we'd memorise them.

...

W: Uhm. OK. Then, do you think this way of learning Chinese (.) is good? Just (.) memorise everything? Or do you think (.) if when learning (.) you can also work on your own to find information (.) Will that be good, too?

A: I think that will be very difficult ... (smile)

W: So, you still think that (.) You still need to memorise them in order to remember them [for using them in the future]?

A: Ya.

V: Uhm (1) If I practice, I'll be able to memorise them [in order to use it].

(A 14, V 14, M)

They may also apply this principle in learning other foreign languages at British schools. As it shows when the conversation moved on:

W: Uhm. For example, when you are learning French or Spanish, (.) do you also need to memorise again and again?

A: Yes, (.) we also need to memorise vocabularies.

V: Uhm.

(A 14, V 14, M)

This is a concept also shared by their Chinese teachers. When I asked the Chinese teachers whether Chinese teaching involved too much memorising, many of them I interviewed argued with statements such as the following. "It is the same as in any other languages. When we were learning English, we had to memorise all the vocabularies and things. Practice makes perfect." "You do that with any language anyway. It's not just about Chinese."

Additionally, there is the issue of the meeting of the British and the Chinese culture. From the data presented above, the students showed that they were aware of the

difference between their British Chinese classes and those in the Chinese-speaking regions. Student V's comment in her interview may provide a glimpse of the reason for the students feeling differently in different learning contexts.

V: It is because, we are (.) uh (.) voluntarily attending the school on Sunday. So, it's not so serious like it is in Taiwan.

(A 14, V 14, M)

7.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, four of the elements which may contribute to the culture of learning in Chinese classrooms have been examined. I first discuss the students' language learning strategy comparing their SILL results. The strategies rated by the students were compared against the six categories suggested by Oxford (1990) and presented accordingly in the first section. The second section then considered a factor identified from reviewing literature as of great importance to Chinese language teaching and learning: the use of texts and textbooks. Examples are given to show the kind of texts which were used in the Chinese classrooms in the study and how these texts were used. To construct the culture of learning, the relationship between the teachers and their students is also examined. Although it appeared that the teachers were leading and guiding the direction of learning in the classrooms, a feeling of powerlessness was found as the teachers indicated that their expectation may be different from their students. Discussion in the final section illustrates potential issues which consider school settings an element in contributing to the development of culture of learning – different feelings participants had towards their schools, both their Chinese and British schools, are presented.

Chapters 6 and 7 have considered the development of culture in the immediate context of Chinese classrooms and Chinese schools. The next chapter will consider how the participants' families can influence their thinking about learning/teaching in British Chinese schools.

CHAPTER 8

THE FAMILIES

Part III aims at exploring data collected in this study using the Ecology Model of Learning Cultures. Chapters 6 and 7 looked at micro-systems within one of the meso-systems, the Chinese school, by examining firstly the classroom activities and the students' language learning strategies, followed by discussion of key features in the Chinese schools including mixed-ability/age groups, the role of texts and textbooks and how Chinese schools differ dependent on the community setting them up. This chapter will look at another meso-system, the participants' families, and discuss how the culture of the families influenced the interactions in the Chinese schools.

The current ecology model, in Fig. 3.2 (p. 87), illustrates the relationship between meso-systems in an exo-system. As discussed in Chapter 3 (3.3), an exo-system refers to those settings that do not involve the subject as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the micro-systems. In the current study, although what occurs in the teacher's family or workplace cannot directly involve the students concerned, it may have a strong impact in the micro-systems described in the previous two chapters. In the same vein, what happens in the students' families also contributes to the effect. This chapter aims to describe the factors that contribute to the culture of learning in the

British Chinese classroom by examining the influence that comes from the participants' families.

The first section in this chapter will look at family influences on the participants' values and attitudes. The second section will focus on the issue of language and how these issues relate to the participants' values and attitudes. It will discuss the link between Chinese language and the traditional culture of respect, and look at language spoken in the children's homes. This is followed by the discussion on the Chinese school's role in maintaining Chinese traditions, and how these traditions in turn are influenced by the participants in their families and in the Chinese schools. The final part of this chapter will look at the family influence on the culture of learning in the classrooms by comparing different 'school cultures' in British Chinese schools set up by Chinese community members speaking different Chinese dialects.

8.1 FAMILY INFLUENCES ON VALUES AND ATTITUDES

The experience of living in the UK as Chinese families has had a profound influence on both the students and the teachers. Many parents in this study felt that their family values were often influenced by their children's British environment (cf. Tsow 1984; Li 1994; Verma *et al.* 1999). However, observations of the interviews with the students, and their activities in the Chinese classrooms showed that they were also influenced by their Chinese background and the teachers were also aware of their attitudes towards teaching and their students changing as a result of

experiencing two cultures. As Bond (1986: 1991) pointed out, there may be some features that were more influential and less likely to change even when one lived in a totally different cultural environment.

... great changes should not be expected in such central characteristics [such as Chinese traditions of parental authority]. Changes can occur quite abruptly in other areas, such as language use, clothing preference, and friendship patterns, without causing a loss of one's distinctive Chinese traditions. ... (p. 115)

It is the interest of the present study to find out how Chinese culture contributes to the immediate context of learning Chinese as a community language, and whether those 'central characteristics' Bond referred to are present. The current study is also interested in the part British culture plays in shaping the attitude of both teachers and students towards learning taking place in British Chinese classrooms.

The discussion in this section will be divided into two subsections. The first subsection will describe how the participants adapted traditional Chinese practices to fit in with the British environment in their every day lives. It will look at how those activities within traditional Chinese families and the traditional values related to them had to be altered slightly to fit in with the British context by comparing comments from the participants. The second subsection will examine the factors influencing the students' values and attitudes towards their education and future career. It also looks at how the teachers' own family experiences affected their attitudes towards their students and their own teaching.

8.1.1 Adapting Traditional Chinese Practices

From the data collected in the study, it would appear that the Chinese children in this study did not necessarily follow a traditional Chinese socialisation pattern. There were also influences from their British life. For example, the children were taught Chinese values such as showing respect to their elders in the families and during social events, but these ‘social rules’ were more relaxed compared to those in the traditional Chinese context. This was evident on the issue of the children’s language use, a point we shall return to later (8.2). Other aspects in the children’s family life also reflected changes of value and attitude under the influence of the two cultures which will be discussed in this subsection.

Under the influence of the British culture, the parents I had conversation with had to try to be ‘fair’ to all the children in the family – giving them equal opportunities to express themselves. In a traditional Chinese context, the older children may be asked to tolerate the younger ones; or the younger ones were expected to show respect by being obliging to their elders. Many Chinese parents in this study stated that they felt they should set ‘house rules’ (including play time and homework), like their British counterparts, for their children instead of expecting the traditional practice of ‘self-regulation/self-control’ to be developed unspoken under the social pressure of the Chinese context (this used to be part and parcel of the experience of learning the Chinese language, a point I shall return to in Section 8.2 and 8.3).

There were more significant changes parents had to consider adapting to their life in the UK regarding the children, for example, on celebrating birthdays and festivals. For instance, one parent who was a teacher who originally came from Taiwan described to me how her child was demanding to enjoy things that were common at the child's British school:

She's asking me for a 18th birthday party like her British classmates. They see it as a big event. You know, these people ... We've never had anything like that when we were in Taiwan. Our family [in Taiwan] never used to celebrate birthdays. We don't even go home [to Taiwan] for Chinese New Year anymore. ...

When I asked her to elaborate her opinions about the celebration of other traditional Chinese festivals, she replied:

We don't celebrate them here anymore. There is no real festive feeling here anyway. If you say to them [the children] 'Today's the moon festival.' All they might think of are the moon cakes.

In this instance, at least two messages were conveyed. Firstly, there was a potential conflict of values between parent and child. The parent, in a traditional sense, did not view birthdays as important occasions to celebrate. Some Chinese traditionalists even argued that birthdays were 'mother's suffering day' and children should show their sense of gratefulness to their mothers instead of expecting parties organised by their parents. However, for the child, there was pressure from her peers for her to be 'like everyone else' which drove her to make the demand on her mother. It was also part of the socialisation into British culture. It was important, in incidents such as this, for the child to be seen to 'belong' to the wider society in which she lived.

The second message conveyed was through the comparison between the birthday party and the act of 'going home for Chinese New Year'. As one of the five major traditional Chinese festivals, Chinese New Year is the most important time for families and relatives to gather together and celebrate. The parent's comment hinted at changes in values and attitudes when Chinese families were adapting to the new (British) environment.

This parent was not alone. Many other parents to whom I talked also expressed the same concern. Chinese festivals for the children were no longer traditions but merely dates on the calendar. Family activities were organised adopting a more 'British way'. For example, parents observed in this study organised festive activities around British festivals such as Christmas and Easter because as suggested by one of the parents, "that's the time we have time and resources to celebrate as a family". When asked about Chinese festivals, the replies, like the one quoted in the earlier incident, were not enthusiastic. One Cantonese-speaking parent spoke of her experience:

We just go to Chinese shops to buy some *yùebǐng* 'moon cake', *zòngzi* 'sticky rice wrapped in bamboo leafs' or *niángāo* 'year cake' (all of them festive food) and go home to eat them. Apart from that, we used to tell the children legends and cultural practices related to these festivals but they are not so interested now they've grown up.

An example from another parent in this study, from Taiwan, is also illuminating. His comment showed how it could even be difficult for the parents to keep up with festival celebration due to limited resources from their everyday environment.

What is the date for this Chinese New Year? I couldn't even keep track of it. On many of the previous occasions, I think it's around the time we're having term papers. I don't expect the children to make a big fuss over it. Unless we go to China town, of course, there are often lion dancing and things like that.

The above comments reflected to some extent that Chinese families were adapting their lives to their British environment. In this process, the Chinese schools appear to play an important role as a part of the community. This will be discussed further in Section 8.3.

The examples above suggest that there may be a change of interactions and attitudes in Chinese families. At the same time, British Chinese children were in some ways still influenced by their parents' values. One influential value may be their view towards the importance of education and the need for learning some Chinese. The following subsection looks at the family's influence on the children's attitudes to education and learning. It also examines the effect of the Chinese teachers' own experience of living in the UK on their attitudes towards their students' learning.

8.1.2 Attitudes to Education and Learning

One of the issues that has been widely discussed, regarding the education of Chinese children in the UK, is the potential problem when some students are expected to help their parents in the family catering business. As a result, some Chinese children were found to have low motivation to achieve academically. In recent years, while some children are still expected to help in the family business

(catering) during the busiest hours, the notorious scene described by Garvey and Jackson (1975) is no longer common. The following is an example of their description of a Chinese child's after-school work in the 1970s.

Four o'clock is not the end of the day for many Chinese children. It is the beginning. Su-su goes straight to bed when she comes in. She sleeps until nine o'clock and then her brother gets her up to serve in the chippy until one o'clock in the morning. Su-Su is not yet ten. So she has no need to worry about homework.

(Garvey & Jackson 1975, p. 7)

In their work, Garvey and Jackson (1975) also described how children found it hard to blend in with their British peers, and how they led an unsociable life with little communication with either their parents or their peers at school. However, their work points out a tendency that has grown stronger over the years. They ended their description of Chinese children's life at that time by noting one of the children's comments on whether or not he would continue the family business.

"And do you want to go into the chippy business, Tzu Lai?" He smiles and looks out of the window to where the kids in the yard are kicking a ball about. "Oh no. I want to be a goal keeper when I'm grown."

(p. 8)

From my conversations with members of the Chinese community including Chinese parents, children and their teachers in this study, the British Chinese children I observed were not only able to express their wish for a different career from the catering business, they were often encouraged by their parents to pursue a different career. However, some parents still insisted on their children helping out in the shops sometimes causing conflict between the children and their parents. For example, on one occasion, I observed a girl at the Chinese school where I was

teaching was particularly upset because she could not go out with her friends the previous evening but was required to help in her parents' takeaway. She explained to me that she did not particularly like helping in the family business but she often had to do so and felt obliged to when the shop was busy. On this particular occasion, she felt that there was pressure from her British school peers which made her upset about staying home again on the Saturday evening.

On the other hand, some parents might encourage their children to seek other career opportunities outside the catering business for social mobility. They felt strongly about their children taking on their advice about career choice. During my time working as a part-time teacher at one Chinese school, I came across many parents complaining about their children not being willing to choose the occupation the parents deemed as more suitable for their children (professional jobs such as doctors and lawyers). Other parents just accepted their children's choice and encouraged them to 'try their best'. For example, one parent who originally came from Taiwan made the following comment.

She wants to take up architecture at the university. Her father would prefer her to do languages or law ... She's very good at languages, but she's got this idea about doing architecture. We have not much idea about what that involves but if she insists, she should be all right ...

Many of my British Chinese friends at British universities chose to do business, science or computer subjects. Chinese parents were generally supportive of their children's decisions and encouraged them to pursue their own goals as long as the children finished the basic levels of education. The parents' values and attitudes also

had a strong influence on the children especially regarding their Chinese language learning. This issue is discussed separately in Section 8.1.3. Prior to that, the next part of the discussion will look at the teachers' experience in the UK as Chinese families. It will also examine how these experiences combined with the teachers' own learning experiences reflect their attitudes to teaching the Chinese language.

Teachers' Experience in the UK as Chinese Families

As mentioned earlier, teachers' own experiences of being in the UK had a strong influence on their attitudes towards what they did at Chinese schools, how they observed their students and sometimes what they expected of them. For example, two of the teachers in this study, Teacher B and Teacher M, who had themselves been through the formal British schooling system, expressed strong empathy towards their students as illustrated below.

Unlike other teachers interviewed in this study who stated teaching 'language', 'the four skills' and 'communication' as goals for their teaching, both Teacher B and Teacher M emphasised that their aim of teaching in the school was to help their students to 'like the idea of going to the Chinese school' and to leave 'the wish to learn Chinese' in their students' hands in the future. As Teacher B stated clearly in the interview:

B: ... *yīnwèi dài yí ge bānjí, nǐ yào xiāng bànfǎ bǎ tāmen jiāo hǎo. Ràng tāmen yǒu xìngqù lái xué zhōngwén. Ràng tāmen xué hǎo zhōngwén bú shì wǒde mùdì. Ràng tāmen yǒu xìngqù lái zhōngwén xuéxiào, cái shì wǒde mùdì. ...*

... Because [once you are] in charge of a class, you have to think of ways to teach them well. Let them be interested in coming to learn Chinese. Helping them learn Chinese well is not my aim. Helping them to be interested in coming to the Chinese school is my aim. ...

Those teachers interviewed who were mothers themselves, like Teacher H and Teacher L, noted that they gained ideas of teaching through their experience of helping their children learn in both Chinese and British contexts. They also appeared to be more aware of the differences between teaching in the Chinese school and in the British school as their children attended both schools. For instance, Teacher H was able to provide some clear examples of how the two classrooms could seem different in the eyes of students.

H: Uhm, (.) I suppose the way that (.) the English children learn (.) through a lot of (.) uhm (.) actually active playing in the class.

W: Right.

H: They learn by (.) uhm (.) actually doing the project.
(Some description about how project work is carried out in British schools)

H: But we've only got books [at the Chinese school]. Textbooks. And from a very young age, they have to learn .. a lot of characters, Chinese characters. English children, they learn their ABC, 26 alphabets. And from there, they build up gradually.

This is an example to illustrate how teacher's own experience affected how they viewed their teaching and their students' learning at the British Chinese schools. Although many of the other teachers interviewed also noticed some effect on their students from their British schools, not all of them were able to provide such an explicit, rich and detailed observation on those differences. According to Teacher

H, the experience of helping her children through British schooling made her more aware of such differences.

From the above discussion, it appears that teachers' own experiences of being in the UK as a family played a strong role in shaping their teaching style and determining what they viewed as important issues in the classrooms. However, as a Chinese teacher myself who has been in similar circumstances, I understand that it is not always easy to know what is going on in students' families. On the one hand, most of the Chinese teachers were aware that their students varied widely and had backgrounds different from their own. On the other hand, teachers also admitted the fact that they knew little about their home environment and probably did not have much time to do so. Interviews with teachers confirmed this. For example, in the interview with Teacher H, she made the following point regarding her students' experiences in their family.

H: Uhm (.) I am sure some of them [the parents] do [speak to their children in English]. But I am not really sure how they (.) you know, I must admit, I don't know how (.) their home is (.) Their home environment. We never have visits or anything like that. ... You know, I can only tell that some of them are well prepared and (.) because of their school work.

Teachers in this study related experiences as families living in the UK both of their own and of other Chinese members in order to understand what their students were going through. Sometimes, as the teachers reported, students talked about their activities at home in the class (as part of classroom activity or casually with their friends) which also helped the teachers to gain insights into students' lives.

However, the opportunities to observe such activity between students were limited as they only spent half a day each week at Chinese schools. Many of the teachers speculated that their students carried out very few Chinese-related activities at home apart from the homework teachers gave them. The majority of the teachers interviewed regularly gave their students homework to do and reported that most of the students finished it on time. They indicated that it was possible that the homework was the only activity students carried out at home relevant to the Chinese language learning. Many of the teachers from areas near London suggested that their students watched Chinese programmes on TV (including cable and satellite TV) and Chinese films mostly with their parents.

When the children interviewed in this study were asked to reflect on what they did at home to help them improve their Chinese, it seemed for many of them the formal learning of Chinese stopped when they left the Chinese school. At home, they only needed to use basic Chinese for communicating with the parents and sometimes to their siblings. Some reported that they always completed the homework which was given to them by their teachers. When urged to provide more information about use of Chinese at home, the most common activity reported was watching occasional Chinese programmes on satellite/cable TV. There were a few channels devoted to the Chinese community in the UK, broadcasting programmes such as soap operas and variety shows [mainly made by Hong Kong or Taiwan broadcasting companies]. Some children also watched Chinese video tapes with their parents. Only a few reported that they listened to cassettes or read books at home.

Another interesting factor influencing the culture of learning from the family was the different attitudes between the Cantonese-speaking and the Mandarin Chinese-speaking children towards reading on their own. Only a few students, as the teachers suggested, read Chinese books at home. The books that children 'can read' were limited to those with Pinyin or *Zhùyīn zìmǔ* next to the Chinese script. A few children explained to me that they found reading in Chinese script difficult and they could only read comic books. All the children who reported reading in Chinese indicated that they enjoyed reading comic books. It is worth mentioning that more Mandarin Chinese-speaking than Cantonese-speaking children reported that they read at home and enjoyed doing so. This may be due to the nature of the dialect learned. As noted in Chapter 3, children's reading material in Mandarin Chinese usually uses either *Zhùyīn zìmǔ* (phonetic alphabets commonly used in Taiwan) or Pinyin (common in Mainland China) to help children pronounce each character. This was an element lacking in Cantonese teaching/reading materials. Many Cantonese teachers were also aware of this problem. Discussions about the teachers' efforts to overcome this problem are in Chapters 6 (6.2) and 7 (7.2).

In this section, family influences on the participants' values and attitudes have been discussed from two aspects: the adaptation of the traditional Chinese practices and the issue of education and career choice. Both the students' and the teachers' experiences were examined. The following section examines another issue which also has strong roots with the culture of the participants' families: their language use. It starts by looking at the issue of language and the culture of respect. It then

turns to examine another important area: the issue of inter-generational language shift and language choice. This is followed by the discussion of the language students used at home, their attitudes towards Chinese language learning and how they tried to improve their language ability at home.

8.2 LANGUAGE ISSUES

One extremely important aspect of Chinese family values, linked to language use and culture, is the use of address terms to pay respect and to show obedience to elders. In this area I found big differences in attitudes across different families. Chinese families in the UK varied greatly in their experience in the British environment: the length of time the family had stayed in the UK; whether the family had the intention of staying longer in this country; the reasons for the family to stay in the UK; the degree of the family's assimilation to British culture, and the children in the family – their age as well as the school environment. These are all factors influencing the families' attitudes, especially on aspects being explored in this research: that is, attitudes to language and culture.

8.2.1 Language and Culture of Respect

Traditionally, Chinese children are brought up to 'show great respect to everyone older than themselves without question' (Garvey & Jackson 1975, p 48). This is particularly evident in what Farris (1992) termed as 'culturally important domains,

such as kin terms'. The quotation by Farris (1992) of Erbaugh's description (1982) of this phenomenon can well illustrate this particular cultural aspect:

In Chinese society it is absolutely necessary to know who someone is by name and rank in the family and society.

(Erbaugh 1982: 385, quoted in Farris 1992, p. 196)

Generally, Chinese children should not call their elders by names. This is still the case in most Chinese-speaking regions. For the majority of the families I encountered, the tradition of calling the elders according to their relation was still a common practice. The 'rank' mentioned here by Erbaugh refers to the detailed segregated address forms amongst family members and friends. It is a general Chinese convention that people in a senior position and age address their junior by their full name including their surname or their given name; while junior persons are to address their seniors only by their title or 'rank'. For example, younger brothers and sisters calling their elder brothers *gēge* 'elder brother' and elder sisters *jiejie* 'elder sister' are the norm. In an office situation, the general manager is often referred to as X *jīnglǐ* 'Manager' X (X in this case represents the manager's surname). On the other hand, younger members in these situations are referred to by their given names. It is specially the case when children face people with whom they have a family connection, and from older generations. This aspect of language was reflected in the materials studied by children at Chinese schools. From early on in children's reading material, there were introductions of terms such as *lǎoshī* 'teacher', *bóbó* 'old uncle' (a term used for uncles who are older than the person's father), *shúshú* 'young uncle' (a term used for uncles who are younger than the person's father), and *āyí* 'auntie', so these people can be addressed appropriately.

People sometimes feel offended if they are not addressed appropriately and the child will be viewed as *bù lǐmào* ‘not polite’ or *méiyǒu jiàoyǎng* ‘have not been taught and raised properly’ (comments recorded during observation).

As a result, this tradition had a deep influence on children’s language when they were used to using different languages to different people, especially to people whom they saw as coming from different generations. This can be illustrated by an instance described in Garvey & Jackson’s study (1975):

... Gill [the researcher] suggested they [the children] should call her Gill, but Yuk Lan, a twelve year old, with a worried look towards her parents replied: “I can’t, I must call you Mrs Something because you are a lady and I am a child.”

(Garvey & Jackson 1975, p. 48)

In the same vein, the observation of the students’ practice in the ‘more British environment’, that is, outside the family, in schools, showed that there was some degree of change and adaptation through the contact with British culture.

Work has been done on the inter-generational language shift amongst the Chinese community (see Section Chapter 2 (2.1.1)). It is not, however, my intention to focus on this area in any detail. Thus, little data was gathered for this purpose in the current study. On the other hand, this is still an important issue in this study and I will discuss it briefly in the following subsection.

8.2.2 Inter-Generational Language Shift and Language Choice

As discussed in Chapter 2 (2.1.1), research on the language use of the Chinese community in Newcastle suggests that ‘a rapid inter-generational language shift from Chinese monolingualism to English-dominant bilingualism is currently taking place’ (Li 1994, p. 114). Furthermore, in McGregor & Li’s study (1991), they found that the most of their subjects (university students of Chinese origin in Newcastle upon Tyne) chose Chinese as their favoured language ‘when the interlocutor is ‘local’ Chinese of senior age’ (p. 504). Although much more research needs to be done, the research so far suggest that speakers vary their language choice according to who the person is that the speakers think is listening to them. This is a feature that was also observed in the present study. Even though language choice also depends on several other factors such as age, gender, and language ability. The person to whom the subjects address, the interlocutor, it seemed, definitely played a part in the case of the British Chinese community. The students in the present study appeared to be exercising their language choices regarding their perceived social distance and family membership. The following example demonstrates how the students exercised their language choice.

During the course of the research, I interviewed two girls whose parents originally came from Taiwan: one was born in Taiwan and the other was born in the USA. The girls used English as a communication medium between themselves as they explained to me later that “it’s easier”, “faster”, and “sometimes it’s quicker to say things in English”. However, as I started the interview in English, the girls insisted

on using Mandarin Chinese to talk to me. They answered the first few questions in English and changed to Mandarin Chinese half way through. I tried to ask questions in English a little bit later and the same situation happened again. This persisted throughout the whole interview. When asked for their reasons for switching, the girls replied that they felt more comfortable talking to me in Chinese. I speculated the reason for them to do so was that they saw me as a teacher and this is a way to show formality and to distance themselves.

In retrospect, the situation described above may be further elucidated by the following incident which happened during the interview. Half way through the interview, a volunteer member of the Chinese school came in to the classroom with a tray of hot drinks and he was looking for the teacher. When we told him that we were not exactly having a lesson and there would be no teacher joining us either, he turned to me and said: "Then, you can have the tea." He then left me the cup of tea and left the room. For the school, especially the children I was interviewing, I was a guest, an adult and probably represented a teacher. So they treated me accordingly.

The argument can be stretched into another direction. There was also a strong influence from participants' British environment in their language choice. As I observed on many occasions, although in most cases the British Chinese children had both English first name and a Chinese name, they were still called by their full Chinese name including their surname or their Chinese name by people who were from older generations and their teachers in Chinese schools. However, children

from the same generation opted for addressing each other using their English first name. Some adults – generally the younger ones – also adopted such practice at their work place. The use of an English first name amongst young generations of Chinese might indicate that there was a gradual language shift towards the British culture.

Chinese children's language ability depends on different factors: At what point did the family move to the UK? Did they move here as a family unit? Did they come one at a time? How old were the children when they arrived in the UK? Were they born in the UK? The difference in exposure to the Chinese language makes the children at British Chinese schools a very heterogeneous group. However, many who were involved in the Chinese education of the British Chinese children agreed that the parents' attitudes regarding the language spoken at home played an important part in the maintenance of their children's Chinese.

Although most of the children participating in this study were born in the UK, some were born in Chinese-speaking countries or some parts of the USA where there are large Chinese communities. It was not difficult to understand that children who spent some of their childhood in a Chinese-speaking environment tended to use a lot of Chinese at home. When I asked the children about their language use at home and whether there was a strict rule about what language was to be used at home, most of them in the research reported that their parents did not ask them only to use Chinese at home but a few of them described it as necessary.

A: Well, if I speak to them in English, they wouldn't understand.
Then I'll still have to speak to them ...
= B: Ya.
= A: In Chinese. (A 13, B 14, C)

V: They only know Chinese.
A: [I speak to my parents] half [in Chinese] and half [in English]
(.) they can also speak English, but .. they are more used to
Chinese.
(A 14, V 14, C)

In fact, code switching was common for these children. Sometimes it happened when they were talking to their parents. But most of the time, it occurred when they were talking to their siblings or their Chinese friends. For example, to find out when or whether the children were aware of their code switching, in the instance above, I asked A:

W: Uhm, you said 'half and half' (.) when do you speak English, at home?
A: Don't know. Uh (.) sometimes English; sometimes I speak Chinese.
W: Then, you (.) speak the whole sentence in English or like what we are doing now (.) speak (.) sometimes mixed with some English words? ...
A: Yes. Sometimes with some English ... (A 14, M)

In another instance, three interviewees talked about their switch between English and Cantonese while they were talking to their siblings.

B: We switch between English and Cantonese.
W: How do you do that?
C: We would talk in Cantonese, then generally become English, and a bit later Cantonese again.
W: Do you do that consciously, I mean, do you think 'Oh! I'm speaking English/Cantonese now, I have to switch back.'?
A: No, I don't. I think it's quite natural. We just do that.
(A 22, B 18, C 17, C)

So far in this section, two issues regarding language use at home have been discussed. Firstly, I looked at language and the culture of respect embedded in the traditional Chinese language practice. This is interrelated to the second issue discussed: the issue of inter-generational language shift and language choice. In the final part of this section, I will turn my attention to the language spoken at home

8.2.3 Language Spoken at Home

All the teachers interviewed agreed that the language spoken in the children's home played a crucial role in their choice of language in different settings. One teacher expressed the view of many when she said, for example, "children should be able to listen and speak in Chinese before they attend the Chinese school". Teachers interviewed in this study also expressed their frustration over the limited help they were able to give to improve their students' language ability when the children did not practise the language at home. In some cases, it was suggested that the problem was made more acute as some of the parents are too busy working in their catering business, as Teacher Y described:

Y: ... Well, for those students whose parents were [working] in restaurant. I notice (.) well, XXX some of them hardly speak (.) their parents. The parent came home late, or rather early in the morning, and they only took them to school again early in the morning, and then after the school (.) they're working, so ...

As similar comments were made several times by different teachers, I asked some of them to clarify whether they meant that there was no communication between the parents and the children. They told me that in many of the cases as described above,

the parents only had limited time to talk to their children and more and more English was used in those families unless the parents' English was really poor.

Another problem repeatedly mentioned by the teachers occurred when the students came from a mixed-ethnic background. The teachers in this study reported that they expected it to be more difficult to “communicate” or “work with” these children. The reason for such an expectation was that, according to the teachers, many of these students joining the class were more likely to have a problem understanding the teachers' speech and keeping up with homework due to limited use of the Chinese language by the students and their family outside class time.

In fact, problems occurred when students' families did not speak Chinese to the children at home regardless of whether or not they were from mixed-ethnic background. This was not only an issue of ‘frequency of contact’, it is also related to the family's attitude towards using the Chinese language. In some cases, as Teacher G reported in his interview, some students who came from Chinese families where they were sometimes only spoken to in English did “even worse than those who came from mixed-background families”. The following extract from the interview with Teacher G illustrates how the students' values and attitudes were influenced by the language spoken at home and the value transmitted through such action.

G: *hái yào yánzhòng! Wèishénme ne? yīnwèi hùnxuě jiāting ne, yìbān shì. e (.) shuāngfāng dōu néng liàngjiě nǐ yào zǐnǚ yào xuéxí. e...*

Much worse! Why? Because mixed-background families, generally, uh (.) both parents can understand [each other's] willingness for [their] children to learn [the languages of their origin] uh ...

W:Uhm.

G: *yīnwèi tāmen (.) jiù (.) jiù yǒu yíge. Dànshì, zhège shāo yīngyǔ de jiāting ne, tā liǎngge fūmǔ dōushì zhōngguóorén.*

Because they (.) uh (.) one of them [speaks it]. But, this other family which speak English when both of his/her parents are Chinese.

...

G: *sǔoyǐ, tāmen dōu shuō yīngyǔ, zhè yàng xiǎohár lái shuō ne. tā jiù yǒu yíge gǎnjué: "nǐ zìjǐ dōu shuō yīngyǔ, wǒ lái xué zhōngwén xué ..."*

So, they all speak English. Thus, for the kids, they'd have a feeling that: "You speak English yourself, I'm learning Chinese. [What do] I learn [it for]..."

W:*dùì.*

That's right.

G: *"wo xué dé shénme ne? nǐ dōu bù gēn wǒ shuō." En, jiù yǒu zhèzhǒng gǎnjué. Wǒ juéde.*

"What do I learn? You [the parents] never speak to me [in Chinese]." Uhm, there's this kind of feeling. I think.

The example above shows that the language families chose to speak at home did not only reflect the amount of exposure the students received, but more importantly, represented the values of the parents.

Lack of opportunity to practise language outside the classroom was also a problem in Mandarin Chinese classrooms for children whose mother tongue is Cantonese or other Chinese dialect. As a result of the developments in Hong Kong as well as the fact that Mandarin Chinese now has become increasingly important in the commercial world, there are a growing number of Cantonese-speaking children learning Mandarin Chinese for social and economic reasons. However, most teachers were happy with this group of students as they normally showed a good

understanding of the written language and had some previous experience of Chinese word order as they listened to their family members speaking Cantonese at home.

Although many teachers interviewed stressed their insistence on students using Chinese in class, they generally reported that their students spoke English on most occasions even when they were still at Chinese schools. On some occasions, teachers even felt the need to withdraw from their position and explain parts of their lesson in English to help the students to understand. However, the teachers noticed that there was a big difference in their students' level of Chinese in all four skills. This difference was often attributed to the language spoken by the students' family. There was an expectation from the teachers for the students' families to support their learning at home. This will be discussed in the next section.

In Section 8.2, language issues related to the aspect of the participants' families have been discussed. It started by examining the Chinese language tradition which entails the culture of respect and comparing the language used by the students in this study to highlight the relationship between language use and the values and attitudes amongst the participants. The second part of this section looked at the issue of inter-generational language shift and language choice of the students. The final part looked closely to the language used in the children's home to see how this affected their views towards learning the Chinese language.

From Sections 8.1 and 8.2, it appears that Chinese schools in the UK have an extensive role in the community to provide links for families between the two cultures. The following section will look at how Chinese schools function as an extension to the community.

8.3 CHINESE SCHOOLS AS EXTENSION TO THE COMMUNITY

As the study progressed, it appeared that British Chinese schools were not only places for learning the Chinese language, but also extensions to the Chinese community. In this role of being an extension to the community, the Chinese schools were important in at least two areas, both functioning as a place for socialisation and a source for help in shaping the participants' ethnic identity. This section looks first at the social functions of the Chinese schools, and then examines the relationship between Chinese language learning and the developments of the students' ethnic identity, finally looking at the role the families play in supporting the students' learning at the Chinese schools both academically and socially.

8.3.1 Social Functions of the Chinese Schools

According to the teachers in this study, Chinese schools in the UK were not as 'serious' a place as schools in the Chinese context for their students. Although some teachers still stressed the importance of discipline in their classrooms, they seemed to show willingness to make allowance for the special circumstance of the students being in a non-Chinese-speaking context. A few teachers claimed that their students

attended Chinese schools more for the reason to make friends or to meet with their friends than actually to learn Chinese. For example, Teacher G gave me the following account when I asked him about the students' attitude towards attending the Chinese school.

G: *wǒmen bānshàng (.) hái kěyǐ. Yīnwèi, yīnwèi, tāmen, uh, júede hǎoxiàng. (.) rènshì (.) rènshì le jǐge péngyǒu.*

Our class (.) is OK [speaking of their attitude to attending Chinese school]. Because, because, they. Uh. Feel like (.) they know (.) they know a few friends.

W: *yǒu péngyou.*

They have friends.

G: *yǒu péngyou le. Ránhòu ne, jǐ ge péngyǒu dōu tán de dǐng tóuqì de.*

They have got friends. Then, [as] they all. get on quite well ...

...

W: *... nǐ júede tāmen zhēn de xiàng lái xuéxí {zhōngwén de dōu ma?}*

... Did you think {there were many of them} really came here to learn {Chinese?}

G: *{xuéxí zhōngwén shì} (.) běnlái ne, xuéxí zhōng wén shì qíci de. E. (.) jiéjāo péngyǒu ne. (.) cái shì shǒuyóu de. wǒ júede.*

{Learning Chinese is} (.) At first, learning Chinese was the second important thing. Uh. (.) Making friends (.) was the most important, I think.

The social function of the Chinese school – students using it as a place to meet their friends was also a point widely reported by the students interviewed.

As discussed in Section 8.1.1, the Chinese parents sometimes felt that there was no Chinese traditional festival feeling. This can be traced back to the agricultural history of the Chinese culture. Up until now, major Chinese festivals were still a time for the extended family to get together, share food and celebrate. As most of the Chinese families in the UK have relatives in other parts of the world, the getting together of the whole family could never be achieved on these occasions. Hence,

the Chinese schools play their part here as an extension to the community and provide members in the community with an opportunity to meet other people from the same or similar cultural background (it was possible to see people who are from Malaysia and Singapore join in the celebration if they knew about the meeting in advance). The fact that Chinese from Malaysia and Singapore were happily participating in the events organised by Chinese schools indicated the powerful bond shared by people using the same language/ethnicity. The following subsection examines the role of the Chinese schools from this aspect.

8.3.2. Learning Chinese Language and Identity

As Sham (1997) pointed out in her cross-cultural study of Manchester adolescents ‘language seems to be a major [cultural] identifying factor’ (p. 228). Learning Chinese language plays an essential part in forming children’s cultural identity. However, Sham (1997) also warned against the comforting thought that the culture elements could be maintained for the youngsters by sending them to Chinese schools. In fact, the youngsters in her study feel that they were ‘living in two worlds’ and the differences between schools and the home were not to be ignored. Sham (1997) concluded that:

Overall, the British Chinese youngsters focus on ethnicity rather than culture. What they mean by Chinese is not easy for them to identify. They mainly just identify the language, because it is the way their parents are. It is not surprising that their way of life in Britain is separated into the two areas of home and school.
(p. 231-232)

In the current study, there were signs that the students' families played as important a part as their Chinese teachers in helping the students to become more aware of the relationship between culture and identity. In some instances, children specially commented on the importance of learning the Chinese language when asked whether they enjoyed learning Chinese language. For example, during an interview with three Cantonese-speaking boys, one of them reported that he enjoyed going to the Chinese school and that he recognised learning Chinese as important to his own identity.

W: Why? You think [learning Chinese] is interesting?

T: I think (.) that's the thing that (.) I should (.) I should only learn Chinese, cause that's our ...

D: Ya.

T: Only (.) that's our personality.

D: Uhm.

(D 11, T 10, C)

This was the only occasion in all the interviews with children at Chinese schools that a child volunteered such a response, I asked him what influence was there for him to make such a statement.

W: ... Who do you think you got the idea of (.) Do you think of this idea yourself? ... Do you think it's our personality (.) or did your grandparents tell you "Oh, you are a Chinese (.) you need to speak Chinese."?

T: When I first (.) grew up (.) I knew I have to be Chinese.

(T 10, C)

When the children were asked explicitly about their cultural identity, a variety of responses were received. Some were definite in choosing one over another while others were reluctant in responding to the question.

M: Of course I am British. I was born here and I am a British citizen.

(M 16, C learning Mandarin Chinese)

W: ... Do you think you are different from your British peers? Friends?

B: Uhm ... I don't know ... Except we know more, another language, ... more than they do.

A: Ya. That's it. (A13, B 14, C)

W: Do you think you are Chinese? Or British?

M: Uhm. (2) Don't know... (laugh nervously).

(M 17, C)

A similar result is reported by Sham (1997) in her cross-cultural study regarding her sample of Cantonese-speaking adolescents in Manchester.

When asked to identify themselves between Chinese (35%), British Chinese (60%) and 3% said they are British.

(p. 223)

Despite the fact that the Cantonese-speaking parents were keen to maintain their children's language and culture, the identity issue for the Cantonese-speaking children was not at all a simple one.

A few teachers in this study mentioned that they view the maintenance of culture as an element as important as teaching the students to learn the language.

S: And, (.) I think it's because (.) uh (.) A lot of them, they're. They're born here (.) they live here all their live.

W:Uhm.

S: They know nothing about the culture.

W:Ya.

S: I mean even if (.) they know (.) the festival, they don't know what's the meaning.

W:Ya.

S: So, for me, the teaching is also about the culture.

W:Uhm.

S: And also, how a Chinese should behave actually. I mean, I would say “This is not a Chinese way of saying this.” Or “For Chinese, we don’t act this way.” I’ll tell them that.

...

From the extract, it seems that culture was not only a part of the content of teaching, culture was also transmitted through the teacher’s use of language and the teacher him/herself. For instance, Teacher H talked about how she modified her own behaviour as she thought it would be more appropriate to her role as a teacher in the Chinese school.

H: It's really a nice feeling to be a teacher. Being (.) uhm (.) it's (.) You've been respected (.) as a teacher.

W: Uhm. (.) By (.) the students or ..?

H: Students and parents. And you try to set up ()like a role model (.) to the children. Which is (.) I think (.) quite important. You've got to dress a certain way. If I am just a parent, I'll just go there ... [indicating the casual way she was dressing]
(Both laugh)

H: But as a teacher, you've got to be aware how you dress,.. how you speak to them; how you behave.

W:Uhm.

H: Everything you've got to be (.) so much more (.) aim to (.) set a role model to them, or how you portray the teacher as (.) as a Chinese speaking person.

...

In this incident, the teacher obtained personal satisfaction from the work she did and at the same time acted as a role model to her students.

The remainder of Section 8.3 will focus on the relationship between families and the Chinese schools – an area containing a strong link in traditional Chinese context.

8.3.3 Family Support for Learning

Although the Chinese tradition requires children to show respect to elders, observations of the children in this study showed that not all of them followed these traditions. Some, within a very tight traditional family, may have followed these traditions, whilst others were affected by the British way of life. The extent of the children's familiarity with Chinese traditions in their families also reflected on how they behaved in the Chinese school. For example, many teachers in this study pointed out with disappointment that their students had not yet learned to behave 'the Chinese way'. The Chinese teachers constantly complained about the children being *bù tīnghuà* 'don't listen to what one was told to do' or being too 'relaxed'; and suggested this behaviour to be a result of their British education, and sometimes the children's home environment. From these statements, it appeared that there were expectations from the teachers of what part the students' families should play in the children's education. It also showed the kind of assumption that the Chinese teachers may have of their students and their families. In this subsection, the family's support on students' learning is discussed – an area stressed by the Chinese teachers interviewed as 'very important' and 'essential'.

As most of the teachers interviewed at Chinese schools did not have much knowledge about the children's routine at the British school, they expected children to behave like those they saw in the Chinese context. On the other hand, the children did not have any previous experience learning in a Chinese context and simply had no idea what was expected of them by their Chinese teachers.

Sometimes, even the children's family could provide few guidelines on how to behave at their Chinese schools – something on which children in traditional Chinese context heavily relied.

On the contrary, Chinese teachers in traditionally Chinese contexts such as China, Hong Kong or Taiwan may rely on children's families to provide reinforcement of children's positive attitudes towards learning and on showing respect and obedience to the teachers. Sharing a similar cultural heritage, what Biggs (1996) terms as 'CHC' discussed in Chapter 2, Hess & Azuma's description (1991) of the support culture in Japanese schools may illustrate closely what the British Chinese teachers expect of their students' parents.

Adults in Japan are particularly eager to prepare the child to be diligent and to cooperate with the teacher. ... Parents also orient children toward their roles as students by instilling beliefs about the causes of failure and success in school and the degree to which the child is responsible for performance. ... (p. 3)

In other words, the family and the school, within the Chinese culture, work together to encourage children to change in attitude and expectation when they reach school age. Furthermore, it is generally recognised that Chinese parents often place great emphasis on the academic achievement of their children. It is also supported by a vast amount of research evidence that achieving goals in Chinese contexts such as China and Taiwan is often presented as being for the benefit of a group, often the family or the wider society, rather than the individuals (Yang 1981; Bond 1991; Cleverley 1991). It is in the family's best interest to help their children ease their

way into schools. Therefore, the Chinese teachers have a high expectancy of help and support from children's family.

During the time of this research, Chinese teachers I met often complained about the lack of support from students' families. There were comments such as "we are not getting enough help from the parents", and "we need more support from the parents as the time at the Chinese school is limited". In some extreme cases, some teachers felt that the parents were placing all the responsibility on them. Wong (1992) noticed a similar trend and reported that some parents might be taking advantage of the voluntary nature of the Chinese schools.

Although some schools have noticed that some Chinese parents have been taking advantage of Chinese classes by treating them as inexpensive nurseries, they still welcome all children joining Chinese classes regardless of the non-educational motives of some Chinese parents. (p. 71)

It is not surprising that the teachers placed much more emphasis on the importance of the parents in helping children's learning. Although there was only a small number of teachers interviewed in this study, this was one emphasised by the majority of them. One of the Chinese teachers interviewed expressed the view that he expected the students' parents to communicate and to be the ones providing essential feedback to them on issues of teaching and learning. The teacher claimed repeatedly that he insists in communicating through the parents whether it was about the problems with the students or feedback for his teaching.

R: To the (.) I would explain only to the parents. (.) I don't explain to him [the student], because there is no point for me to explain to any student.

...

(When talked about gathering ideas for improving teaching.)

R: There's no point to ask (.) yah (.) I think they are still too young [the students, in this case, are up to Form 5.] to make any comment for whatever ...

When asked about their students' learning, all the teachers indicated that it should be the parents' responsibility to 'support', 'help', and 'supervise' their children to learn/study Chinese while they were at home. Many teachers related children's performance and level of language directly to their parents' supervision. For example, when I asked Teacher W why some of their students were better than the others, she gave me the following response.

W: *wèishénme tèbié (.) wèishénme tèbié hǎo? Jiùshì yīnwèi (.) fùmǔ zài jiā fǔdǎo le. (laugh) yǒu xiē ne (.) yǒu xiē xiǎoháizi zài jiā zìjǐ (.) bú fùxí la. Jiù shì shuō (.) wǒ měicì, zuò le zuò yè. Bùzì shàng gěi tāmen zuò yè. (.) tāmen dōu zuò le. ... bù hǎo de ne. (.) Jiù shì shuō, húiqù méiyǒu (.) fùxí..*

Why are they particularly (.) Why are they particularly good? Just because (.) their parents supervised them at home. (laugh) Some of them (.) at home, some of the children themselves (.) never reviewed [what they've learnt]. That is, (.) Every time I gave them homework. I gave them homework on the exercise books (.) They [the good students] would all do it [the homework]. ... Those who did less well. (.) that is, they did not review (.) when they went home...

Time was an important issue. Many teachers indicated that their expectation of the family support on children's learning was not only based on the cultural tradition where parents would generally prepare their children at home for them to be better students; there was also a practical issue as students had only two hours of learning time each week at the Chinese school. It is certainly not enough for learning a

language as illustrated in the following statement Teacher W made during her interview.

W: *jīalǐ de rén (.) rúguǒ yào fùmǔ yǒu dūcù de huà, xiǎoháizi yě huì yǒu jìnbù. XXX jiù huì hěnhǎo le la. Rúguǒ bù dūcù (.) jiù bùxíng. (Both laugh) Jiù guāng kào zhe yìzhōu lǎngge xiǎoshí, shì bùxíng de.*

Family members (.) if their parents supervised them, children would improve. XXX would be quite good. If they [the parents] didn't supervise (.) it wouldn't work. (Both laugh) Depends only on two hours a week, it will not work.

The time available at the Chinese school was so limited. Even much of the teacher-parent communication, which was identified by the teachers as essential, had to be carried out within a short space of time, just before the class started and when the class finished, sometimes less than an hour. Thus, it depended heavily on parents seizing the opportunity to talk to the teachers. This was one of the factors which made the teachers feel the need to rely even more on the family to support their students' learning.

However, teachers also showed their understanding towards their students' different family circumstances which might restrain the support they receive from their family. Some older children might have to spend some of their time occasionally at the family business, and some of the parents could not offer help to their children as they were busy 'running their business'. Among all the reasons put forward, children's autonomy was also often discussed. Teacher R suggested that the whole learning should be supported by three sectors: the parents, the students and the teachers.

...

W: Whether they [the parents] push their ... children or not. How about others? Are there any other (.) factors? That you think ...?

T: If you are talking about as a whole, I would say that there is three part is the parents, [the students] themselves, and the teacher. These are the three parts.

In a few cases, parents are keen to send their children to the Chinese school while their children did not approach the school with the same enthusiasm. Take the following instance described by Teacher H in her interview as an example when she talked about her students' family situation.

H: But there are also a couple of them (.) the parents are very eager, but the child is very lazy.

W: Uhm.

H: He doesn't want to learn, and he's doing his best to (.) make up any excuse as possible.

W: Right.

H: [The excuses were that] he lost his sheet. He lost his book. He lost his exercise ...

...

It seemed that there were students with low motivation to learn even in an informal education setting such as Chinese schools. There could be several reasons for children having this problem. However, this is an issue which cannot be covered within the scope of this study. Particularly with cases such as the above, the Chinese teachers interviewed were aware that they could only rely so much on the students' family in providing the students support on learning at home.

The learning support students gained from the family was in many forms. It is not surprising that parents and grandparents were the British Chinese children's main

source of knowledge of Chinese at home. Children indicated that they had certain knowledge of the Chinese language, especially in speaking and listening, through communicating with their parents. A few of the students I talked to during the school visits stated clearly that they attended Chinese schools mainly to learn how to read and write Chinese because they were already able to listen and speak in Chinese. Some students expressed the view that they only receive encouragement from their parents for them to go to Chinese schools. Teachers and some children also talked about the importance of the parent's encouragement to the students' persistence on attending Chinese schools. As one interviewee explained when I asked her whether she still felt forced to attend the Chinese school after having some time there:

V: That's (.) I actually want to come a little bit, but I have to have (.) dad and mum force me to, then I will ... There needs to be some encouragement (.) then I will come ...

(V 14, M)

Children sometimes asked their parents for help with their homework from their Chinese school. One boy talked about the difference between homework from their British school and the Chinese school.

L: [The homework are quite similar] except (.) probably the fact (.) There will be Chinese homework, (.) I probably need help from parents. But (.) otherwise, it's more or less the same. ...

(L18, C)

Parents would also provide information about local activities run by the Chinese community for children to choose from. One boy told me that he actually enjoyed learning Chinese because it was useful for him to communicate with other Chinese

people; and it was his parents who provided him the opportunity by suggesting him to attend and taking him to the Chinese school.

M: They (the parents) suggested it. They said that there is a school nearby ...

(M 17, C)

Parents also made children's Chinese language environment richer by inviting their friends to visit especially when there was only one child in the family. For instance, I once observed in Tang school where I was a teacher, Parent A complimented Child B's (5-year-old) language ability as "like a little grown-up". His mother explained that Child B "always likes to talk to his Daddy's friends. There are not many other Chinese children in our area". Hence, Child B enjoyed playing around his parents and their friends when his parents had friends visiting them. It was noticeable that the child had knowledge of a large amount of vocabulary in Chinese and he felt comfortable talking to other adults at the Chinese school. It seemed natural for the child to switch between different languages: When I observed him playing with another child at the school, he spoke to his friend in English. As soon as he turned to explain what they tried to achieve to me and another student's parent, he switched to Chinese instead.

Children at British Chinese schools relied on their parents for knowledge and support in improving their Chinese language learning environment. The parents' attitudes towards Chinese language and culture also played an important part in influencing the children: whether they positively encouraged children to use Chinese whenever they could, or they sent their children to Chinese schools and only helped

them when the children asked for help. The children would react to these different attitudes and form their own opinions about the Chinese culture and language which could also contribute to their culture of learning in the classrooms.

8.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN AT THE BRITISH CHINESE SCHOOLS

Although each of the children had a set of different factors affecting them, the children's home language environment provided some indications to the characteristics significant to the groups of children. This section examines the diversity of the British Chinese children by comparing them against their language background. These children can be grouped into three main categories: Cantonese-speaking children, Mandarin Chinese-speaking children and the children with one British parent. However, it is worth noting that there may be some overlaps between these categories.

8.4.1 The Cantonese-Speaking Children

Many students at British Chinese schools were from Cantonese-speaking families. As Cantonese and Hakka are more similar in pronunciation than they are to other Chinese dialects, it was common to find students who report that one or more of their family members spoke Hakka as mother tongue speaking mainly Cantonese themselves. Most of these children claimed that they could understand Hakka and sometimes spoke Hakka to members of their family (normally, the older generations

such as grandparents), but they used Cantonese to most of the other members of the family and their own friends. The reason being that the early Chinese immigrants to the UK mainly spoke Cantonese. It had become a major medium of communication in the Chinese community in Britain (Chapter 3). Therefore, even children with one Hakka-speaking parent tended to speak Cantonese most of the time. In this research, these children were included in the Cantonese-speaking children's group.

Most of the families of the Cantonese-speaking children had been in the UK for a considerable period of time, even though some families did not arrive as a whole unit as explained in Section 3.2. A few families still had new members coming from Hong Kong and other places in Asia while this research was carried out. Hence, children who were 'Cantonese speakers' represent a huge variety of language users in Britain's Chinese community. As many of these children's families had settled down in the UK and mainly were in the catering business, the majority of them were involved in activities within the Chinese community even if they did not attend Chinese schools. Activities such as going to Chinese supermarkets with parents, going to Chinese films and participating in local events run by Chinese community centres were opportunities for the children to spend time with their parents and meet other Chinese people in the area. In a sense, this group of children were surrounded by more contacts to the local Chinese culture than the other two groups, as most of the events mentioned were organised and participated mainly by Cantonese speakers. But at the same time, as many children in this group were born in the UK, they were more deeply influenced by the British culture. They

progressed all the way through the British education system and probably only had Chinese lessons at Chinese schools for a short period of time. Their feelings about their cultural identity varied enormously (Section 8.3.2).

8.4.2 The Mandarin Chinese-Speaking Children

As discussed in Chapter 3, despite the political turmoil in Mainland China, some of the Chinese families immigrated to the UK did so for economic reasons. Hence, at the time of carrying out the current research, even though there were some newcomers in the catering trade who were Mandarin Chinese speakers, they tended to have their children staying in the Mainland and could not move them to the UK ‘until the fathers (sometimes also the mothers) settle down’ – just like it was for the earlier settlements. The majority of the Mandarin Chinese-speaking children, however, came to the UK with their parents who were mainly overseas students, professionals for trading or computer companies which had branches outside their country of origin. Therefore, although they might be from a wider geographical region in comparison to the South East region where the Cantonese-speaking people were mainly from, the children appeared to have similar educational experiences.

Some of the children in this group were born in Chinese-speaking countries, some were born in other countries due to the travelling required by the nature of their parents’ work. From my observation, the Mandarin Chinese-speaking parents were more likely to spend more time communicating with their children in Mandarin

Chinese. My observation would suggest that these children had reasonable ability in listening, speaking, reading and writing Chinese. Most of the Mandarin Chinese-speaking children I met communicated easily in Chinese. In order to maintain the Chinese connection – with companies or universities in Chinese-speaking countries – there seemed to be a more acute need for the children to maintain their Chinese language. Despite knowing that it was not realistic, some parents even expressed their desire for their children to keep up with the same age children back home in their learning of the Chinese language. In their effort to do so, they tried to obtain textbooks from Taiwan and China (depending on the parents' country of origin), asked the children to study them and sometimes even asked the teachers to base their teaching on these textbooks. The results sometimes could be frustrating for the parents concerned. One parent made the following comment when talking to me about her children's learning at the Chinese school.

He should be studying year 5 now, but he's only on the first book of the year 3's. At this rate, they'll never be able to fit back in the Taiwan's educational system.

Some parents did not have such a high expectation of their children but were similarly worried about their children's future. Another parent, also from Taiwan, made the following comment on a different occasion.

Yes... I'm a bit worried about them. The older sister [age 17] is OK. She seems to settle down now. It's the younger brother [age 15] I am worried about. He doesn't like it here. But they've been here for about a year now. It will be difficult for them to go back to the [Taiwan's education] system.

There were classes and even Chinese schools set up especially to cater for this group of children. As shown in Chapter 3, some parents might not be happy with the way teaching was done in British Chinese schools; choosing not to send their children to the Chinese school but teaching their children at home themselves. There were also cases where parents tried to teach their children at home with little progress and decided to ask the children to go to Chinese schools. Generally, the Mandarin-Chinese-speaking parents expect their children to do well academically, in both Chinese and British schools. It was common to observe parents comparing their children's academic performance when they met at the Chinese schools. Children were expected to do well not only in Chinese and English but also in other subjects they chose to do at the British schools.

In the above two groups, Chinese children of two Chinese parents show signs of uncertainty about their own identity and culture due to the family's choice or the environment in which they grew up. It was not surprising that children with one Chinese and one British parent found it even more difficult to identify with the Chinese culture/language and to find reasons for putting in hard work in learning the Chinese language. The following paragraphs will look at the circumstances of those children with one British parent.

8.4.3 Children with One British Parent

There was a minority of children at Chinese schools who had one British parent (in most cases with a British father and a Chinese mother). Some teachers commented

on these children as 'difficult to teach' due to the fact that most of these families adopted a British way of life. According to my observation, most of these children were sent to Mandarin Chinese classes even if Mandarin Chinese was not the Chinese parent's mother tongue. This may be due to the lingua franca status Mandarin Chinese had over other Chinese dialects. Since the communication in the families was mainly in English, it did not seem to matter as much which Chinese dialect the parents chose for the children to learn. Only a small number of children in this group attended Chinese schools. The main reason for these children voluntarily opted to learn Chinese was to learn it as a foreign language rather than out of ethnic interest.

It was not surprising that these children found it particularly difficult to keep up in the Chinese schools. They had very little help to practice the language once they walked out of the Chinese classroom. During one conversation with a boy whom I met when I was teaching at a British boarding school, he commented that "There's no point. ... I can't see any point of learning [Chinese], I'm not gonna use it. I will never be good enough".

Blame of a low level of motivation to learn Chinese should not be placed wholly on the children. Parents' attitudes are also important. Some parents whom I met during the course of study admitted that it was hard to keep discipline themselves in helping their children to become bilingual. One instance described to me by a friend from Taiwan and her husband might be able to provide a picture of the family's

language use. The British father (T) admitted that after being married for almost 4 years he was still “not very good” at Chinese. As he pointed out: “I tried to learn some Chinese every so often but most of the time we just talk in English”. And the Chinese mother (L) added that “It’s faster that way” and stressed that she is not very patient. However, they laughed lightly at the fact that when L was angry, she would use Chinese to speak to their 3-year-old son as she “just forget about it” and “the Chinese comes straight out”. They concluded that “Now he [the baby boy] thinks that Chinese is something that is said when mummy is not happy” which was something they would like to change for the future.

As mentioned before, only a small proportion of the children at Chinese schools belonged to this group. Nevertheless it represented an area where more help and understanding are needed in the future.

In sum, the culture of the Chinese families constitutes a major influence on the children’s sense of Chinese identity. At the same time, it also prepared the children to adopt a way to blend into the bigger context, the British society, around them so that they were not too different from other groups of people that they encountered every day.

8.5 SUMMARY

The discussion in this Chapter has focused on the influences of the participants’ families on the development of ‘culture of learning’. It began with the discussion of

the families' influences on the values and attitudes of both the teachers and students. It then focused on the issues of language, language and the culture of respect, inter-generational language shift and language choice, and languages spoken at home. The third part of this chapter has looked at how the Chinese schools functioned as extension to the community and as part of the families' life. The final part of the chapter looked at the children at the British Chinese school according to their family background. Although the categories for the children may overlap in some cases, the differences between each group of children are worth noting.

Part III, including Chapters 6, 7 and 8, has examined the data collected in this study. It has considered the development of culture in the immediate context of Chinese classrooms, Chinese schools and the participants' families based on the Ecology Model of Learning Cultures. The following chapter, Chapter 9, provides conclusions, implications and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 9

AN ECOLOGY MODEL FOR LEARNING CULTURES: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In Part III, results of the current study have been presented. My aim in this chapter is to bring together the major themes of the preceding chapters. This final chapter examines the proposed ecology model for understanding the culture of learning in the British Chinese classrooms where Chinese is taught as a community language, and considers how the model can be used to understand the complex issues of community language schools and how it can be extended in the wider social context. The discussion is organised as follows: some general considerations of the nature of the study are presented below in order to recap on the situation researched. In Chapter 3, the Ecology Model of Learning Cultures adopted for the study from Bronfenbrenner's paradigm was discussed, particularly considering the relationships between each 'system'. The second section of this chapter outlines the potential usefulness of the model in interpreting the particular context of the current study. The final part of this chapter attempts to show how the study has addressed the research aims and questions with the outcomes of the study. It reviews and evaluates the current research, considers the practical implications of the proposed model, and makes suggestions and recommendations for future research.

9.1 LEARNING CULTURES IN BRITISH CHINESE SCHOOLS

As argued in Chapter 3, language is more than a means of communication – it is also a reflection of culture (Wallerstein 1983; Kramsch 1998). Language can be a principal source of group identity and a medium for the transmission of that identity to children. From the discussion so far, it appears that in Chinese schools, when the language is taught by native-speaker teachers, different cultural expectations and communicative styles are also introduced. However, the impact is two-way. As the students learn and the teachers teach the community language, they are at the same time reflecting their cultural understanding and adapting it to fit new cultural and social rules. It is worth noting that this study does not only define culture in its commonly recognise terms as to refer to culture as ‘the way of life of a people or society, including its rules of behavior; its economic, social and political systems; its language; its religious beliefs; its laws; and so on’ (Grosjean 1982, p. 157). The term ‘culture’ is also used in this study to refer to the norms, attitudes, values and beliefs of the participants in smaller settings such as schools and even classrooms. After considering different theories regarding language learning and culture, the study applies the notion introduced by Cortazzi and Jin (1996b), the culture of learning, to explore the dynamic situation of the British Chinese schools.

Earlier on, in Chapter 2, the context of the current research was set out and the aims of the Chinese schools when they were first set up were identified as maintaining the language and cultural knowledge of the second-generation Chinese in the UK. Throughout the chapters so far, I argue that the students in the British

Chinese schools are learning more than only the Chinese language and the culture contents included in the teaching materials, but more importantly, they also learn a new ‘culture of learning’ in a different learning setting, that is, the British Chinese classrooms. To understand the development of culture in the British Chinese classrooms, the study has proposed an Ecology Model of Learning Cultures which is derived from the ecology model of cognitive development developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979: 1993). The following section focuses on the potential usefulness of the model proposed in the study.

9.2 THE ECOLOGY MODEL OF LEARNING CULTURES

In this study, I try to fit the findings about issues concerning the learning culture of the British Chinese classrooms into Bronfenbrenner’s paradigm to help with describing what is happening in the community language schools. This section first takes a look at key features of the Ecology Model of Learning Cultures adopted from Bronfenbrenner’s (1979: 1993) original model of cognitive development. The section then discusses the relationships between different ‘systems’ drawing essential features from the current study. A further discussion of how the proposed model may be applied in a different, wider research setting is in the next section.

The ecology model of learning cultures is adopted from Bronfenbrenner’s ecology paradigm. As previously noted in Chapter 3 (3.3), although Bronfenbrenner’s model has originally been designed for the understanding of cognitive development, it is useful as a theoretical framework as it emphasises the importance of understanding

behaviour 'in context' rather than in pre-determined settings. The hierarchical paradigm of micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-systems also enables the classroom cultures to be viewed as self-regulating systems and to focus on the inter-relationships of the different systems. The current study applies the ecology concept and develops it for the situation in the British Chinese classrooms. The study has made use of the graphically presented vision of the model provided by Renn (1999) who also adopts Bronfenbrenner's model for the understanding of the development of multiracial identity by college students. The adopted model is shown in Fig. 3.2 and is considered in the following paragraphs with relevant discussion and reference to the research data in this study.

This research suggests the need for understanding of different elements contributing to the development of classroom culture. The current study notes that elements including classroom activities, the highly varied, mixed-age/ability nature of classroom members, the students' language learning strategies, the texts and textbooks used in the classrooms, the teacher-student relationship and the school settings themselves are all influential in the development of classroom cultures. This does mean that the above elements are the only contributing factors to the attitudes, beliefs and values shared in the classrooms, but that the participants in the same or similar setting should be aware of and be on the constant look out for these and other elements which may also affect how teaching and learning takes place and how the different elements can have an influence on each other.

The Ecology Model of Learning Cultures (Fig. 3.2) entails four levels of 'nested networks of interactions' that create an ecology: micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-levels. Although the scope of the study can only allow the exploration of a few of the 'systems', the findings so far suggest that the social relationship between the teachers and their students is re-negotiated in the UK Chinese classrooms all the time. Even though it was found that there were dominant themes across the classrooms, to say the least, there is a powerful influence of the written language and a strong tendency of the teachers leading the direction of the learning in the classrooms, the negotiating between the participants was also evident. For example, it appears from the discussion in Chapters 6 and 7 that both the teachers and their students had to adapt their views about the culture of learning and teaching in British Chinese classrooms. The teachers had to include a wide variety of activities to accommodate the differences between their students in their age and ability. The teachers also reported in their interviews that they noticed that their students may be more forthcoming in participating in classroom discussions and other activities than children in traditional Chinese context due to their British learning experience, whilst the students reported that they were adopting to the Chinese school environment through the use of textbooks and other writing activities which may be different from their experience of learning other foreign languages at their British schools. Although the relationship between the teacher and their students is more of a teacher-dominant one, both the teacher and students negotiated their role and attitudes when they were at the Chinese schools. For instance, both the teachers and students interviewed expressed their view that because the students were attending

the Chinese school voluntarily, the Chinese teachers would not set their students such a high language and discipline standard as they would have in traditional Chinese contexts, and the students would try their best to fulfil the *gōngkè* ‘schoolwork, homework’ requirement set by their Chinese teachers but still put their priority in their British school work. The school settings, furthermore, contribute to the culture of learning as it provides the socialisation framework and environment in cultivating the participants’ beliefs, values and attitudes. It can be observed that the micro-systems (Fig. 3.2) – the classroom activities, the mixed-ability/age groups, the use of texts and textbooks, the relationships between students and their teachers, and the school settings – are strongly inter-related. Changes in one of the micro-systems may result in the re-negotiation of the other(s). This is one feature which arises from the concept of ecology model of development, the ecological transitions. Brofenbrenner (1979) stresses that ‘the developmental importance of ecological transitions derives from the fact that they almost invariably involve a change in role, that is, in the expectations for behaviour associated with particular positions in society’ and notes that ‘an ecological transition occurs whenever a person’s position in the ecological environment is altered as the result of a change in role, setting, or both’ (p. 6).

Furthermore, this study also explores an area that I feel is under-recognised: the students’ language learning strategies as discussed in Chapter 7 (7.1). As noted in Chapter 3 (3.1), previous research has shown that raising students’, and their teachers’ awareness of their language learning strategies can help the students to

learn more effectively. Although it is stressed throughout this thesis that the time available to the teachers and students in British Chinese schools is limited, I feel that it is an area worth exploring. Not until the students' full potential is realised, can both teachers and their students benefit from the learning experience in British Chinese schools. The understanding of the students' learning strategies may have implications in many areas. First, the understanding of the students' strategy use may help teachers to recognise how their students learn. This is not to say that the teachers should change all their classroom activities accordingly. Students may learn differently while they are on their own than they do as a group. The culture of learning in the classrooms may also have an impact on students' strategy use. The combination of circumstances may have made the use of particular types of strategy that are more appropriate than others (detailed discussion of the students' learning strategies is in Chapter 7).

The ecology model of learning cultures enables us to provide a holistic view of the inter-relationships between the different micro-systems that are described so far, which concern the participants in British Chinese schools. However, the micro-systems discussed so far are of a similar level and are enveloped in a wider framework of a meso-system. This study considers another area which is also crucial to the development of culture in British Chinese classrooms, the families. Empirical data was introduced in Chapter 8 to demonstrate the impact of family on the learning and teaching of the participants in the Chinese classrooms. Although it is suggested that the experience in the work-place of the volunteer teachers and the

students' parents may also affect the attitudes and beliefs of the participants, the scope of this research does not allow further investigation in these areas.

The discussion in Chapter 8 also shows that even though the family of each participant may not have much direct influence on the other's, they still have a profound influence over the culture of learning when the participants meet in the British Chinese classrooms. This particular feature is reflected in the ecology model as the concept is meant to incorporate this flexibility. Taking a holistic view of the whole ecology model of learning cultures, it appears that the potential options for the development of a culture in its environment are provided by the possibilities available in the wider context. The structure and content of the settings and the process of development in the smaller frame, the micro-systems, are to a large extent provided by the wider concept of culture or subculture, in other words, the meso-, exo-, and even macro-systems in which the micro-systems are embedded. Moreover, the present extension to Bronfenbrenner's model allows for more than one macro-system. If the term 'macro-system' is considered more or less coextensive with the term 'culture', there is no reason why the present ecology model cannot be extended to multicultural situations where two or more macro-systems are interacting.

After reviewing the model proposed in the study holistically, the following section draws a conclusion to the study and provides suggestions for further studies.

9.3 CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this section looks at the study in three parts. It firstly evaluates the study by restating its aims and looking at the outcomes. The section then discusses some practical implications of the research before providing suggestions for further research.

9.3.1 Evaluation of the Study

The study set out to fulfil two broad aims which I discuss in turn in this sub-section.

The first broad aim to the study is:

1. To explore current practice in UK Chinese schools in order to provide contextual information for understanding current issues involved in learning Chinese as a community language, especially in the context of Chinese schools in the UK.

The study approaches the first aim through the review of literature and the description of the current classroom practice based on the empirical data collected in the Chinese classrooms. My first question for investigation is:

1. What is the current state of learning Chinese as a community language in UK Chinese schools?

Detail discussions on the British Chinese schools and other community schools has been provided in Chapter 2. In short, the findings from the study shows that the

primary focus of Chinese schools is still to ensure the preservation of the language and culture of the children in the community. There is a particular emphasis also on teaching the literacy in the language. The British Chinese schools exist outside the mainstream education system and the limited resources mainly were sought from within the community. The majority of teachers in these schools were native speakers and they expressed an urgent need for better teacher training in linguistic and pedagogical principles and designing teaching materials.

To achieve the first broad aim of the study, the research raised a second question which explores the situation in the British Chinese schools from 'the field'.

2 What is the nature of classroom interaction in Chinese schools in the UK?

The findings from the study, discussed in Part III, contain illuminating examples of classroom interaction in the Chinese classrooms. The ecology model of learning cultures proposed early on in this study provides a framework for looking at the classroom interactions from various angles, the classroom activities and how they are affected by the students groups, the role of texts and textbooks and the different expectations of the teachers and students. These findings are also used in an attempt to achieve the second broad aim of the study.

- 2. To examine the relationships between culture and learning – cultures (that is, British and Chinese cultures) that teachers and learners bring with them into their interaction and the culture of learning in the UK Chinese classes.**

Chapter 3 of this study discusses the relationships between language and culture in general. It is worth noting again that the current study has put emphasis on ‘culture’ to include also the norms, attitudes, values and beliefs of the participants in smaller settings including schools and classrooms, which are termed by Cortazzi & Jin (1996) as ‘culture of learning’. The exploration of the data collected focuses on understanding the culture of learning in the British Chinese classrooms. The next two research questions were raised to help achieve the second broad aim.

3. What are the cultural elements developed in the context of the UK Chinese schools where there is a meeting of cultures? How can we account for this distinctive mix of cultural elements?
4. Of the two main cultures in question, which contributes the most to the construction of the classroom culture? Where do the activities, beliefs, practices, values and identities that we observe in the classroom come from?

The findings from the study show that both British and Chinese cultures contribute to the construction of the classroom culture. For example, Chapter 6 described how the teachers in this study expressed their observations of their students being more actively participating in the classrooms (than those in traditional Chinese contexts) and attributing this to the students’ British educational environment. On the other hand, the powerful influence of the written language seems to be a dominant theme which runs through the whole study. This is a relatively permanent and fixed aspect of Chinese literacy education which comes through more or less intact into the culture of the UK Chinese schools. This may be due to the high symbolic value which is placed on the written language by the community.

Furthermore, there is also evidence of a mix of cultural elements present in British Chinese classrooms. Examples of this aspect are described in detail in Chapters 6 and 7. The use of phonic clues by the students (where they were observed to be introducing English syllables to help pronunciation and memorisation), for example, is particularly interesting as this feature of learning is not common in either the British or Chinese mainstream learning environment.

The final research question attempts to conclude the study in the following terms, and I try to answer this question in discussions in the following sections.

5. Can the answer to these questions help us to understand in a more general sense what happens when two or more cultures meet in an educational setting?

The researcher is aware of the many problems generic to the study. For example, due to time, space and other constraints, the collection of data was limited to a small number of subjects, mainly the teachers and some of their students in British Chinese school, even though with the emphasis of the study it would have been ideal to include the views of more parents and community members. The study also attempts to use the proposed ecology model as a theoretical background for understanding the complex situation of the British Chinese classrooms and then links it back to the practice. Some practical implications of the research are raised in the next subsection.

9.3.2 Practical Implications of the Research

Practical implications which arise out of this study are mainly concerned with Chinese teacher training. In the course of the study, many teachers' perceptions have been distilled in a way in which few of them could themselves give the composite picture. Similarly students' views are also pooled together and it is unlikely that a single student's view would be similar to the one presented as the study illustrated. However, this study intends to present these different dimensions of the Chinese schools to the understanding of the development of learning cultures in the classrooms to help teachers consider aspects in their teaching and organisation of their classes which they may not previously taken into account.

9.3.3 Suggestions for Future Research

There are many aspects identified in the study worthy of further investigation. First, the use of ecology model in understanding holistically the multicultural situation in educational settings is useful as it suggests a flexible and inter-related dynamics of different systems. It is also interesting, in the case of Chinese schools, to explore and add further 'systems', whether at micro-, meso- or even macro- level, to the existing model in order to further understand the situations of many community schools.

Additionally, in the case of teaching a community language, this study provides some interesting areas which may be explored under different circumstances, for

example, Chinese schools in countries other than the UK, or language schools of other communities in the UK.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Transcription Conventions

Convention	Meaning
(n)	a pause; n is the length of the pause in seconds
(.)	a slight pause less than a second
[overlapping speech
[]	to provide contextual detail
(laugh)	transcription of a sound etc. that forms part of the utterance
XXX	unclear speech – something not audible
<u>underline</u>	underlining indicates the speech was in the speakers' own words (in classroom observations)
{ }	translation of the statements originally made in Chinese

Conversations in Chinese were translated into *Pīnyīn* ‘phonetic system’ with the meaning/English equivalent in quotation mark.

Appendix B:

Interview Schedule for Teachers in Taiwan Chinese and English translation

Information about interview

Interview questions

訪談記錄

日期: NO.

受訪人:

目前服務單位:

主題: 臺灣 -

海外教學經驗: 無 有 _____ 年

專業科目 _____ 教學經驗 _____ 年

教學對象: 年齡 _____

國籍 _____

其他說明 (level) _____

附件.1. 問題卷

2. tape no.

3.

附註

訪談記錄

學生學習策略

1. 您可以說明您的學生們在教室中的行為有些什麼特色嗎？
2. 請舉例一般您學生使用的一些學習方法？
(pronunciation/grammar/vocabulary/listening/reading/writing)
3. 您的學生會使用溝通的學習方式嗎？
(role play/talk to native speakers/ oral presentation/individual or group project/competition between students or group/ pair or group work?)
4. 您覺得您的學生在之前的學習經驗對他們現在的學習有什麼樣的影響？
5. 您覺得學生的文化背景對語言學習是否有影響？您通常以什麼樣的態度方法來處理相關的問題？

教學策略

1. 請問您覺得台灣的教學方式與國外是否有所不同？有那些特別不同的地方？
2. 您覺得在教師與學生互動過程中，有沒有什麼讓你特別覺得需要注意的事？
3. 您覺得中文是否應以特定方式教授？您認為什麼樣的方式最適合？教師是否應該只用中文教課？
4. 您覺得一個成功的課程需要俱備那些條件？

A. Information of interview

Date:

Informant:

Teaching Position:

Teaching experience overseas No, Yes _____ years

Subject _____ for _____ years

Students Age _____

Nationality _____

Other information _____

B. Interview Questions

I. Learners' Strategies

1. How would you characterise the behavior of your learners in the classroom?
2. Can you tell me about the ways your learners engage in learning?
pronunciation/ grammar/ vocabulary/ listening/ reading/ writing/
3. Do your students do any activities using communicative strategies?
role play/ talk to native speakers/ oral presentation/ individual or group
project/ competition between students or group/ pair or group work
4. What do you think about students' previous learning experience having
the effect on their learning now?
5. Do you think your students' cultural background or previous learning
experience affects their Chinese language learning?

II. Teaching Strategies and Concerns

1. In general, do you think teaching styles in other countries e.g. North
American, or Europe, are different from those in Taiwan?
2. What are your principal concerns about teaching (Chinese) in your
schools?
3. Do you think Chinese language should be taught in one particular way?
What do you think as 'most appropriate'? Do you think teacher should
only use Chinese to teach in the class?
4. In your opinion, what are the ingredients of a successful language
lesson?

Appendix C

Teacher Questionnaire

Cover letters to headteacher and teachers of Chinese schools

Teacher questionnaire



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22 October, 1997

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47250 LEICUN G

Dear Head/Committee member:

My name is Chao-Jung Wu. I am a PhD. student at the University of Leicester under the supervision of Dr. D. Robertson and Mr. W. Cajkler. My study at present is investigating the teaching of Chinese at Chinese schools in the UK. I hope, by sending out this letter, I could explain what my study is about and ask for your help in collecting some data from you school.

As most of you have been in this field for a long time, you will have noticed that there is a big difference between the performance of different students. That is, some of our students perform better than others due to their use of some particular 'strategies'. Some of these strategies might be taught to them by their teachers, some might have been developed by the students. It is my intention to find out what are the strategies that are used by our students and to see if there are other factors that affect their choice of strategies. I hope that this study will provide Chinese language teachers with a 'different angle' while thinking about instructional design.

This study includes several stages. I hope by sending out questionnaires to teachers of Chinese schools in the UK at this stage, I will be able to learn more about the teaching in the classrooms, and to find out what teachers know about their students' used of learning strategies. Please find enclosed two questionnaires for your school. I would like to ask if you could give these questionnaires to two teachers at your school who are interested in taking part in this study. If there are more teachers willing to participate, you are more than welcome to photocopy the questionnaire for use. If you would prefer me to send more copies, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will send additional questionnaires as soon as I can if you need them.

My next stage will be arranging interviews with teachers. With your permission, I could arrange a meeting with you to find out the possibility for me to investigate strategies used by students in your school. That, hopefully, will lead to useful insights that may help further planning for instruction.

I will send each school that participates in this stage a short written report regarding the results analysed from the returned questionnaires. Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours Sincerely

Chao-Jung Wu
E-mail: cjw12@le.ac.uk





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22 October, 1997

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7250 LEICUN G

校長暨委員會先生大鑒：

您好！我叫吳昭蓉。我現在是Leicester University 博士班學生，由 Dr. D. Robertson 與 Mr. W. Cajkler 兩位指導。我目前的研究重點在探討海外中文學校華文教學的情形。希望藉由這封信向各位說明我做這項研究的情形，並希望得到各位的協助，在貴校收集一些資料。

各位先進在海外中文教學界上已經付出許多年的心力，一定也注意到華人子女在中文學校中學習中文的情況依個人背景不同有很大的差異。近年來西方學說對學生之間的差異提出「學習策略」的理論：亦即，某些學生因為運用了一些特別的學習策略（或方法），使他們在語言的學習上有較其他學生好的表現。這些學習方法有些是老師教給他們的，有些則是學生們自己發展出來的。我希望藉著這一項研究瞭解我們的華裔子弟到底運用了哪一些學習策略？看看是否有其他因素會影響他們決定應用某些特定的策略。希望華文教師們在思考華文教育的問題時，這份研究的結果可以提供一個不同的角度。

這份研究包含幾個階段。目前，我希望藉由發出問卷給英國各個中文學校的中文教師們，瞭解教師們教學的情形及教師們對學生「學習策略」應用情形的瞭解的程度。每個學校我都寄出兩份問卷，期望校長或委員先生能將問卷交給兩位有興趣參與本研究的教師填寫。如果有更多的教師希望能參加，非常歡迎貴校影印本問卷並填寫寄還給我。如果貴校希望由我多寄一些問卷，請與我聯絡，我一定盡快將另外的問卷寄上。

下一個階段是對教師們做更進一步的訪談。甚至，如果可以得到您們的許可，我希望可以到貴校與您深談，瞭解進一步與貴校合作瞭解貴校學生運用學習策略的情形，作為教學計畫時的參考。

所有參與填寫問卷的學校都將收到一份關於這份問卷分析結果的簡短報告，供各位參與者作為參考。先謝謝您的合作。

再拜


吳昭蓉 吳昭蓉
E-mail: cjlw12@le.ac.uk





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347250 LEICUN G

各位華文教師：

您好！我叫吳昭蓉，我現在是Leicester University的博士班學生。這份問卷是我目前對於中文教學研究的一部份，研究的重點在於瞭解教師們所用的不同教學方法及學生在中文學校的學習策略，希望可以由「學習策略」的角度尋找可能幫助改進海外中文教學的方法。這份問卷的目的在調查英國中文學校教師們對於在英國教中文——特別是針對華裔學生的教學方面的經驗與看法。您對於中文教學的看法及您所觀察到在中文教學上的問題都將對我的研究有很大的幫助，請您盡可能詳答問卷中的問題，謝謝。

這份問卷應該只需要30分鐘就可填完。您可以依個人喜好用英文或中文填寫。所有的資料將由研究員自己作分析比較，並以匿名方式呈現。如果您對任何問題有疑問或意見，請您與我聯絡。謝謝。為感謝您的合作，我將會在資料整理完畢之後將結果向填寫問卷的學校教師們做簡單的書面報告。

請利用所附上的回郵信封將填好的問卷在 11月 30日前寄回。謝謝您的合作。

My name is Chao-Jung Wu. I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Leicester. This questionnaire is a part of my on-going research looking at the different teaching methods that Chinese teachers bring into their classrooms and learning strategies used by students. It is my hope that these findings about 'learning strategies' can be used as information in the future to help teachers in their classrooms. This questionnaire is being sent to teachers of Chinese schools in the UK. The object of this questionnaire is to investigate teachers' opinions toward teaching Chinese in the UK (mainly to children of Chinese descendants), and teachers' understanding about their students' strategy use. Thus, information about your beliefs, concerns and observation about Chinese language teaching will be most valuable to me. Please give as much detail as possible in your answers.

Please answer the questions in English or Chinese whichever you prefer. The questionnaire should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. Your reply will be read only by myself and treated in confidence in any reporting of the work. If you have any questions about the questionnaire, please contact me. As a token of appreciation, I will send schools or teachers who participate in answering the questionnaire a short written report when I finish analysing the data.

Please return the questionnaire by **30, NOVEMBER** using the stamped addressed envelope enclosed. Thank you very much for your co-operation.

吳昭蓉敬上

Chao-Jung Wu

E-mail: cjw12@le.ac.uk



A. Please answer these questions about YOURSELF 請填寫以下關於您的資料。

Please tick one box 請選一項

a) Gender 性別

Male 男 ☐

Female 女 ☐

b) Age group 年齡層

21-30 ☐

31-40 ☐

41-50 ☐

51-60 ☐

61+ ☐

c) Origin 原籍

Please indicate if you are 請說明您的原籍是

(i) Chinese (from China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan) 中國人 ☐

(ii) Not Chinese 非中國人 ☐

(iii) Chinese parents but born elsewhere (e.g. Australia, Europe, UK, USA) 華裔 ☐

Please state where you were born 請註明您的出生地 _____

d) Your language use. 您使用語言的情形。

1. What is your mother tongue? 請問您的母語是什麼？

2. What languages do you use (speak) in the following situation? (Please circle as many as apply.) 在下列情況下，您會使用下列哪一些語言？（請圈出所有適當的答案）

For example, Mandarin Chinese/ Cantonese/ Haka/ Taiwanese/ Other Chinese dialect.
例如，普通話/ 廣東話/ 客家話/ 閩南話/ 其他 上海話

i) Chinese languages 中國語言

Professionally Mandarin Chinese/ Cantonese/ Haka/ Taiwanese/
在專業領域上 普通話/ 廣東話/ 客家話/ 閩南話/
Other Chinese dialect (please state the languages at the space below)
其他各種中國方言(請在下方空白處填入語言)

In family Mandarin Chinese/ Cantonese/ Haka/ Taiwanese/
在家中 普通話/ 廣東話/ 客家話/ 閩南話/
Other Chinese dialect (please state the languages at the space below)
其他各種中國方言(請在下方空白處填入語言)

With friends Mandarin Chinese/ Cantonese/ Haka/ Taiwanese/
與朋友在一起 普通話/ 廣東話/ 客家話/ 閩南話/
Other Chinese dialect (please state the languages at the space below)
其他各種中國方言(請在下方空白處填入語言)

ii) Non-Chinese languages 非中國語言

Professionally English/ French/ German/ Japanese/
在專業領域上 英文/ 法文/ 德文/ 日文/
Other languages (please state the languages at the space below)
其他語言(請在下方空白處填入語言)

In family English/ French/ German/ Japanese/
在家中 英文/ 法文/ 德文/ 日文/
Other languages (please state the languages at the space below)
其他語言(請在下方空白處填入語言)

With friends English/ French/ German/ Japanese/
和朋友在一起 英文/ 法文/ 德文/ 日文/
Other languages (please state the languages at the space below)
其他語言(請在下方空白處填入語言)

e) What is your highest level of educational qualification ? 您的最高學位是 ?

Doctorate 博士 ☐

Master 碩士 ☐

Bachelor 學士 ☐

H. N. D. 專科 ☐

High School Certificate

中學 ☐

Other Qualification 其他認證 ☐

Please specify. 請詳述 _____

Please state the main subject area of your highest qualification. 請註明您最高學位的專業領域（科目名稱）。

f) In addition to teaching, do you fulfil any of the following roles? (Please tick as many as apply) 請問您在教職以外是否還有其他的工作（請複選）？

Paid Employment 雇員 ☐, (Please state nature. e.g. work in Computer companies, takeaways, etc. 請詳述其性質，例如：在電腦公司、餐館工作等。)

Self Employment 自行經商 ☐, (Please state nature. e.g. owning a restaurant or a baby clothing shop, etc. 請詳述其性質，例如：自己開餐館或嬰兒用品店等。)

Student 學生 ☐, (Please state the subject. 請說明課程及科目)

Housewife 家庭主婦 ☐,

Other 其他 ☐, (Please state nature. 請詳述其性質)

B. Please answer the following questions about YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND 請回答以下有關您的專業及學習背景的問題。

a. Have you had any training experience to teach Chinese? 您是否曾接受任何擔任中文教師的訓練?

No ☐

否 ☐

Yes ☐

是 ☐

Please state what kinds of training you have had and when. (Please give year and length of course; full time or part-time, and where.) 請說明訓練的性質、您接受訓練的時間、地點及訓練為期多久，您是全職學生或 part-time 訓練。

Year Completed 結訓時間 _____ Length of course 為期 _____
month/year

Title of course 課程名稱 _____ Part-time/Full-time

Qualification (if applicable) 結訓時是否有證書 _____

Country you did the course in 受訓地點國家 _____

b. Have you had any training experience to be a teacher? 您是否曾接受任何教師訓練?

No ☐

否 ☐

Yes ☐

是 ☐

Please state what kinds of training you have had and when. (Please give year and length of course; full time or part-time, and where.) 請說明訓練的性質、您接受訓練的時間、地點及訓練為期多久，您是全職學生或 part-time 訓練。

Year Completed 結訓時間 _____ Length of course 為期 _____
month/year

Title of course 課程名稱 _____ Part-time/Full-time

Qualification (if applicable) 結訓時是否有證書 _____

Country you did the course in 受訓地點國家 _____

c. In what way do you think the experience of your training affects the way you teach? 您所受的訓練怎樣影響您的中文教學?

C. Please answer these questions about YOUR TEACHING EXPERIENCE. 請回答以下有關您的教學經驗的問題

1. Please list the languages/subjects you have taught, number of years of teaching that language/subject and your estimation of the average number of hours per week over this period. 請在下表中填入您所教過的語言及科目，並請大約估計您教學以來平均每星期教學時數。

Language taught 教授語言	Number of years 教學年數	Estimate the average Number of Hours per week over this period 請大約估計您教學以來平均每星期教學時數
Mandarin Chinese 普通話		(hrs/week) (小時/星期)
Cantonese 廣東話		(hrs/week) (小時/星期)
English 英文		(hrs/week) (小時/星期)
Other subject taught (please state) 教過的其他 科目(請詳列)		(hrs/week) (小時/星期)
_____		(hrs/week) (小時/星期)
_____		(hrs/week) (小時/星期)

2. Do you teach more than one Chinese variety (e.g. Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese)? 您是否有教授兩種以上中國話的經驗（例如：普通話與廣東話）？

☐ No.

☐ 沒有。

☐ Yes.

☐ 有。

{ONLY TO BE ANSWERED BY TEACHERS if you teach more than one Chinese variety (e.g. Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese), 如果您教授不同的中國話（如：廣東話和普通話）請多回答本問題，謝謝！}

Do you use different teaching strategies for different dialects? 您是否會用不同的教學方法教不同的方言？

☐ In most of cases, I would use the same methods. ☐ 大多都用相同的方法。

☐ I would use different strategies.

☐ 我會用不同的方法。

Please state the reasons and what the differences are. 請說明原因與差異。

3. Please list the schools in which you teach **now** and details about the classes. 請將您目前教學的學校校名及您所教授的班級相關資料填入下表中。

(i) School 1

name of schools, and locations 學校校名與校 址	language taught 教授語言	students' identity 教學對象 † see below	age range 學生年齡	level 學生程度 ‡ see below	number of students 學生人數	length of each lesson (hrs/week) 上課時間 (小時/週)
		N 1 N 2 N 3 N 4		E I A O		

† For students' identity please circle, 教學對象請按以下分類圈寫

N1: for Chinese (from China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan) 中國人

N2: for Not Chinese 非中國人

N3: for Chinese parentage but born elsewhere(e.g.Australia, Europe, UK, USA) 華裔

N4: Other cases, 其他情形

please specify here, 請說明 _____

‡ For students' level please circle, 學生的程度請按以下分類圈寫:

E: for elementary, 基礎班

I: for intermediate, 中級班

A: for advanced, 進階班

O: for other cases其他

please state the situation. 請詳細說明情形 _____

(ii) School 2

name of schools, and locations 學校名與校址	language taught 教授語言	students' identity 教學對象 † see below	age range 學生年齡	level 學生程度 ‡ see below	number of students 學生人數	length of each lesson (hrs/week) 上課時間 (小時/週)
		N 1 N 2 N 3 N 4		E I A O		

† N4: Other cases, 其他情形

please specify here, 請說明 _____

‡ O: for other cases其他

please state the situation. 請詳細說明情形 _____

D. Answer the following questions about YOUR OWN LANGUAGE LESSONS. 請回答以下關於您的中文班的問題

1 How often do your students engage in the following activities in the classroom? (Please tick the appropriate box for each activity) 請您填寫以下表格，說明學生在課室中進行以下活動的情形（請在適當的格子中打 V）？

Activities 活動名稱	A great deal of time (several times in a lesson) 每次上課都使用非常多次	Quite a lot of time (once in a lesson) 每次上課都用一次	Sometimes (once every month) 每個月使用一次	Not very often (once in several months) 幾個月一次	Never 從來沒有
Using supplementary reading materials created by you 使用您製做的補充閱讀教材					
Listening to you 聽您講課					
Using a textbook 使用課本					
Reading other Chinese books 讀課外的中文書					
Listening to stories 聽故事					
Listening to cassettes 聽錄音帶					
Watching videos 看錄影帶					
Pair work 雙人一組活動					
Group work 小組活動					
Speaking to you in Chinese 與您說中文					
Speaking Chinese to others 與其他人說中文					
Writing sentences 寫句子					
Writing letters 寫信					
Writing stories 寫故事					

Activities 活動名稱	A great deal of time (several times in a lesson) 每次上課都使 用非常多次	Quite a lot of time (once in a lesson) 每次上課 都用一次	Sometimes (once every month) 每個月使 用一次	Not very often (once in several months) 幾個月一次	Never 從來沒有
Filling work sheets 填寫練習					
Translation 翻譯					
Role-play 角色扮演					
Copying new characters 學寫生字或生詞					
Using computers 使用電腦					
Tests 測驗					
Drawing pictures 畫圖					
Learning language patterns 學習新句型					
Listening to Chinese songs 聽中文歌					
Singing songs 唱歌					
Reading poems 詩歌朗誦					
Playing language games 玩中文的遊戲					
Solving problems 解決問題					
Using word cards with pictures and characters 使用有圖案或生字的字卡					

If you use other ways to support your classroom activity, please state. 如果您在教室中所應用幫助學生學習的方法不在上表中，請列舉在以下空白中。

2. It is common experience that some language learners are more successful than others. This may be because they use different learning strategies. 我們常常看到有些學生在語言學習上表現的較其他學生好。可能因為這些學生應用了不同的學習策略。

a) Which learning strategies do your good learners seem to employ most **in the classroom**? 請問您的學生中，學習成效較好的學生在教室中最常使用哪一些學習方法？

b) Which learning strategies do your good learners seem to employ most **outside the classroom (including at home)**? 請問您的學生中，學習成效較好的學生在教室外（包含在家中）最常使用哪一些學習方法？

3. Please list a maximum of five principal concerns that you have about teaching Chinese in your schools (in order of priority). 依照您的經驗，中文學校的教學（以您的學校為例）有哪一些主要的問題？請依序列舉至多五項。

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

E. Answer the following questions about YOUR OPINIONS ON CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE UK. Please provide as much detail as possible. 請盡可能詳答以下關於您對在英國中文教學的看法

1. In general, do you think teaching styles in British schools are different from those of Chinese schools in Hong Kong, Taiwan, China? 請問您覺得在英國學校中一般所用的教學方法與在香港、台灣、大陸等華人學校中所用的教學方法相同嗎？

☐ No. 沒有不同的地方。

☐ Yes. 有不同的地方。

What are the differences? 有相異之處，有哪一些特點呢？

2. Do you think there is one best way to teach Chinese language? 您覺得中文應該用某一種特定的方式教才特別有效嗎？

☐ No. 不一定。

☐ Yes. 應該。

If yes, what is it? 如果是的話，應該用什麼方法呢？

If no, could you briefly describe how you think Chinese should be taught? 如果您覺得不需特定方法，請您簡單說明您覺得中文應用什麼方法教授。

3. What do you feel about how your pupils respond to teaching? 您覺得您的學生對您的教學有什麼反應？

4. Do they behave as you expect? If not, please specify why? 您覺得學生表現與您所預期相同嗎？如果不同請說明原因。

5. Do you think that the teacher should speak Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin Chinese) all the time in the classroom? 您覺得教師在班上應該只說中文嗎？

☐ If yes, why? 如果您覺得是，為什麼？

☐ If not, why not? 如果您覺得不需要，為什麼？

6. Do you think your pupils' British lifestyle affects their Chinese language learning? 您覺得學生的英國成長背景會影響他們對中文的學習嗎？

☐ No. 沒有不同的地方。

☐ Yes. 會。

If so, what are the most significant points? 如果會的話，有哪一些顯著的特點呢？

7. If you have other concerns about Chinese language teaching or wish to make other suggestions, please use the space below. 如果您在中文教學相關的問題上還有其它寶貴的建議，請寫在以下的空白中。

Your participation in the interviews later on would be very much appreciated. **If it is convenient for you to participate, please tick.** Please state ways in which I can contact you for arranging meetings. 如果您日後方便接受訪談深入討論您的意見的話，請打勾。 ☐

Contact details 並請留下通訊方法。

Name :

Home Tel _____ Mobile _____

Fax _____

E-mail address. _____

Address. _____

If you know someone who is also working in this field and who would be willing to participate in this project, please give their names and correspondence information. 如果您認識其他在這一個領域工作或有經驗的人也有意願填寫此問卷者，請寫下他們的名字與通訊方式，謝謝！

Thank you very much for your co-operation. 謝謝您的合作。

Appendix D

Student Questionnaire

Cover letter to teachers

Instruction to administrate SILL

Key to understand the SILL result (for teachers)

Background questionnaire

SILL worksheet

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Chao-Jung Wu
No. 21, University Road,
School of Education,
University of Leicester,
Leicester LE1 7ZX
12, February 1998

親愛的中文教師:

您好!我是吳昭蓉.謝謝您幫我填寫了問卷.并且答應在稍后接受我的訪問.目前我還在等更多的問卷回覆.如果我有進一步的結果,我會盡快的向您報告.

我的下一個研究階段是探討學生使用學習策略的情形,因為考慮要請學生填寫調查表,所以我決定采取十三到二十三歲以下的學生為調查對象.因為您在問卷中指出您的學生年齡小于這個範圍,所以沒有辦法讓您的學生加入這個階段的研究.如果您對這個階段研究有興趣,請您不用客氣盡管與我聯絡.我可以再給您做更詳細的說明.

還要再次謝謝您的合作.并且希望可以很快安排時間與您會面.

敬祝

大安

吳昭蓉 Chao-Jung Wu

Chao-Jung Wu
No. 21, University Road,
School of Education,
University of Leicester,
Leicester LE1 7ZX
12, February 1998

親愛的中文教師:

您好!我是吳昭蓉.謝謝您幫我填寫了問卷.并且答應在稍后接受我的訪問.目前我還在等更多的問卷回覆.如果我有進一步的結果,我會盡快的向您報告.

我的下一個研究階段是探討學生使用學習策略的情形,因為考慮要請學生填寫調查表,所以我決定采取十三到二十三歲以下的學生為調查對象.因為您在問卷中指出您的學生年齡正好在這個範圍之內,不知道您是否願意讓您的學生加入這個階段的研究?

這份調查表是由美國學者Oxford發展出來,專門用來了解學生使用學習策略情形的測驗表.學生依他們的情形評1--5分,由我加以分析.一般填寫的時間只要15--20分鐘.您可以讓學生在課堂上填寫或帶回家做.

如果您對這個階段研究有興趣,請填寫下面的回條,讓我知道您有幾位學生可以參加.我才能給您寄上所需要的資料及說明.

還要再次謝謝您的合作.希望可以很快接到您的回音,并在近期內安排我們的訪問.

敬祝
大安

吳昭蓉 Chao-Jung Wu

姓名 _____

我不想要學生參加 ☐

我想要學生參加 ☐

請寄 _____ 份問卷給我.

Chao-Jung Wu
No. 21, University Road,
School of Education,
University of Leicester,
Leicester LE1 7ZX
12, February 1998

您好!

我是吳昭蓉.謝謝您答應參與學生的學習策略調查.
茲寄上您所希望我寄上的測驗卷 _____ 份.每份測驗卷包含:

題目一份, 背景資料問卷一張, 答案卷一張

這份問卷由美國學者R. Oxford 發展出來的,希望可以幫助教師們更了解學生用哪些方法學習.也因此學生的評分高低并無好壞之分 -- 只是他們的習慣不同罷了. 我另外附上計分表及分數解析圖,給您作為參考.

填答前麻煩請您指導學生先將背景資料填好. 所有的題目都是由1到5分. 1: 如果他們從不曾使用該項方式幫助學習. 5:如果他們常使用該項方式.

唯一需要注意的是:爲了要了解學生填答的情形.不管您讓學生在課室中填寫或帶回家填答.請您一定要要求學生在開始做答與答完時將時間寫在答案卷的右上與右下角的兩個空格里.這一點是要麻煩您特別要求學生注意的.

當然最后還是要請您幫忙將這些資料收集,以附上的回郵信封寄還給我.

我附了較多的背景資料問卷, 如果貴校有其他教師有興趣讓他們13-23歲的學生參與者.請轉交給他們.

爲了節省資源,請您要求學生不要在問題卷上做記號,并在用完后將不用的問題卷寄還給我.(您可以保留幾分做參考).與教師問卷一樣,我將在有研究結果時向您簡報.

先謝謝您的合作.

敬祝

大安

吳昭蓉 Chao-Jung Wu

Your Name _____ Date _____
Language Learned Now or Most Recently _____

Profile of Results on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Version 5.1
(c) R. Oxford, 1989

You will be given this Profile after you have completed the Worksheet for Answering and Scoring the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). This Profile will summarize your results on SILL and show the kinds of strategies you use in learning a new language. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers and no "best" average scores for each part, since people learn languages differently.

To complete this Profile, transfer your averages for each part of the SILL, and for the whole SILL, from the Worksheet.

Part What Strategies Are Covered Your Average on This Part

- A. Remembering More Effectively: Grouping; making associations; placing new words into a context to remember them; using imagery, sounds, sound-and-image combinations, actions, etc. in order to remember new expressions; reviewing in a structured way; going back to review earlier material.
- B. Using Your Mental Processes: Repeating; practicing with sounds and writing systems; using formulas and patterns; recombining familiar items in new ways; practicing the new language in a variety of authentic situations involving the four skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing); skimming and scanning to get the idea quickly; using reference resources; taking notes; summarizing; reasoning deductively (applying general rules); analyzing expressions; analyzing contrastively via comparisons with another language; being cautious about word-for-word translating and direct transfers from another language; looking for language patterns; adjusting your understanding according to new information.
- C. Compensating for Missing Knowledge: Using all possible clues to guess the meaning of what is heard or read in the new language; trying to understand the overall meaning and not necessarily every single word; finding ways to get the message across in speaking or writing despite limited knowledge of the new language; for instance, using gestures, switching to your own language momentarily, using a synonym or description, coining new words.
- D. Organizing and Evaluating Your Learning: Overlooking and linking with material you already know; deciding in general to pay attention; deciding to pay attention to specific details; finding out how language learning works; arranging to learn (schedule, environment, notebook); setting goals and objectives; identifying the purpose of a language task; planning for a language task; finding practice opportunities; noticing and learning from your errors; evaluating your progress.
- E. Managing Your Emotions: Lowering your anxiety; encouraging yourself through positive statements; taking risks wisely; rewarding yourself; noting physical stress; keeping a language learning diary; talking with someone about your feelings/attitudes.
- F. Learning with Others: Asking questions for clarification or verification; asking for correction; cooperating with peers; cooperating with proficient users of the new language; developing cultural awareness; becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings.

YOUR OVERALL AVERAGE

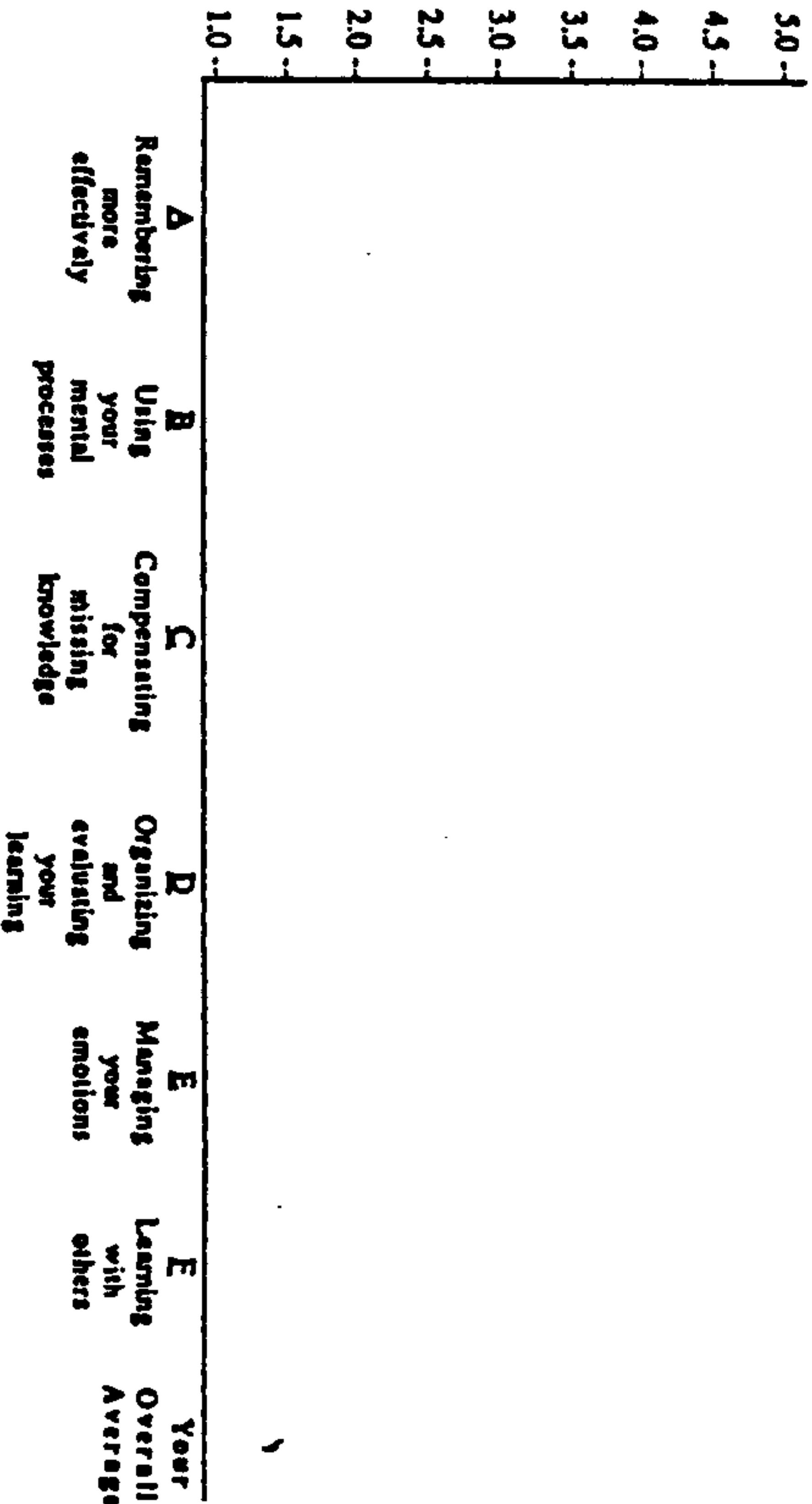
Version 5.1
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Key to Understanding Your Averages

High	Always or almost always used	4.5 to 5.0
	Generally used	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	Sometimes used	2.5 to 3.4
	Generally not used	1.5 to 2.4
Low	Never or almost never used	1.0 to 1.4

Graph Your Averages Here

If you want, you can make a graph of your SILL averages. What does this graph tell you? Are you very high or very low on any part?



What These Averages Mean to You

The overall average indicates how frequently you use language learning strategies in general. The averages for each part of the SILL show which groups of strategies you tend to use the most in learning a new language. You might find that the averages for each part of the SILL are more useful than your overall average. Optimal use of language learning strategies depends on your age, personality, stage of language learning, purpose for learning the language, previous experience, and other factors. Nevertheless, there may be some language learning strategies that you are not yet using which might be beneficial to you. Ask your teacher for more information on language learning strategies.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name _____
2. Date _____
3. Age _____
4. Gender Male/Female
5. Where were you born? _____
6. Before you arrived in the UK, in which country did you live?

a. In what year did you arrive in the UK? _____
7. How often do you go to Chinese-speaking countries? _____ times/year
a. How long do you normally stay during these visits? _____
8. In this section, could you tell me information about your language use:
including all Chinese languages and non-Chinese languages (e. g. English).
a. What language(s) do you speak/use with your mother/father?

b. What language(s) do you speak with your brothers or sisters?

c. What language(s) do you speak with your friends (if more than one,
please specify)? _____
9. Which is your Mother Tongue (the language you first learned as a baby,
even you do not speak it very well now)? _____
a. If # 9 is not Chinese, when did you start and how long have you learned
Chinese for? _____
b. If # 9 is not Chinese, where and under what circumstances have you
learned Chinese? _____
10. Which other languages have you studied or tried to study?

a. Which of these languages do you still speak/use?

SILL Worksheet (continued)

Version 5.1
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Please write down time start

hour / min

Part A	Part B	Part C	Part D	Part E	Part F	Whole SILL
1. _____	16. _____	41. _____	49. _____	65. _____	72. _____	SUM Part A _____
2. _____	17. _____	42. _____	50. _____	66. _____	73. _____	SUM Part B _____
3. _____	18. _____	43. _____	51. _____	67. _____	74. _____	SUM Part C _____
4. _____	19. _____	44. _____	52. _____	68. _____	75. _____	SUM Part D _____
5. _____	20. _____	45. _____	53. _____	69. _____	76. _____	SUM Part E _____
6. _____	21. _____	46. _____	54. _____	70. _____	77. _____	SUM Part F _____
7. _____	22. _____	47. _____	55. _____	71. _____	78. _____	
8. _____	23. _____	48. _____	56. _____		79. _____	
9. _____	24. _____		57. _____		80. _____	
10. _____	25. _____		58. _____			
11. _____	26. _____		59. _____			
12. _____	27. _____		60. _____			
13. _____	28. _____		61. _____			
14. _____	29. _____		62. _____			
15. _____	30. _____		63. _____			
	31. _____		64. _____			
	32. _____					
	33. _____					
	34. _____					
	35. _____					
	36. _____					
	37. _____					
	38. _____					
	39. _____					
	40. _____					

SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____
÷ 15 = _____	÷ 25 = _____	÷ 8 = _____	÷ 16 = _____	÷ 7 = _____	÷ 9 = _____	÷ 80 = _____ (OVERALL AVERAGE)

Please write down time finish

hour / min

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Version for English Speakers Learning a New Language

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Version 5.1
(c) R. Oxford, 1989

Directions

The STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL) is designed to gather information about how you, as a student of a foreign or second language, go about learning that language. On the following pages, you will find statements related to learning a new language. Please read each statement. On the separate answer sheet, mark the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells how true the statement is in terms of what you actually do when you are learning the new language.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Generally not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Generally true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Never or almost never true of me means that the statement is very rarely true of you ; that is, you do the behavior which is described in the statement only in very rare instances.

Generally not true of me means that the statement is usually not true of you; that is, you do the behavior which is described in the statement less than half the time, but more than in very rare instances.

Somewhat true of me means that the statement is true of you about half the time; that is, sometimes you do the behavior which is described in the statement, and sometimes you don't, and these instances tend to occur with about equal frequency.

Generally true of me means that the statement is usually true of you; that is, you do the behavior which is described in the statement more than half the time.

Always or almost always true of me means that the statement is true of you in almost all circumstances: that is, you almost always do the behavior which is described in the statement.

Use the separate Worksheet for recording your answers and for scoring. Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you, not in terms of what you think you should do, or what other people do. Answer in reference to the language you are now learning (or the language you most recently learned). There are no right or wrong responses to these statements. Work carefully but quickly. You will score the SILL yourself using the attached Worksheet. On the Worksheet, write your name, the date, and the language learned.

EXAMPLE

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Generally not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Generally true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Read the item, and choose a response (1 through 5 as above), and write it in the space after the item.

I actively seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers of the new language. _____

You have just completed the example item. Answer the rest of the items on the Worksheet.

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Version 5.1

(c) R. Oxford, 1989

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Generally not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Generally true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on Worksheet)

Part A

When learning a new word . . .

1. I create associations between new material and what I already know.
2. I put the new word in a sentence so I can remember it.
3. I place the new word in a group with other words that are similar in some way (for example, words related to clothing, or feminine nouns).
4. I associate the sound of the new word with the sound of a familiar word.
5. I use rhyming to remember it.
6. I remember the word by making a clear mental image of it or by drawing a picture.
7. I visualize the spelling of the new word in my mind.
8. I use a combination of sounds and images to remember the new word.
9. I list all the other words I know that are related to the new word and draw lines to show relationships.
10. I remember where the new word is located on the page, or where I first saw or heard it.
11. I use flashcards with the new word on one side and the definition or other information on the other.
12. I physically act out the new word.

When learning new material . . .

13. I review often.
14. I schedule my reviewing so that the review sessions are initially close together in time and gradually become more widely spread apart.
15. I go back to refresh my memory of things I learned much earlier.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Generally not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Generally true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on Worksheet)

Part B

16. I say or write new expressions repeatedly to practice them.
17. I imitate the way native speakers talk.
18. I read a story or dialogue several times until I can understand it.
19. I revise what I write in the new language to improve my writing.
20. I practice the sounds or alphabet of the new language.
21. I use idioms or other routines in the new language.
22. I use familiar words in different combinations to make new sentences.
23. I initiate conversations in the new language.
24. I watch TV shows or movies or listen to the radio in the new language.
25. I try to think in the new language.
26. I attend and participate in out-of-class events where the new language is spoken.
27. I read for pleasure in the new language.
28. I write personal notes, messages, letters, or reports in the new language.
29. I skim the reading passage first to get the main idea, then I go back and read it more carefully.
30. I seek specific details in what I hear or read.
31. I use reference materials such as glossaries or dictionaries to help me use the new language.
32. I take notes in class in the new language.
33. I make summaries of new language material.
34. I apply general rules to new situations when using the language.
35. I find the meaning of a word by dividing the word into parts which I understand.
36. I look for similarities and contrasts between the new language and my own.
37. I try to understand what I have heard or read without translating it word-for-word into my own language.
38. I am cautious about transferring words or concepts directly from my language to the new language.
39. I look for patterns in the new language.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Generally not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Generally true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on Worksheet)

40. I develop my own understanding of how the language works, even if sometimes I have to revise my understanding based on new information.

Part C

41. When I do not understand all the words I read or hear, I guess the general meaning by using any clue I can find, for example, clues from the context or situation.
42. I read without looking up every unfamiliar word.
43. In a conversation I anticipate what the other person is going to say based on what has been said so far.
44. If I am speaking and cannot think of the right expression, I use gestures or switch back to my own language momentarily.
45. I ask the other person to tell me the right word if I cannot think of it in a conversation.
46. When I cannot think of the correct expression to say or write, I find a different way to express the idea; for example, I use a synonym or describe the idea.
47. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones.
48. I direct the conversation to a topic for which I know the words.

Part D

49. I preview the language lesson to get a general idea of what it is about, how it is organized, and how it relates to what I already know.
50. When someone is speaking the new language, I try to concentrate on what the person is saying and put unrelated topics out of my mind.
51. I decide in advance to pay special attention to specific language aspects; for example, I focus the way native speakers pronounce certain sounds.
52. I try to find out all I can about how to be a better language learner by reading books or articles, or by talking with others about how to learn.
53. I arrange my schedule to study and practice the new language consistently, not just when there is the pressure of a test.
54. I arrange my physical environment to promote learning; for instance, I find a quiet, comfortable place to review.
55. I organize my language notebook to record important language information.
56. I plan my goals for language learning, for instance, how proficient I want to become or how I might want to use the language in the long run.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Generally not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Generally true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on Worksheet)

57. I plan what I am going to accomplish in language learning each day or each week.
58. I prepare for an upcoming language task (such as giving a talk in the new language) by considering the nature of the task, what I have to know, and my current language skills.
59. I clearly identify the purpose of the language activity; for instance, in a listening task I might need to listen for the general idea or for specific facts.
60. I take responsibility for finding opportunities to practice the new language.
61. I actively look for people with whom I can speak the new language.
62. I try to notice my language errors and find out the reasons for them.
63. I learn from my mistakes in using the new language.
64. I evaluate the general progress I have made in learning the language.

Part E

65. I try to relax whenever I feel anxious about using the new language.
66. I make encouraging statements to myself so that I will continue to try hard and do my best in language learning.
67. I actively encourage myself to take wise risks in language learning, such as guessing meanings or trying to speak, even though I might make some mistakes.
68. I give myself a tangible reward when I have done something well in my language learning.
69. I pay attention to physical signs of stress that might affect my language learning.
70. I keep a private diary or journal where I write my feelings about language learning.
71. I talk to someone I trust about my attitudes and feelings concerning the language learning process.

Part F

72. If I do not understand, I ask the speaker to slow down, repeat, or clarify what was said.
73. I ask other people to verify that I have understood or said something correctly.
74. I ask other people to correct my pronunciation.
75. I work with other language learners to practice, review, or share information.
76. I have a regular language learning partner.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Generally not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Generally true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on Worksheet)

77. When I am talking with a native speaker, I try to let him or her know when I need help.
78. In conversation with others in the new language, I ask questions in order to be as involved as possible and to show I am interested.
79. I try to learn about the culture of the place where the new language is spoken.
80. I pay close attention to the thoughts and feelings of other people with whom I interact in the new language.

Your Name _____ Date _____

Language Learned Now or Most Recently _____

Worksheet for Answering and Scoring

the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Version 5.1 (c) R. Oxford, 1989

1. Write your response to each item (that is, write 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) in each of the blanks, which are numbered to correspond to each item on the SILL.
2. Total each column and put the result on the line marked "SUM".
3. Divide by the number under "SUM" to provide an average for each column. Round this average off to the nearest tenth, as in 3.4. Because the only possible response for a SILL item is 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, your average across items for each part of the SILL should be between 1.0 and 5.0. You can make sure your figuring is correct by checking whether your average for each part is within the range of 1.0 to 5.0.
4. Calculate your overall average. To do this, add up all the SUMS for the different parts of the SILL. This will give you the total raw score. Divide by 80, the number of items on the SILL. This will give you the overall average, which should be within the range of 1.0 and 5.0.
5. When you have completed this Worksheet, your teacher will give you the Profile of results on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). Transfer your averages (for each part and for the whole SILL) from the Worksheet to the Profile in order to obtain an interpretation of your SILL results.

Appendix E

Teacher Interview Schedule

Information sheet about teacher’s school

Interview schedule

1. Name of your school:
in Chinese _____
in English _____

2. Address: _____

3. Are you a member of any Chinese Association?
No, ☐
Yes, ☐ Please State _____

4. Do you have a school committee? Yes, ☐ No, ☐

5. Contact person:
Chairman of school committee:
Name: _____ Telephone number: _____
Headmaster of the school:
Name: _____ Telephone number: _____

6. No. of students: _____

7. Minimum age for starting at the school: _____
Maximum age for attending at the school: _____

8. Please complete the table for the range of courses and the time they are offered at the school.

- What time are classes held each week? (Please Circle.)
Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday/Saturday/Sunday

Course Name		Mandarin Chinese	Cantonese	Martial Art	Brush Painting	Chinese Musical Instruments	Others (please specify)
Class time	Morning						
(Please tick)	Afternoon						
Class	Morning						
Number	Afternoon						

- How long is it for an average session? _____ minutes

9. No. of teachers at school: _____

10. No. of other staff: _____

11. Teaching Materials:

Mainland China textbooks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hong Kong textbooks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taiwan textbooks	<input type="checkbox"/>
UKFCS textbooks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others	<input type="checkbox"/> (please give details)

12. What is/are the method(s) for you to find new students?

13. How do you recruit teachers in your school?

15. Teacher Qualification:

	No. of teachers
Teachers who are now in teaching position	<hr/>
Teachers came to UK for further study	<hr/>
Students	<hr/>
House wife	<hr/>
People who have teaching experience	<hr/>
Other profession (Please state what it is/they are)	<hr/>

If it is possible, please write on a separate sheet specify how long the teachers have been teaching and what is the ratio (in percentage) for teachers to leave their position.

16. Do you provide any form of teacher-training? Yes, ☐ No, ☐
If Yes, could you state what it is/they are?

17. School premises:

school's own premises	<input type="checkbox"/>
rental	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much is the rent for each year?	£ <hr/>

18. Financial Resources:

Tuition fee	every term £ <hr/>	every year £ <hr/>
government support	£ <hr/>	
Chinese association support	£ <hr/>	

Please state how you apply funding from government.

19. Teachers' Salary:

Teaching Salary

Transportation fee (per week)

Other

£

£

£

20. Other Activities: (Please tick in the appropriate box.)

	School Outings	School Library	Video Facility	Computers	Others
Yes					
No					

22. Does your school belong to any Chinese association?

Yes, ☐ Please state. _____

No, ☐

23. Have there any students in your school taken exams outside school (e.g. GCSE) in the past three years?

Yes, ☐ Please state. (e.g. 10 students took GCSE, 2 took A level)

No, ☐

24. If there is anything else you'd like to add, please use the space below.

A. During this interview, I'd like to ask you some questions about your opinions on Chinese language teaching. And to clarify some answers from the questionnaire you filled in. O.K.?

1. What does the term 'Chinese teaching' mean to you? What sort of activities you think of when it's been mentioned?

2. What do you think your main duty is?

(Teaching written /spoken language)

3. What is your main motivation to do this?

4. Do you enjoy it? What aspect do you enjoy? What aspect do you not enjoy?

5. What kind of things do you find difficult?

age? Student level? home background?

B. 1. Can you describe your typical class for me?

2. What activities do you use most often? Why?
use rarely? Why?

(if they have items missing in the questionnaire, ask about those)
reading: aloud as a group/ individually?
writing: what? (be specific!)

3. Do you ever use activities like role play/...?

Do you find them valuable?
Do they work? Are they successful?

role play/ talk to native speakers/ oral presentation/
individual or group project/ competition between students or group/ pair or group work/ game/ music/

Why? Why not (using them)?

4. Do you use any meta-language at all? Where did you get the idea?

English learning exp. /personal learning exp./ training course?/ student's feedback?

II. In this section, I am going to ask you some questions about your students' behaviours, alright?
1. Could you describe a little bit more about your students?

age, level, gender, nationality, lang. background, (similarities and differences)

Can you tell me how your students behave?

How long do they last?
Reason for not continue learning?

home? transport?
teacher? parents?
children's attitude?
Why do they not want to learn?
Why are they good in ... pronunciation/ grammar/ vocabulary/ listening/ reading/ writing/

2. You must have some good and bad students. Could you tell me what do the successful ones do, and the bad ones don't, in the class?

Do you have any idea what they do at home?

homework/support from parents/family/ reading/watching videos

How do you come to know about this?

3. How did you decide what to teach?

School policy?
Textbook chosen by whom?

4. How did you decide how to teach?

previous training/learning teaching exp./ feedback from students&parents/ other -- conference/ books

5. People think 'Chinese language teaching' involves a lot of memorising. Do you think it is true?

Do you ask your students to memorise?

6. Also, people think us put emphasis on reading and writing, do you agree with this?

III. In the next section, I'd like to ask you some questions concerning the nature of teaching Chinese in the British context. To start with, could you tell me what do you think of teaching Chinese in the UK?
Is it worth doing?
Does it work?

teacher? location of the school? (more schools? less schools?)

What kind of influence do you think the teacher will have on their students?

2. Do you know other practice in any other countries like the USA?

How is that different to practice in the UK?

3. Do you think your students’ cultural background or previous learning experience affects their Chinese language learning? How?

4. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic, that I haven't asked you?

Is there anything else that you want to ask me?

Thank you very much for your time, that has been most interesting!

Teachers' own experience?

Appendix F

Student Interview Schedule

Best Copy Available

Print bound close to the spine

Do you do some things in the Chinese classroom that you do not normally do in your British classroom?

Do you do some things in the British classroom that you do not normally do in your Chinese classroom?

{What are the things you do in the Chinese classroom that you like the best?

Are there things that you don't like to do in Chinese class?

Do you think your teacher at Chinese school are different to those of your British teachers? In what way?

Do they help you to learn in a different way?

Do you find it easy or difficult to learn this way?

B. Just now, we talked about your experience in the school. There are a few more questions about learning the Chinese language that I'd like to ask you, OK?

1. Do you like learning Chinese?

Why?

2. Is Chinese difficult to learn? What is the most difficult part in Learning Chinese?

What is the easiest part in Learning Chinese?

Do you have a special way to help you learn Chinese? (How did you come up with it?)

questions about your experience of learning Chinese at Chinese school. O.K.? {Have you filled in one of this (SILL inventory) already?}

1. Remember when you were little? What language do you speak then/ as a baby?

{Any other language?}

Do you always speak Chinese at home?

Who do you speak Chinese to?

Who speaks Chinese to you?

Do you always speak Chinese to your brother and sisters?

Can you read or write Chinese? Do you read Chinese books? Watch Chinese programs? Listen to anything Chinese (stories/songs)?

2. How old were you when you started Chinese lessons?

How long have you been attending Chinese school?

3. What was the reason for you to go to Chinese school at the first place?

Is it still the same reason that you are here now?

{Do you think because your parent(s) is/are Chinese, you have to learn the language?}

Do you think it is important that you come to Chinese school/learn Chinese? Why/Why not?

4. What do you think of the Chinese school?

What do you like the most about it?

What do you not like about it?

Is it like your British school? Why (What's the difference?)

Do you have many friends at school? Are they Chinese? British? What do your parents think of them (Chinese/British)?

Appendix G

Regions of Local Education Authorities

Source: Department for Education and Employment (1996)

Statistics of Education: Teachers. England and Wales

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|---|
| 1 | North | Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland. |
| 2 | Yorkshire & Humberside | Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Doncaster, Humberside, Kirklees, Leeds, north Yorkshire, Rotherham, Sheffield, Wakefield. |
| 3 | North West | Bolton, Bury, Cheshire, Knowsley, Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, St Helens, Salford, Sefton, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan, Wirral. |
| 4 | East Midlands | Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire. |
| 5 | West Midlands | Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Hereford & Worcester, Shropshire, Sandwell, Solihull, Staffordshire, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton. |
| 6 | East Anglia | Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk. |
| 7 | South East
(Great London) | Barking, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, City, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston-upon-Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond-upon-Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth, Westminster. |
| 8 | South East
(Other) | Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey, West Sussex. |
| 9 | South West | Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Isles of Scilly, Somerset, Wiltshire. |
| 10 | Wales | Clwyd, Dyfed, Gwent, Gwynedd, Mid-Glamorgan, Powys, South Glamorgan, West Glamorgan. |

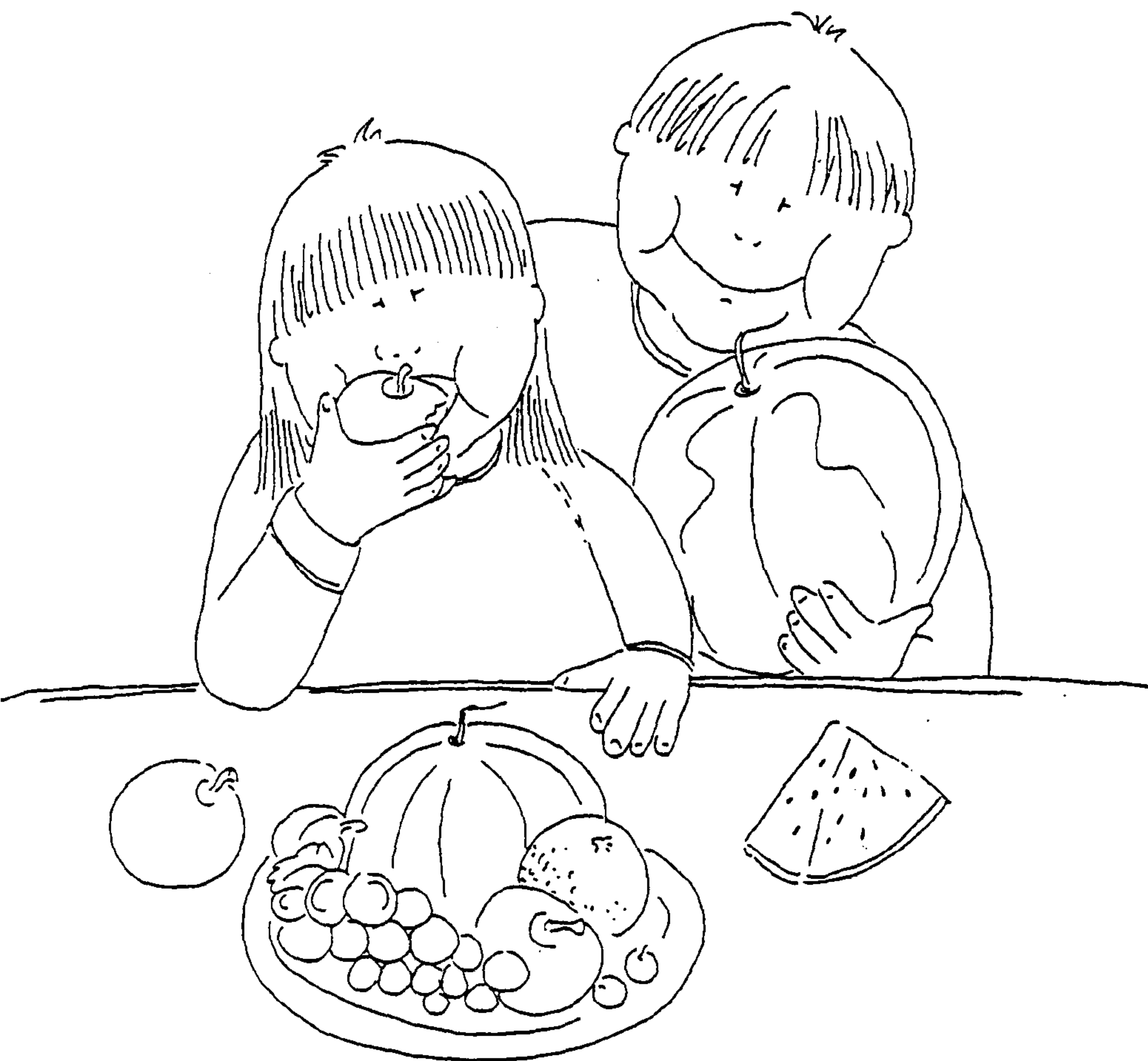
To cover the whole range of areas of Great Britain, the following two categories were added to the list:

- 11 Scotland
- 12 Ireland

(二十三)

水果

紅紅的蘋果，
綠綠的西瓜，
有益的水果，
我們都愛吃。



灰

棕

371

紫

(十六) 復活節

復活節來了，
姑媽送一籃復活蛋給我們。
彩色的復活蛋，
漂亮又好吃。



(十七)

端午節

今天放學回家，弟弟
說：「桌子上放著一些好
吃的東西呢。」我連忙
跑去看。啊！原來是粽子。
媽媽說：「今天是端
午節，我們吃粽子。如果
在香港，我們還可以看賽
龍船呢。」



(十九)

夜思

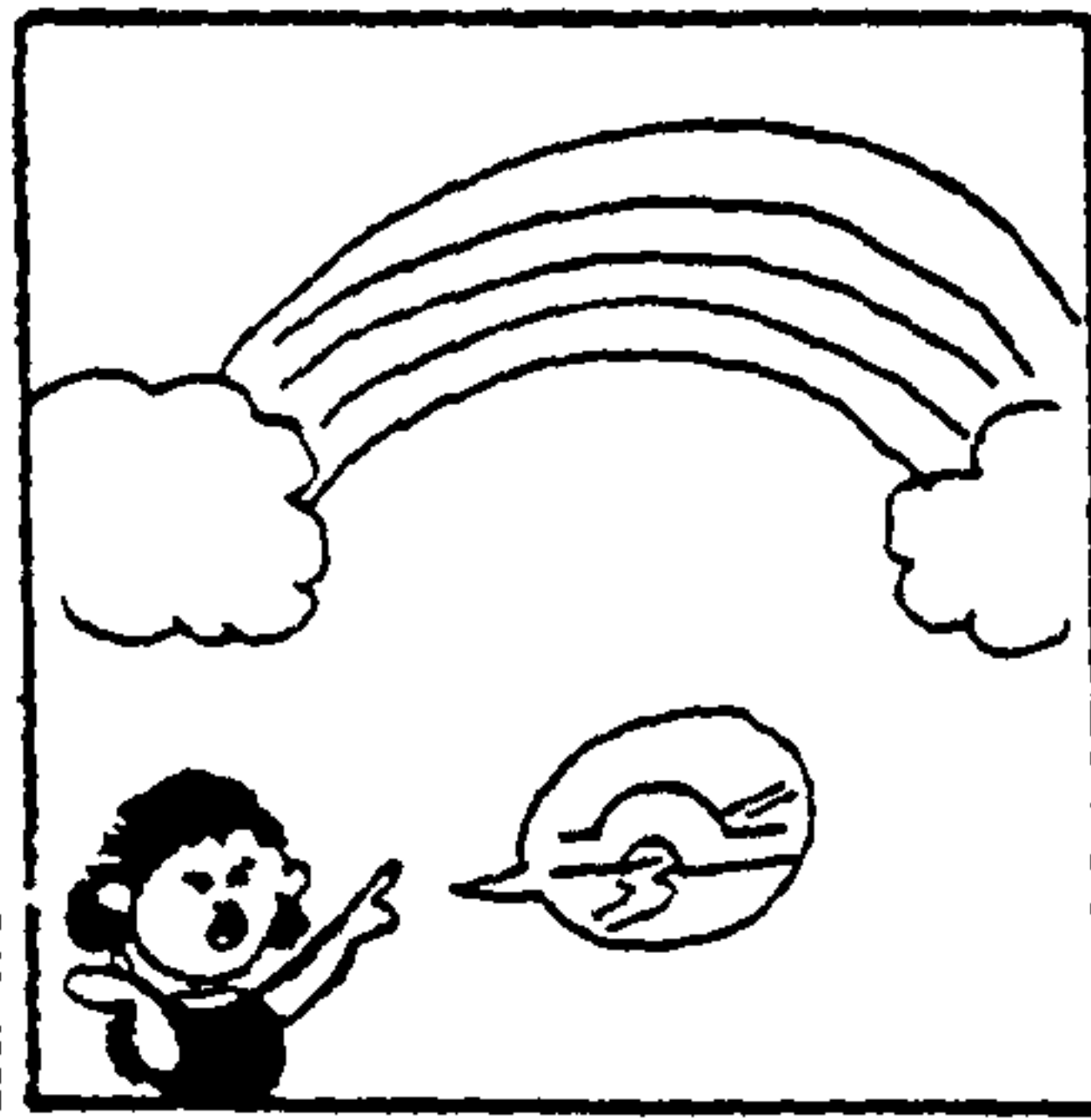
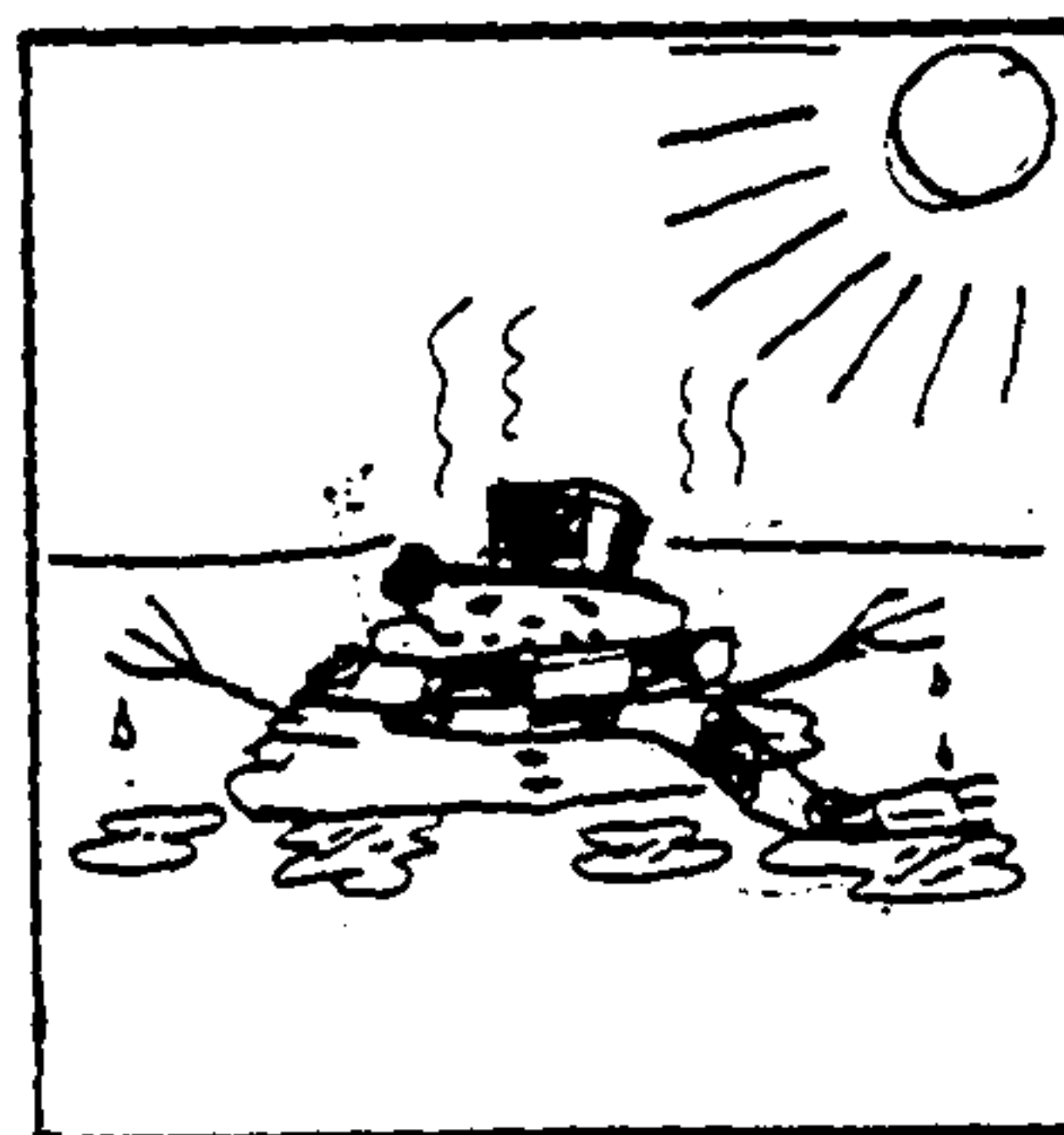
李白

床前明月光
疑是地上霜
舉頭望明月
低頭思故鄉

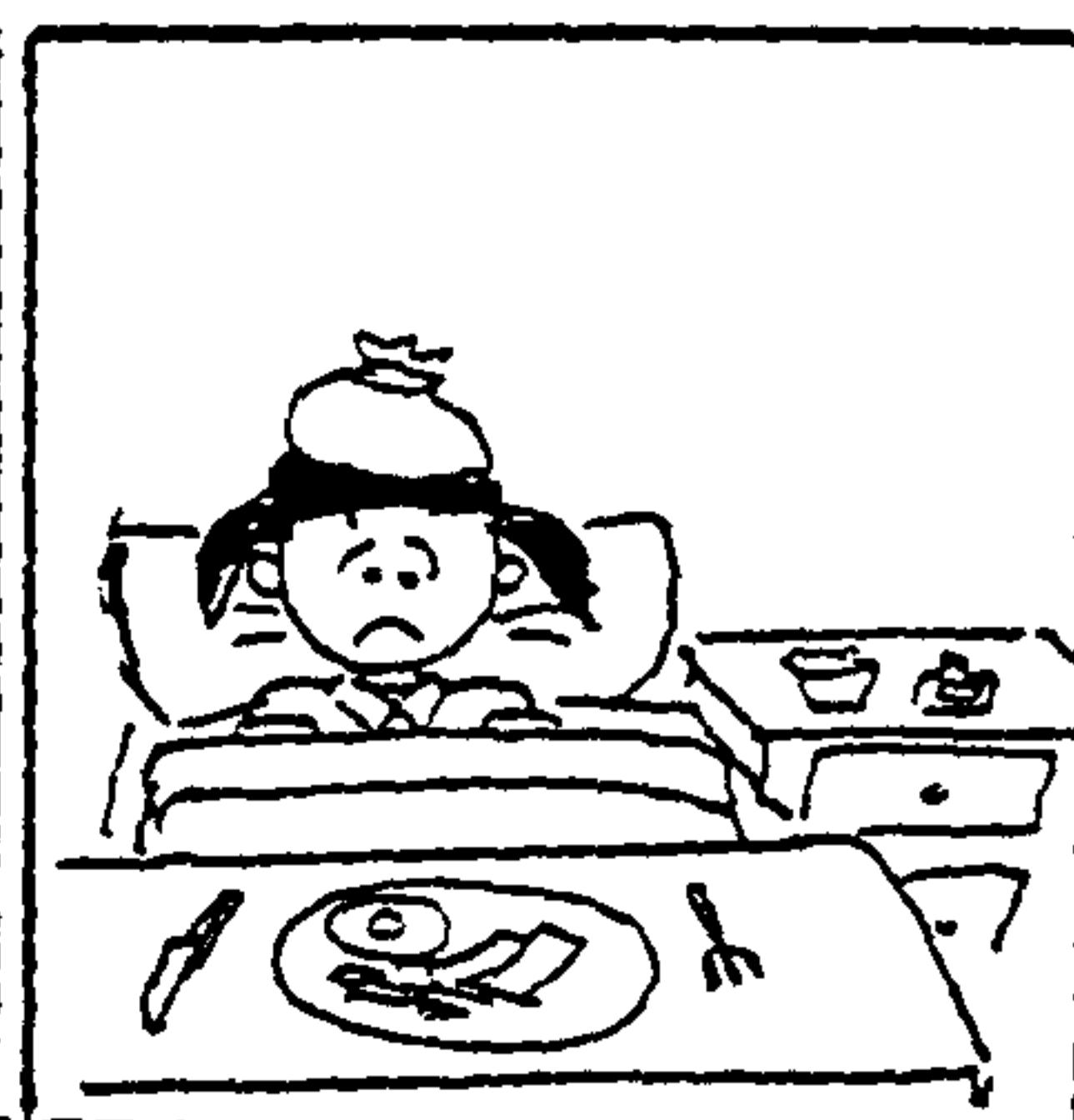
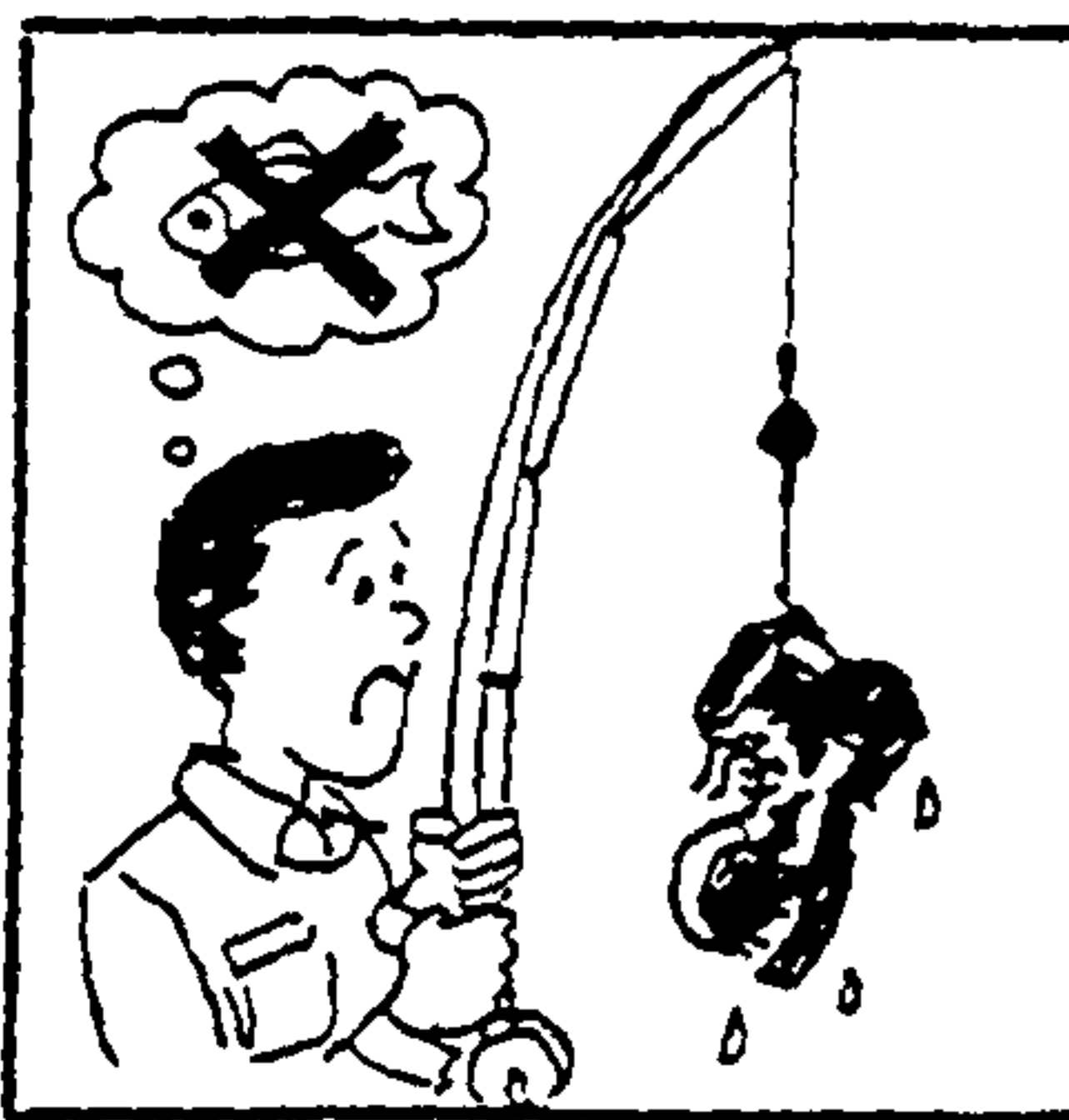
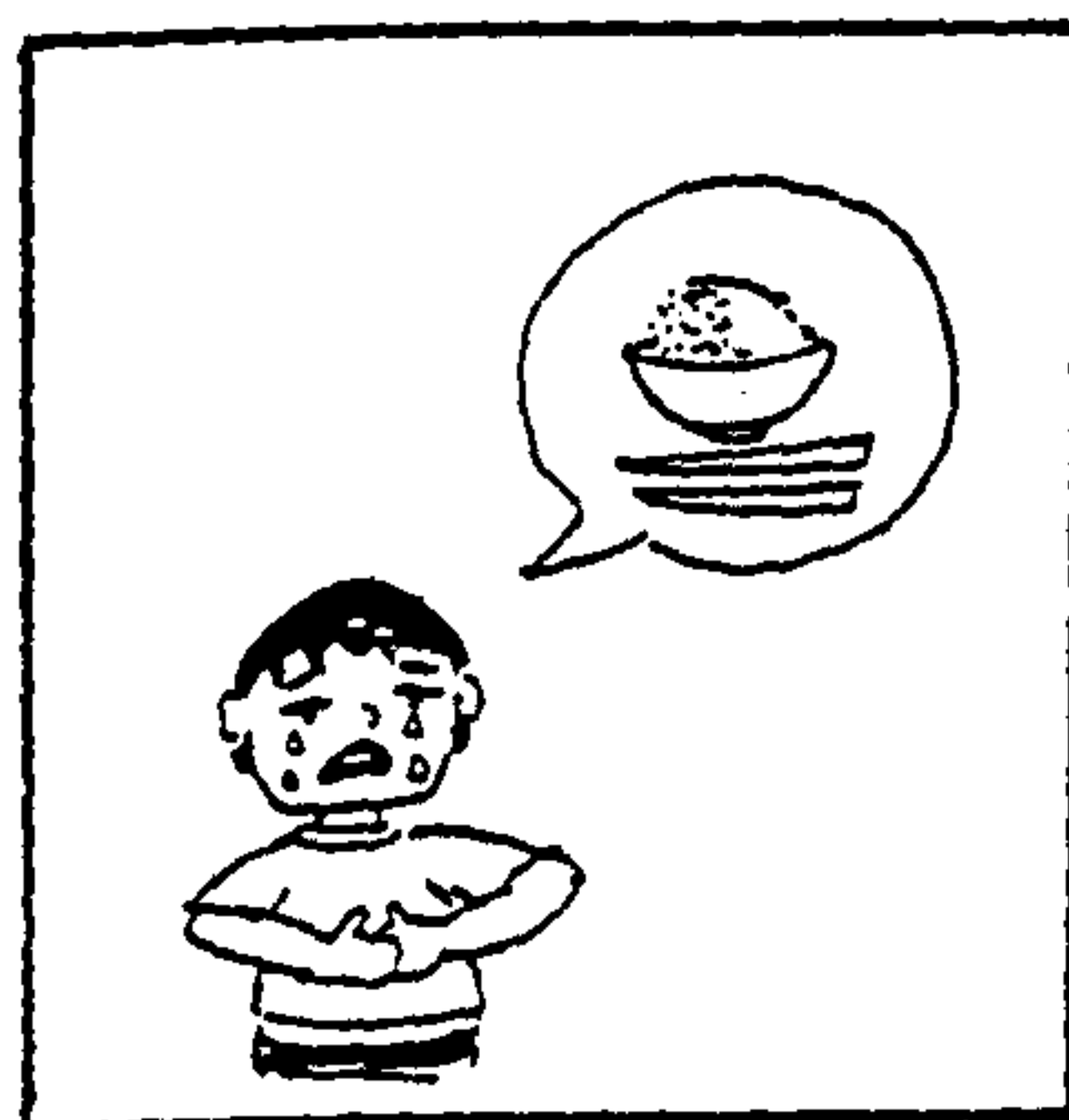
Appendix L

A Page of Written Exercise

(一) 原來 (看圖連線配句) (堂課)



- | | | |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| 1 | 雪人哪裡去了， | 原來是彩虹。 |
| 2 | 白兔飛快地跑， | 原來被太陽曬融了。 |
| 3 | 誰把花瓶打破了， | 原來他肚子餓了。 |
| 4 | 妹妹大叫天上有座橋， | 原來老虎走下山來。 |
| 5 | 弟弟不停地哭， | 原來是她的生日。 |
| 6 | 哥哥以為釣了一條大魚， | 原來是小花貓。 |
| 7 | 媽媽給妹妹紅封包， | 原來她病了。 |
| 8 | 妹妹不想吃東西， | 原來是一隻破鞋。 |



Appendix M

A Page of Homework Book

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