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# **Bilingual Preschool Education: A Comparative Study Between Hong Kong and Shanghai**

**Maggie Koong May Kay**

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**A thesis submitted on partial fulfillment of the  
requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education**

**School of Education**

**University of Durham**

**15 MAY 2008**

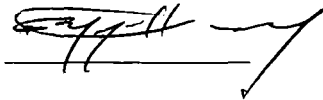
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## Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis dissertation or report submitted to this university or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maggie Koong', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Maggie Koong

## Abstract

Global and local factors have recently pushed English-Chinese bilingualism to the forefront of early childhood education in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Signaling new sociolinguistic alignments, each city is pursuing language policies according to its own political and economic imperatives. Using Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological system's theory as a framework for analysis, this research study examines the contextual layers that shape the linguistic environments of the two cities, focusing on the macrosystem's forces of globalization, the exosystem's social networks, the mesosystem's institutions and human players, the microsystem's schools and homes, and the chronosystem's biology, acknowledging all factors that affect child development. In the hope of providing better strategies and interventions for developing second language learning, it looks at the stakeholders' attitudes towards, beliefs about, and expectations of English, as well as at parental involvement in children's English education, perceptions about NETs (native English-speaking teachers), and curriculum implementation. Quantitative and qualitative data collected (from four schools in each city and a total of 438 respondents) through questionnaires, interviews and archival documents are then triangulated to identify differences and similarities between the two cities. The results show that English is universally promoted for its economic benefits, both to individuals and society. The form of preschool bilingualism advocated by the governments of Hong Kong and Shanghai, however, is unduly influenced by political and nationalist considerations. This has led in Shanghai to conceptualizations of bilingualism that allow only for the acquisition of English without its attendant cultural and philosophical dimensions. In Hong Kong, the government's attempt to arbitrarily reduce the size of English-medium education, has led, due to blowback, to extremely high English literacy expectations for preschoolers, delivered through overly ambitious programmes. In both cities, attempts to safeguard the use of the mother tongue as the primary medium of instruction stand in the way of early bilingual development through immersion or partial immersion. In addition, the stakeholders' disparate

expectations about when, how and why English at preschool is important have given rise to conflicts and dilemmas that distort the two cities' cultures of learning and the extent and form of their education reforms. The recommendations made seek to create for bilingual preschool education, sufficient space, given the current political, social, and economic conditions in both cities, to allow educators to pursue it with the most effective pedagogies.

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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

A successful comparative study of bilingual education between national systems depends upon a detailed consideration of both the prevailing contextual influences and their antecedent historical circumstances that gave rise to different constellations of thought and policy and which consequently lead to the formation of unique education systems. More specifically, the following research attempts to show the influence cultural conceptions of language and official language attitudes had and continue to have on early childhood English acquisition policy and practice since the 1980s in the multicultural contexts of Hong Kong and Shanghai. The objective is to examine, through a multi-disciplinary approach, the impact of language policy on early childhood English curriculum and the current status of language policy as well as its concrete influence on second language curriculum for preschoolers. The objective is to examine, through quantitative and qualitative means, the differences and similarities among the different stakeholders of preschools in their attitudes, beliefs and expectations towards bilingualism or English learning. The research also attempts to study the teachers' expectations of effective English curricula and the difference between native English-speaking teachers (NET) and local teachers in facilitating English learning. The findings will hopefully influence the second language curriculum for preschoolers and the language policy on bilingualism by enabling a deeper understanding of the current issues.

Common wisdom and national studies suggest that Hong Kong and Shanghai look at early childhood education and care (ECEC) and at bilingual education from two radically different and perhaps contradictory perspectives, given their histories (Yim-Mei, 2004; Li & Rao, 2005; Corter et al., 2006). As a British colony for 150 years, Hong Kong has recognised English as its official language alongside Cantonese, whose vitality remains unaltered and the majority, nearly 96% (H.K. Government, 1991) of the population, speak Cantonese. English continues to be of great and growing importance in formal domains even though Hong Kong has rejoined China and Putonghua has gained in importance and even though the government of Hong Kong, by introducing a new policy of trilingualism and biliteracy (consisting of fluency in Cantonese,

Putonghua and English and the ability to write in Chinese and English), signals a new sociolinguistic alignment under Chinese sovereignty (Pierson, 2001). Hong Kong is a multilingual society where English, with its official status and use as the medium of instruction in parts of the secondary and tertiary education systems, remains an elite language and bilingualism, let alone biliteracy, is not universal. New linguistic and political trends anticipate that Putonghua will emerge as the language of public administration, English will continue to serve as the language of international commerce and relations with the West, and Cantonese will persist as the language of family and personal intimacy (Johnson, 1994). Whatever the outcome, Hong Kong will be shaped by the dynamic interaction of these three languages.

In contrast, Shanghai's interest in the English language is relatively new and it was brought about by China's growing economic importance, its participation on the world stage, and especially by the current forces of globalisation. English in Shanghai is taught as a foreign language yet its acquisition is pursued both by popular and state demand as early as kindergarten although it does not enjoy official status and only a minority speak it fluently. Despite the fact that both the Chinese people and their government assign increasing importance to the English language, Putonghua has not only been the language most frequently used between various Chinese communities, but it is also anticipated that it will eventually become Asia's language of commerce (Pease, 1994). In this context, the long-term importance of English in China is by no means secure, but for the time being, it is the only foreign language that is actively pursued from below and from above.

The manifold reasons for and the varying degrees of English competence one encounters in Hong Kong and Shanghai belie the universal appeal the English language has and the equal demand the population of the two cities place on their educational institutions to provide instruction at kindergarten level. These complex and varying factors furnish the reason why the two cities have been chosen as the focus of this research.

## 1.1. Purpose of the study

Increased use of English in many parts of the world means not only that more people are learning English, but also that English is being used for many more purposes around the globe. English is perceived as key to promoting international exchange, acquiring scientific knowledge and technological expertise, fostering economic progress and participating in international dialogue and competition (Ross, 1992). Because of the spread of English in terms of numbers of users, increased uses and changing varieties, we can think of World English as a language of the world rather than a language of one geographic area or one particular group of people. The spread of English around the globe has meant that new varieties of English have developed and that these varieties reflect specific linguistic and cultural influences.

Under the forces of globalization, Hong Kong and Shanghai have experienced increasing emphasis on early English language acquisition, moving from primary school to preschool level. Through comparison of the two cities' historical backgrounds, language policies, educational principles, parental expectations and attitudes, teachers' expectations, conditions of English language learning, and the role of NETs (native English-speaking teachers) in the preschool setting, the present research will explore the similarities and differences between these two cities and the expectations and beliefs of different stakeholders (parents, teachers and principals) in order to provide useful information for developing and discussing effective strategies for English learning in preschool settings. The strategies thus uncovered will then serve as a platform from which to critique and improve existing practices, launching early language education in new directions with amplified force, renewed vigour, and deepened purpose. This implies an implicit trust in the benefit of comparative research, which, as scientists have early demonstrated (Noah & Eckstein, 1969) and recently reaffirmed (Bray, 2003), serves not only to inform policy makers and administrators by deepening understanding of one's own education system and society, but can also wisely guide the education of teachers.

## 1.2. Rationale for research

The use and value of a bilingual early childhood education has long been debated and remains controversial. Although there are no concrete guidelines on English language learning for preschool level in Hong Kong and Shanghai, parents have high expectations and strong beliefs that English is critical for their children's later academic success. Most kindergartens offer English programmes of varying quality to meet parental demand, but neither parents nor educators have a thorough understanding of the cognitive, affective and social consequences of bilingual education or of how to translate existing research into classroom and home practice. It is hoped that the following study will shed light on the specific experience and predicament of Hong Kong and Shanghai with the English language and inspire new approaches to foreign language teaching in particular while also giving rise to more effective early literacy-enhancing experiences in general.

Due to inadequate research in this area, the following will examine the experience of actual implementation of educational policies and the difficulties encountered in Shanghai and Hong Kong. This will provide a deeper understanding that might lead to more sophisticated strategies and interventions for developing second language learning both at the classroom and administrative levels so that future generations can meet the linguistic demands soon to be imposed on them by the forces of globalisation and the expectations of the market place.

The different profiles of language use in Hong Kong and Shanghai are dictated by the prevailing community-specific norms that assign English language disparate social, cultural, and political meanings. In light of this, understanding the motives and aspirations that animate parents and educators to pursue English instruction for children would provide policy makers and governments with grassroots data and insights necessary to help them overcome any existing gap between societal and institutional support for English and to forge consensus as to the most beneficial and realistic sociolinguistic alignment in their respective societies.

Parents, educators, and policymakers all stand to gain new tools of empowerment from the convergence of research, practice and theory on emergent literacy and early bilingualism. These new tools will hopefully aid them to collaborate successfully in the common goal of improving early childhood education by enabling them to better understand each other as well as

giving them the knowledge necessary to understand the cultural and environmental factors that shape children's access to literacy- and bilingualism-enhancing experiences.

Ultimately, this study attempts to contribute to the establishment of a better relationship between language and culture as well as between current and traditional educational methods and norms by endowing all interested parties in Hong Kong and Shanghai with greater objectivity and distance from the emotional issues that surround language.

The choice of Hong Kong and Shanghai for this comparison is ideal in as much as they represent the two antipodes of Greater China; one capitalist and the other socialist, one inherited and the other home-grown, one southern and the other northern. How these two rivals approach education and language will determine how their societies will adapt, and how Beijing reconciles the choices made by Shanghai with those made by Hong Kong will determine how China will evolve.

### 1.3. Research questions

The following research will attempt to answer several crucial questions that, for the sake of clarity and on account of their nature, are divided into two types: archival, or literature based, and empirical, or evidence based.

Falling in the first category are the following:

- (1). *To what extent have contextual factors influenced English language learning at preschool level in Hong Kong and Shanghai?*
- (2). *Considering the cultural commonalities and socio-political dissimilarities of the two cities, what roles - according to current research - do parents, teachers and principals play in children's English learning?*

Answering the first of these questions is fundamental to understanding the background and context in which English came to play a part in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Without this knowledge any analysis of the current language circumstances is devoid of a causal chain and thus incomplete. As for the second question, since parents and teachers/principals mirror the cultural and political challenges of the societies they live in, while at the same time representing the demand and supply sides of education, they are the driving forces of current education

practices and no future direction in education can be forged without considering them first and foremost. Researchers and policymakers must understand the roles these primary stakeholders play in order to treat them as the fertile ground in which new seeds can be planted for future harvests, especially since they allow or prevent new educational methods envisioned by researchers and promoted by policymakers to be applied on children.

As for the second category, that of empirical questions, this research will ask and answer:

- (1). What are the beliefs and attitudes of parents, teachers and principals towards bilingualism, and, based on their beliefs and values, what similarities and differences define their language expectations?*
- (2). In light of the two cities' distinct socio-linguistic environments but shared cultural traditions, what is the extent and type of parental involvement and support that children receive at home in their efforts to learn English?*
- (3). Due to high and increasing demand for English in early childhood, what language learning approaches are favoured by each city and what are the prevalent opinions about how to improve bilingual learning?*
- (4). What role do native English-speaking teachers (NETs) play in stimulating English learning and are there differences between them and local teachers in how they create environments that enable children to feel immersed in language and culture?*

These empirical questions cover the internal and external as well as the procedural and structural factors that affect the way education functions and bilingual education is delivered in the present. Without a thorough understanding of these factors any attempts at introducing new or improved forms and functions of education can only be academic exercises whose application will find little success in the real world.

It is the contention of this research that the language policies of the two cities in question are undergoing variant degrees of modification, which will impact in dissimilar ways the roles assigned by policy and curriculum on teachers and students; the teaching process thus having repercussions upon the level of progress achieved in English language education and upon the sociolinguistic makeup of Hong Kong and Shanghai.

#### 1.4. The Ecology of Bilingual Development

The theoretical framework of this research follows Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1989) conceptualisation of the factors affecting child development because it comprehensively covers all aspects of this maturation process.

The complexity of factors that bear upon a child's development has prompted Bronfenbrenner to devise a system capable of considering each and all; this he called the *ecological systems theory* (1989) and comprises four distinct levels. He views the child as developing within a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the environment; from immediate settings of family and school to broad cultural values and social beliefs. The ecological systems theory - renamed **bioecological systems theory** to include an additional layer that considers a child's own biology as the original and primary environment of development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) - states that human beings do not develop in isolation, but rather in the context of the environment in which they are subsumed and with which they must constantly interact. The five systems of relationships Bronfenbrenner identifies are themselves interrelated and any changes or conflict in one layer will ripple through all. Therefore, to study a child's development one must look not only at the child's immediate environment and unique genetic features, but also at the interactions that fuse all layers of the greater environment together.

The five levels of environmental ecology can be conceptualised from the most immediate to the most distant and have been here appropriated to serve as the structure of this research because Bronfenbrenner's framework is uniquely capable of integrating and summarising what is known about bilingual development.

The first level, that of the *chronosystem*, refers to the biology of the child itself, the ground zero of life as much as to the "temporal changes in children's environment, which produce new conditions that affect development" and which "can be imposed externally or arise from within the organism, since children select, modify, and create many of their own settings and experiences" (Berk, 2000, p. 30). This level acknowledges that a child's development is influenced not only by environmental changes but also by developmental changes, thus not only by external but also by internal factors, and that "children are both products and producers of

their own development” (Berk, 2000, p. 30). By adding this fifth layer to an original structure of only four, Bronfenbrenner pays tribute not only to both viewpoints in the nature versus nurture debate, but also to the most recent revelations of Vygotskian theory, which identifies man’s unique ability to express thought through speech, thus that which is innate in us with that which is learned, and the resulting cognitive growth that is achieved through language. Biology and sociology, the human organism and the social construct, find common ground in Bronfenbrenner’s chronosystem just as they do in Vygotsky’s assertion that language develops thinking and thinking develops language.

The second level that affects human development outside the constraints of one’s own organism is the *microsystem* and it has both the most immediate and the earliest influences. It includes the family, neighbourhood, school, religious institution and peer groups the child has direct contact with as well as the specific culture the family identifies with. The childcare environment belongs to this level. At this level, relationships are not only bi-directional (i.e. they impact in both directions, away from and towards the child) but are also the strongest and, as such, of most consequence.

The third level is the *mesosystem* and it comprises an intermediate level of influences exerted by the social institutions and their human players that surround the child. The mesosystem is the web of life that human civilization builds around each of its members; the connections between the child’s teachers and his parents or those between his church and his neighbourhood serve as good examples.

The fourth layer is that of the *exosystem*, which defines the larger social system beyond the child’s immediate reach - parent workplace schedules being an example. It constitutes the beginning of the nebulous world outside an individual’s experience and control, but that nonetheless shape each individual life.

The *macrosystem* encompasses the most distant influences derived from abstract regional, international and global changes that have a widespread and enduring impact on the ways societies, communities and families operate. The structures of this layer are impersonal and their cascading effect affect not only the child, but also all other human beings, though to different degrees of intensity. This layer comprises cultural values, customs and laws as well as geopolitical events with long-term repercussions and sweeping breadth.



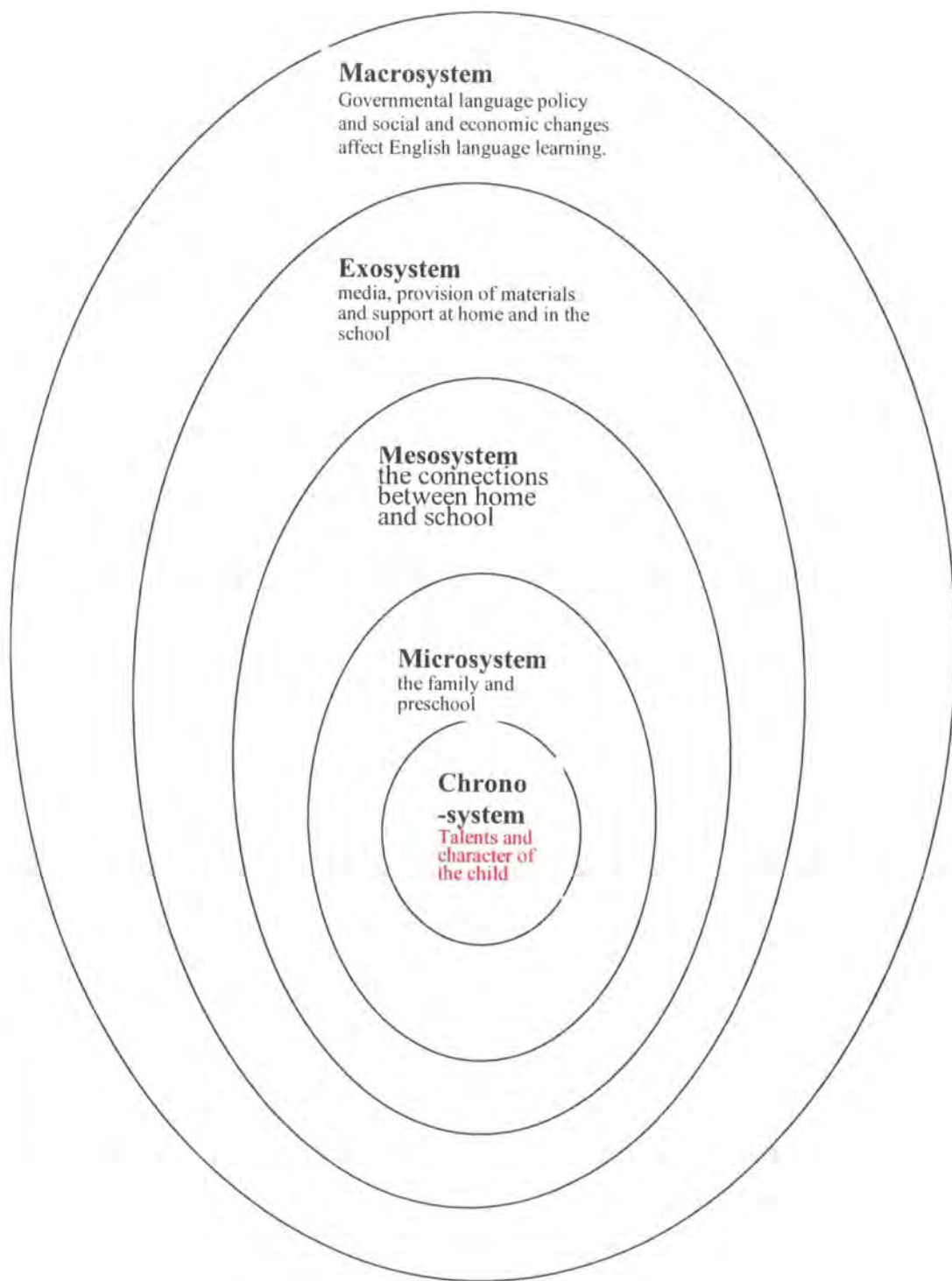


Fig1-1: The Ecological Model of this Study

## 1.5. Bilingualism framed by ecological systems theory

The present study then, in adopting the framework of bioecological systems theory, will view bilingualism as a consequence of the comprehensive interactions between people (principals, teachers, parents, child) and the surrounding multilayered environment, and not only as the result of individual achievement due to specific talents and/or inherent motivational goals.

Starting in reverse order, the macrosystem, the outmost subsystem, affects all other environmental levels. Governmental language policy and social and economic changes affect the English language learning of preschoolers.

The exosystem includes the role of the media in the dissemination of knowledge beyond time and place, provision of materials and books at home and in the school, and the support forthcoming from families to children in their quest for language acquisition, as well as specifics such as opportunities for language immersion through the use of native English-speaking teachers, and the extent to which exposure to both languages is provided at home and school.

The mesosystem comprises the connections between teachers and parents, thus between home and school, and the extent to which these connections affect a child's academic performance. This will be explored when the beliefs and expectations of these two groups are examined.

The microsystem is the innermost level of the child's environment, the family and preschool, which directly affect the child and have a strong impact on his or her development. Breakdown at this level of the ecology has dire consequences because nothing can replace the love of the parent and the emotional, cognitive, and even physical benefits that parental devotion elicits. Yet the ability of parents to love and nurture suffers when families don't live close enough to rely on one another for support, when the nuclear family is isolated from the extended family, when economic considerations force both parents to work and thus renders them absent in their children's lives, and when values are imparted by the media and by strangers rather than by a child's biological parents; in short, when parental responsibilities become social responsibilities and when institutions replace parents or the 'significant others' (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) who might be raising them.

And finally, the chronosystem will cover the child's biological endowment - the talents, abilities, and character traits that aid or hinder bilingual acquisition.

The validity of Bronfenbrenner's assertion that a child's development is shaped and influenced through active interaction with the environment should also hold true for bilingual development. The extent to which this is the case will be uncovered over the course of this thesis while exploring the specifics of English language learning at preschool across political, socio-linguistic, economic, demographic, and educational contexts.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Literature Review**

#### 2.1 Definition of bilingualism

##### 2.1.1 Notion of bilingualism

Bilingualism is a concept that is hard to define. Although definitions of bilingualism are numerous, consensus is still elusive as to when exactly one can speak of bilingual aptitude since identifying the level of proficiency a speaker needs to be deemed bilingual is a relative distinction subject to debate (Bloomfield, 1935). The notion of bilingualism remains open-ended and vague as long as the contradiction between native-like control (the most demanding or maximalist definition) and limited foreign language ability (the least demanding or minimalist definition) cannot be reconciled. Unable to draw a line between these two extremes, some have formulated definitions of bilingualism that are deliberately vague and say that bilingualism is “the alternate use of two or more languages by the same individual” (Mackey, 1957, 51) or “the practice of alternately using two languages” (Weinreich, 1953, 5). This kind of definition avoids the pitfall of circumscribing bilingualism to the level of a speaker’s fluency, such as Bloomfield’s (1933) statement that bilingualism is “the native-like control of two or more languages”(p. 56). Perhaps the most adequate definition – since it covers both societal and individual bilingualism while staying away from qualitative and quantitative criteria - is that supplied by Hamers & Blanc (2000) for whom bilingualism refers to a society in which “two or more languages are in contact” and an individual who “has access to more than one linguistic code as a means of social communication” (p. 6).

The difficulty of defining bilingualism derives from the fact that an adequate and authoritative description must cover four perspectives: the quantitative and qualitative measurement of bilingual competence, the distinction between individual and societal bilingualism, the problems associated with the degree of bilingualism versus its function, and the when and how (i.e. the mechanics) one comes to possess bilingual ability. Also, the problem of defining bilingualism is worsened by the absence of a standardized terminology (Stern, 1992) and by the continuing tendency to use monoglot terms of reference to judge bilingualism and

according to which a speaker can be considered bilingual only when he/she has a native-like level of language proficiency - this being an unattainable goal for the vast majority of speakers of two languages. As long as bilingualism is measured with the same standards used for the one speaker/one language kind, it is inevitable that the differences found by isolating the phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis of one or both languages used by bilinguals, and that distinguish them from monolinguals, will be misinterpreted and will serve more to skew rather than to clarify the unique issues pertaining to speakers of two languages.

### 2.1.2 Typology of bilingualism

Various disciplines have attempted to approach the concept of bilingualism pragmatically yet these individual interpretations vary considerably (Saville-Troike, 1973) and agreement exists only on that bilingualism marks the presence of two languages in one speaker, but not in the notion that the speaker's ability or competence in these two languages is or should be equal or that it should be indistinguishable from that of monoglots (Baetens-Beardsmore, 1982). Agreement exists also as to what constitutes the four basic language abilities without which neither monolingualism nor bilingualism are possible, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Deeper still, but just as necessary, are the sub-skills of accuracy in pronunciation, extent of vocabulary, correctness of grammar, ability to convey meaning, and stylistic flexibility.

#### 2.1.2.1 Societal and individual bilingualism

The distinction within bilingualism that has the greatest relevance to the subject of this research and also the broadest scope is that between *societal* and *individual bilingualism*. The former kind concerns the presence of two languages within a community or society whereas the latter within a single individual – distinctions that apply to Hong Kong and Shanghai respectively. Societal bilingualism (Fishman, 1966) deals with the sociology of language rather than with sociolinguistics or pure linguistics, which are the domains of individual bilingualism. In investigating the linguistic forces that act upon a community and the threads that connect political, economic, historical, social, and cultural forces with language, the study of societal bilingualism has found that language determines to a great extent a society's values (Kjolseth, 1978) and this has wide-ranging implications for policy makers and educators, especially in

countries where two or more languages are in common usage, as in Hong Kong, and therefore in competition with one another.

#### 2.1.2.2 Proficiency of bilingualism-minimalist/semilingualism vs. maximalist/ambilingual

The failed effort to agree on a single definition of individual bilingualism has forced researchers to identify degrees and kinds of bilingualism instead. A comprehensive typology that describes and measures the varying degrees of bilingual proficiency (Kelly, 1969) avoids an absolute definition by recognizing the notion of relativism entailed by the term. This classification of linguistic competence reveals to what extent an individual can function as a bilingual and it starts with the lowest level of proficiency, or **minimalist** expectations, and works its way up to the highest level or **maximalist** expectations. At the lowest level of proficiency, Haugen (1977) speaks of *semilingualism*, and refers to an inadequate output in both the native and the second language – a false charge commonly thrown at young bilinguals in Hong Kong who liberally code-mix and code-switch between English and Cantonese. This restricted linguistic output is discussed in detail by Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukamaa (1979) and is based on the deficit hypothesis put forward by Bernstein (1971), who saw this condition as class-determined, but whose conclusions have come under criticism because they rely on monoglot terms of appraisal and fail to consider the integrated nature of bilingual behaviour (Dittmar, 1976; Ammon & Simon, 1975; Labov, 1970). The dissenters have pointed out that although bilingual performance may differ from that of two separate monoglots in that it fails to reach their respective range of abilities, the bilingual's combined repertoire across both languages may well be just as rich – an argument that applies well to the aforementioned young bilinguals from Hong Kong. The functional specialisation determined by the circumstances of one's life dictate to what extent bilingual speakers use their respective languages and, consequently, to what extent their output is affected by features such as interference, deviation and lag that are not present in monoglot speech. The notion of semilingualism, it has also been pointed out, fails to be useful as a yardstick for bilingual ability in societies where everyone shares the same “bilingually-marked speech patterns” (Baetens-Beardsmore, 1982, 12), something observed among students in Hong Kong in the miniature environments of their universities (Pierson, 2001; Luke, 1998; Pennington & Balla, 1998).

At the other end of the spectrum from semilingualism is the classification of *ambilingualism*, which describes a perfectly balanced bilingual ability or the equal mastery of two languages in all fields of activity and without traces of interference that would distinguish such a person from the speech produced by two separate monoglots (Halliday, McKintosh & Stevens, 1970). This represents an idealised or at best exceptional measure of bilingual ability, which, though ardently sought by an ambitious segment of Hong Kong society, is rarely encountered.

#### 2.1.2.3 Primary vs. secondary bilingualism

Another classification is that of *natural bilingualism*, also known as *primary bilingualism*, referring to someone who acquired two languages from birth but lacks systematic instruction, or as *secondary bilingualism*, which denotes someone who acquired a second language through instruction later in life (Baetens-Beardsmore, 1982). Primary bilingualism is commonly encountered in Hong Kong where families encourage their children to speak English and Cantonese from birth. Secondary bilingualism is now aggressively pursued in Shanghai because parents, unable to speak the language themselves, must rely on kindergartens and schools to teach their children English. Although natural bilinguals, of the primary and secondary kinds, are fluent in both languages and approach ambilinguals in their level of competence, they do not possess equal ease at handling all language domains with the same facility because their functional specialisation of language usage prevents them from doing so. As such, lexical availability is likely to be greater in one of the two languages in specific semantic areas. This situation partially describes Hong Kong's diglossic society, where English is widely used at work and Cantonese at home.

*Equilingualism*, also called *balanced bilingualism*, occurs when a speaker's competence in two languages is roughly equivalent and matches that of two monoglot speakers, but is nonetheless distinguishable from them through traces of interference in both languages, usually through deviations in phonology. This type of bilingualism is encountered in Hong Kong among the many who in the last two decades have received their primary education in Cantonese-medium instruction (CMI) schools, secondary schooling through mixed medium instruction (Cantonese and English), and tertiary education in English only.

The vast majority of people who command two or more languages, however, fall into the category of *non-fluent bilinguals* (Segalowitz & Gatbonton, 1977) whose speech reveals significant differences from that produced by native speakers and whose quality and ease of linguistic output is better in one of the languages than in the other. This is the predicament of most bilinguals who have learned their second language as adults and, therefore, is the kind of accented English one hears in Shanghai among the few who have acquired English as a foreign language.

#### 2.1.2.4 Other categories

A common categorisation of bilingual ability is that of **ascendant** and **recessive bilingualism**; the first referring to one whose language skills are increasing due to ongoing study of and exposure to a foreign language, while the second refers to just the opposite scenario, namely one who is no longer using a language and is therefore losing the ability to speak and comprehend it (Baker, 1996). This typology serves to show the fluidity of language acquisition and the constant flux of bilingualism in either direction, up or down, and is of great relevance to the language environment in Shanghai because English is not part of daily life and is thus constantly in danger of being forgotten.

A similar bipolar designation has been used by Lambert (1974) when he spoke of **additive** and **subtractive bilingualism** and meant by the former an enrichment of a speaker's cognitive and social abilities due to the acquisition of a second language, whereas by the latter he meant a loss of these abilities brought about by the acquisition of a second language at the expense of the first. Additive bilingualism, according to Lambert, is encountered when two linguistic and cultural entities are complementary and the society in which they coexist attributes positive values to both, which is very much the case in Hong Kong. The same approach to bilingualism has been embraced by society at large, and not just the upper classes, in places such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan and more recently in China and especially Shanghai.

In contrast subtractive bilingualism occurs when two linguistic and cultural systems are in competition with one another and the attributes of an ethnic minority's language are denigrated by the more prestigious or socio-economically powerful language. This description fits the way Shanghaihua, the native language of the Shanghainese, is being suppressed by the authorities in order to promote Putonghua as the language of all Chinese.



Cummins (1981) has devised his own framework for language proficiency by referring to two types: the social and the academic, or a distinction between surface fluency and the more evolved language skills for academic learning. In the social setting, children acquire surface fluency or *basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS)* by freely interacting with the environment. The situation, intonations and gestures provide clues to the message and communication is cognitively undemanding. The academic tasks rely on *cognitive and academic language proficiency (CALP)*, a demand inherent in the education system and its pursuit of literacy skills. While BICS refers more to the oral use of language and aspects of sociological competence, CALP is cross-lingual and its features, once learned, are transferable to any language context (Swain, 1981). Furthermore, it fits the level of English competence pursued in primary education in Shanghai, where BICS suffices, and in Hong Kong, where CALP is deemed appropriate.

## 2.2 Bilingualism and age

### 2.2.1 Early/infant bilingualism vs. ascribed/late bilingualism

A different classification of bilingualism concerns itself not with the level of fluency but with the time when languages are learned. *Early bilingualism* (also called *infant bilingualism* by Haugen, 1956, and *ascribed bilingualism* by Adler, 1977) and *late bilingualism* (also called *achieved bilingualism* by Adler, 1977) are used to refer to the acquisition of more than one language in the pre-adolescent phase of life and, respectively, to the acquisition of a second language sometimes after the so-called formative period or during adulthood. The former is much in vogue in Hong Kong, and to a lesser but growing extent in Shanghai, where parents go out of their way to enable their children bilingual environments at home and in kindergarten.

### 2.2.2 Consecutive bilingualism vs. successive bilingualism

An alternative classification for time-determined types of bilingualism is provided by the terms *consecutive bilingualism* for cases when two languages are acquired early in life and *successive bilingualism* for later language acquisition. This latter could be used to describe past generations of English learners in Shanghai and the former to describe present generations, who learn English much earlier in life than their parents.

What the above list of various types of bilingualism reveals is that, for the most part, value judgements of linguistic ability rather than empirical data are used to classify this rather complex phenomenon that eschews a single overarching definition. In attempting to formulate a definition of bilingualism that covers the complete range of possibilities entailed by the term, as attempted by Beziers & Van Overbeke (1969), linguists found that it is impossible to do so without being ambiguous and that instead it makes more sense to use specific terms to describe the different levels and kinds of bilingual competence and the various sequences of bilingual acquisition. These distinctions, therefore, are not absolute categories but only working hypotheses.

### 2.2.3 Simultaneous vs. sequential bilingualism

Later research in the field of Second Language Acquisition defines two types of second language learning among young children: namely *simultaneous* and *sequential* (Garland, 2007). The former route occurs up to the age of three when two languages are learned simultaneously. Sequential childhood bilingualism is when one learns one language first, and then a second language is acquired by formal instruction. Young children in Hong Kong experience both routes to bilingualism, depending on other variables such as parental or primary caretaker language patterns, reinforcement from the community, and the bilingual pre-school environment. By contrast, children in Shanghai learn English sequentially.

## 2.3 Acquisition of first and second language

### 2.3.1 Acquisition from cognitive and intellectual perspectives

In the study of child language acquisition, either first or second, researchers of different disciplines have a tendency to look into a particular trait, or traits, relating to the most recent theories in their own field and to arrive at conclusions accordingly. For instance, while behavioural psychologists regard the learning processes as habit formation (Skinner, 1957), generative linguists emphasize universal grammar and the learners' innate abilities (Chomsky, 1965; Pinker, 1994; White, 2003) that underlie language acquisition to account for similarities in route, rate, and the sequence of morpheme acquisition. While the pioneer educators and theorists in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), influenced by the psychologists and linguists researching first language (L1) learning, used habit formation as their starting point and, therefore, favoured drills and repeated practice, the later researchers focus their attention on the functional and interactional aspects of language learning – the learners' overall communicative competence. Numerous studies focus on individual differences that shape the learner's style and strategy. Other research looks into the relationship between the learner's cognitive style, cultural and family backgrounds and language

acquisition. More recent research on second language acquisition has switched attention from examining the learners' role alone, to the contributions of native-speaking teachers (Cambourne, 1995), while others yet stress that well-developed learning environments must consider and take advantage of the social nature of learning (Cambourne, 2002; Holdaway, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978) because language is socially learned and not a mechanical decoding process (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

In the field of early childhood research, experts tend to interpret child language acquisition as intellectual and cognitive development, using the *Theory of Intellectual Development* put forth by Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1958), or the *Zone of Proximal Development* espoused by the Russian theorist Lev Vygotsky (1978).

#### 2.3.1.1 Piaget's theory of intellectual development

Piaget's theory explains the processes by which an infant develops into an individual who can reason and think. By asking how children reasoned, he probed into the psychology of intelligence and the development of thinking, which he called *genetic epistemology*. He understood cognitive development as a progressive reorganization of mental processes due to maturation and experience. His theory has three components: types of knowledge (*physical, logical-mathematical, and social-arbitrary*), stages of development (*sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, formal operational*), and processes of development that enable the evolution of thought (*assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration*). Cognitive growth, as understood by Piaget, creates increasingly advanced cognitive structures that allow children to progress to ever-higher levels of understanding and permit them to interact with the environment with greater flexibility (Huitt, W. & Hummel, J., 2003). The processes that allow children to do so are by gradual *assimilation* of new information and by *accommodation* of this incoming information. Through *accommodation* and *assimilation*, individuals construct new knowledge from their experiences. Assimilation occurs when individuals' experiences are aligned with their internal representation of the world. They assimilate the new experience into an already existing framework or *schemata*. Accommodation is the process of reframing one's mental representation of the external world, one's *schemata*, to fit new experiences. Assimilation and accommodation allow learning or

what Piaget called adaptation. But learning to Piaget was broader in scope than what the Behaviourists understood by it. Piaget saw it as a fundamentally biological process of adaptation. Assimilation and adaptation form the method that allows us to advance our understanding of the world and how to function in it. A state of balance between the two reflects a state of balance between the structure of the mind and the environment and this is accomplished by *equilibration*. His investigations of children led him to note periods when assimilation dominates followed by periods when accommodation dominates, and in-between periods of relative equilibrium. Since these periods are similar among all children in both their nature and timing, he described them as *stages of cognitive development*. Each of the four stages identified by Piaget corresponds roughly to a specific age and they overlap even though one predominates at any given time: the *sensorimotor* stage occurs in infancy (birth to 2 years) when children experience the world through movement and the senses; the *preoperational* stage occurs during pre-school (age 2 to 7) and is marked by the acquisition of motor skills; the *concrete operations* stage occurs during childhood (age 7 to 11) when children begin to think logically about concrete events; and last there is the *formal operations* stage or the hypothetical thinking stage, which occurs during adolescence (after age 11) when the development of abstract reasoning brings the child into adult modes of thought. Each of these stages is characterized by a general cognitive structure that affects all of the child's thinking and gives the child an incomplete or approximate understanding of reality. The child's understanding of reality advances by accumulating or assimilating data from countless trials and errors whose combined "weight" create such a degree of cognitive disequilibrium that thought structures require reorganizing to arrive at a state of equilibrium once again. The experience of cognitive conflict or disequilibrium occurs when the child holds two contradictory views of reality that both cannot be true. This forces the child to rethink his or her view of the world or to establish a new balance between what is assimilated and how it is accommodated - a process that advances cognitive growth. Every time equilibrium is re-established the child's brain advances to a higher level of cognition and the child's intelligence acquires a more mature understanding (Piaget, 1972, 1970).

Piaget pointed out that teaching can support these developmental processes by providing support for the “spontaneous research” of the child, using active methods that require rediscovering or reconstructing truths, using collaborative and individual activities, and devising situations that present useful problems and create disequilibrium in the child (Piaget, 1972).

Piaget’s theory has influenced the work of Lev Vygotsky and other academics and, most importantly, inspired the transformation of European and American education during the 1970s and 1980s, including both theory and practice, to a more “child-centred” approach that attempts not to “lead the child to resemble the typical adult in society,” but to “make inventors, innovators – not conformists” (Bringuier, 1980, p. 132, quotes Piaget from *Conversations with Jean Piaget*).

#### 2.3.1.2 Jerome Bruner’s cognitive theory

Another contributor to cognitive theory is Jerome Bruner who saw thinking as the outcome of cognitive development. The intelligent mind, he postulated, uses experience to create generic coding systems that allow one to go beyond the information given and make new predictions. Endowed with this ability, the outcome of learning is not simply to acquire the concepts, methods and problem-solving procedures invented by the minds of others, but the ability to invent these things for oneself. Therefore, the aim of education should be to create autonomous learners, i.e. learning to learn (Bruner, 1973).

Bruner envisioned intellectual development moving through three stages: *enactive*, *iconic*, and *symbolic*, in that order. Unlike Piaget, however, he did not contend that these stages are necessarily age-dependent or invariant. In the *enactive* stage, knowledge is stored primarily in the form of motor responses. In the *iconic* stage, it is stored primarily in the form of visual images, which explains why learning is aided when diagrams or illustrations accompany verbal information. And in the *symbolic* stage, knowledge is primarily stored as words, mathematical symbols, or other symbol systems (Bruner, 1973). The implications for instruction are that any subject can be taught to any child at any stage of development as long as the appropriate sequence is used so that kindergarteners could be taught a subject first by using the enactive form and then later in

life the same principles could be elaborated and enforced in iconic and ultimately in symbolic form.

While Piaget contended that the child must be ready or prepared for any given subject matter, Bruner (1960) contends that the fundamental principles of any subject could be taught at any age, provided the material is converted to a form and stage appropriate to the child. Discovery is an appropriate form for instructing young children and to Bruner it goes beyond just being an instructional technique to being an important learning outcome in itself. That is why teachers should guide the discovery process as well as model the inquiry process and they should do so while being mindful that members of different cultures will exhibit different kinds of reasoning and inference. Furthermore, the instructional challenge, according to Bruner (1966), is to provide problems that both fit the manner of the child's thinking and tempt the child into more powerful modes of thinking, which is similar to Vygotsky's notion that learning should lead development.

### 2.3.1.3 Vygotsky's theory of cognitive functioning

Vygotsky attempted to answer the question of how children come to possess cognitive functions. In his view, individual development could not be understood without reference to the social and cultural context within which it is embedded. Higher mental processes, for Vygotsky, have their origin in the social context and no single principle – such as Piaget's equilibration – can account for development. Development is the conversion of social relations into mental functions. “Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later on the individual level; first, between people, then inside the child... All the higher functions originate as actual relations between individuals” (Vygotsky, 1978, 57).

The child converts social relations into psychological functions through mediation and the most powerful facilitator of mediation is language. Therefore, language is the most important tool in the acquisition of higher psychological processes. Language being symbolic, the diversity of languages across cultures leads to differences in the kinds of mental functions that language helps develop, so that universal stages of psychological development across cultures eschew identification. What can be

identified is the zone where learning occurs, which Vygotsky called the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD) and defined as the difference between a child's independent problem-solving ability and his/her guided problem-solving ability, i.e. that which a child can accomplish alone and that which a child can accomplish with the aid of teachers. The zone of proximal development defines the area in which development is taking place and represents the appropriate target of instruction. In an instructional setting, students should be at different levels of development from their teacher and they should jointly construct solutions. This insures that teachers can assist students in reaching their zones of proximal development and thus progress in their cognitive development. The task of instruction is to provide learners with authentic situations in which they must resolve dilemmas, but because children are not yet capable of operating at an abstract level, instruction should focus on tasks and goals that are relevant to the child. To Vygotsky, the very origin of human thought is in socially meaningful activity (Vygotsky, 1978).

## 2.3.2 Theory of Bilingualism

### 2.3.2.1 Cummin's iceberg theory of bilingualism

The positive relationship between bilingualism and thinking processes and its implications for developing bilingual curricula for young children has been demonstrated. For example, Cummins uses the analogy of two icebergs to explain the cognitive advantages for being bilingual (1981). According to Cummins, the two icebergs are separated above the surface, which symbolizes two languages that are visibly different in outward conversation. Underneath the surface, the two icebergs are fused so that the two languages do not function separately. Both languages operate through the same central processing system. In other words, provided that children are given the opportunity to develop sufficient skill in a second language, bilingualism may enhance cognitive functioning. This clearly illustrates that people have the capacity to easily store two or more languages. However, it should be emphasized that a pre-requisite for the success of bilingual learning is that a child must have developed sufficient skill in the language through which learning takes place. As Baker (1996) notes, if a child is faced with



learning in a “submersion” classroom, in which she/he is not sufficiently familiar with the MOI (medium of instruction), successful learning is not likely to take place. This argument echoes those of Cheng et al. (1973), who expressed concern about English being used as the MOI in Hong Kong, where students’ English language skills may not be adequate for effective learning.

#### 2.3.2.2 Baker’s threshold theory of bilingualism

*Threshold theory* elaborates on the relationship between cognition and degree of bilingualism further through the idea of multiple thresholds (Baker, 1996). This theory may be portrayed in terms of a house with three floors (Freeman, 1998). There are two language ladders on the sides, indicating that a bilingual child will usually be moving upward and is not stationary or moving upwards only. On the bottom floor, a child’s current competence in both languages may be inadequately developed and consequently there may be a lag in achievement. The middle level of the house represents age-appropriate competence in one language but not in both. At this level, partly bilingual children have no difference in cognition from monolingual children and are unlikely to experience positive or negative cognitive consequences. At the top of the house, the third floor, reside children who approximate “balanced” bilinguals. At this level, children will have age-appropriate competence in two or more languages. For example, they can cope with curriculum materials in either of their languages. It is at this level that the positive cognitive advantages of bilingualism may appear, enabling the bilingual child cognitive advantages over monolinguals.

While both the Iceberg and Threshold theories have limitations, primarily in that they do not provide indications about when “sufficient” or “threshold” levels are reached, they do help in the conceptualization of bilingual educational programmes. Research has found that children’s bilingual ability is “decisive” in determining its effect on cognitive development (Bialystok, 1988).

#### 2.3.2.3 Critical period of second language acquisition

Much research has attempted to find out whether there is an ideal time for introducing a second language, a so-called *critical period* (Lenneberg, 1964, 1967;

Bickerton, 1967), since there is conflicting evidence on this issue (DeKeyser, 2000; Kegl & Iwata, 1989). Arguments have been made that the earlier bilingualism is introduced the more successful it will be (Krashen, Long & Scarcella, 1992; O'Grady & Dobrovolsky, 1996) due to the brain's greater plasticity early in life (Scovel, 1988; Brown, 1994), superior ability to mimic (Tahta, Wood & Lowenthal, 1981; Long, 1990) and less fossilization of motor patterns (Scovel, 1982; McLaughlan, 1992), while others believe that the first language must be stable and secure before introducing a second one (Brent-Palmer, 1979; Swain, 1981). The evidence, however, shows that there is no critical age at which a biologically determined constraint on language learning appears (Huttenlocher, 2002) and no evidence to suggest that older language learners function differently than younger ones (McLaughlin, 1978; Snow, 2002), that their proficiency levels are not comparable (Paradis & Lebrun, 1984), or that full L2 acquisition is not possible at any time (Flege, 1987; Jacobs, 1988). What the evidence shows is that for some aspects of learning younger learners have advantages (e.g. better pronunciation, less interference) and for others older learners have advantages (e.g. better grammar, greater motivation), but not that these advantages or disadvantages are biologically determined. Different aspects of language are learned at different ages (Walsh & Diller, 1981). What determines language acquisition are factors such as: the learner's level of cognitive development (Cummins, 1979), the particular strategy one employs (Dodson, 1981), how embarrassed one is about making errors, socio-economic status (McNaughton, 2006; Tarullo & Zill, 2002; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1980), the existence of a supportive, dependable, and nurturing social environment (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Lowenthal & Bull, 1984), and the like. Advantages and disadvantages cut both ways. Thus we see that child second language learners are more likely to achieve native-like proficiency in the target language, but also more likely to lose proficiency in the first language in the process, whereas adult second language learners almost never suffer language loss and are more capable of maintaining two languages than children.

The fact that no particular age has been found when the ability to learn a second language declines supports the assertion that there is no critical age. A critical age would be associated with "a decline in speed, ease, or success" of second language acquisition, but no such decline has ever been reported. Moreover, language learners of

all ages make the same mistakes, which suggests that they are using the same cognitive processes to meet the challenge of language acquisition (Snow, 2002).

What does influence language learning is not optimal age but optimal conditions (Snow, 2002) to achieve second language proficiency and these include a supportive environment, a period of full immersion in the target language, minimal recourse to the first language, and high personal motivation; in short, a propitious environment (Baetens-Beardsmore, 1982).

The implications of the research data on critical age for bilingual education are that first of all, second language learning can begin anytime and should not be rushed for fear that a critical window of opportunity to becoming fluent speakers will be missed and that, secondly, educational programs must provide maintenance for the first language while building second language competence (Snow, 2002).

Much controversy still reigns around the issue of what constitutes the optimal age at which to start instruction in a second language. Three main views vov for supremacy in this respect. According to the optimal age hypothesis, young children possess an innate facility for language learning. Chomsky (1959) and Donoghue (1965) maintain that languages can best be learned at the age of four through eight and give neurological and psychological reasons for this early age advantage. Children's superior imitative ability has often been noted in this context by several researchers (Wilkins, 1972; Delaunay, 1977; Hill, 1978; Patkowsky, 1980; Schmidt-Schönbein, 1980), who found also that spontaneity and lack of inhibition in young children allow them to more easily adopt a new language, while older children are inhibited by a more conscious and self-critical attitude. Lenneberg (1967) maintains that the critical period for language acquisition ceases at the onset of puberty, while at the other extreme of the optimal age scale many have argued that older individuals have an advantage over children due to their more developed intellectual capacities (Burstall, 1975; Cook, 1978; Cummins, 1980; Ekstrand, 1979; Ervin-Tripp, 1974; Macnamara, 1973; McLaughlin, 1977; West, 1959).

A different line of research found that language learning during the optimal period should be limited to phonology (Scovel, 1969, 1978) since better pronunciation has been observed in younger immigrants and better morphology and grammar in their older counterparts (Fathman, 1975; Oyama, 1976, 1978; Seliger, Krashen and Ladefoged,

1975). Others still have postulated that no single optimal age for learning a foreign language exists and have pointed out that every age has advantages and disadvantages (Jakobovits, 1970; Stern and Weinrib, 1977).

Experimental data supplied by Mägiste (1986), who examined developmental changes in the encoding and decoding abilities of bilingual students, shows that elementary school students age six to eleven took less time than high school students, age thirteen to eighteen, to acquire an elementary vocabulary in the second language, but that both age groups achieved a point of language balance (i.e. equivalent linguistic ability in both languages) at the same time, namely after circa six years of exposure to both languages. Mägiste has also observed a significantly longer response time in both groups of bilingual students than in their monolingual counterparts; an effect previously observed by other researchers (Durga, 1978; Ervin, 1961; Gutiérrez-Marsh & Hipple-Maki, 1976; Kovac 1969; Rogers & Monsell, 1995) and attributed either to a lower level of fluency and/or to interference between languages.

A more recent method of research has looked into the response time of bilingual speakers by subjecting them to tasks that required switching from one language to another (switch trial) and to tasks in a single language only (non-switch trials). Their results showed that bilingual speakers are slower to name items on switch trials than on non-switch trials (Jackson, Swainson, Cunnington, & Jackson, 2001; Meuter & Allport, 1999; Thomas & Allport, 2000). This has led some to postulate that the brain possesses an inhibition mechanism, which allows it to select the appropriate item in the lexicon by actively inhibiting the task-irrelevant language (Green, 1998). In contradiction to Green's hypothesis stands the work of others whose data suggests that there is "no language-specific lexical selection mechanism for receptive switching" and who think that the time lag bilinguals experience when switching from one language to another may "arise from outside of the bilingual lexico-semantic system" (Jackson, Swainson, Mullin, Cunnington, & Jackson, 2004, 238).

## 2.4 Emergent literacy and the pedagogy of early childhood education

*Emergent literacy*, a term first coined in 1966 by Marie Clay, initially described the behaviour of young children when imitating reading and writing activities before actually being capable of performing them. Today, the term is defined as the ongoing process of becoming literate, that is, of learning how to read and write, beginning at birth (Sulzby, 1989) and occurring during the first years of a child's life as developmental literacy (Mason & Allen, 1986), which is the crucial stage that precedes actual literacy (McGee & Lomax, 1990). Alternatively, it is defined as the "development of the association of print with meaning" (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

The literature reveals numerous but complementary definitions of emergent literacy. There is agreement that emergent literacy: (1) begins during the period before children receive formal reading instruction, (2) reading and writing develop at the same time and interrelatedly in young children, rather than sequentially, (3) involves listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities as aspects of both oral and written language), (4) is acquired through informal as well as adult-directed home and school activities, (5) facilitates acquisition of specific functions of literacy via stages of development that occur in a variety of ways and at different ages (van Kleeck, 1990; Stahl & Miller, 1989; Teale & Sulzby, 1986, 1991).

Emergent literacy differs from conventional literacy as it examines the range of settings and experiences that support literacy, the role of the child's contributions (i.e., individual construction), and the relation between individual literacy outcomes and the diverse experiences that precede those outcomes. Van Kleeck (1990) identifies the following areas of literacy knowledge: (a) awareness of print, (b) knowledge of the relationship between speech and print, (c) text structure, (d) phonological awareness, and (e) letter naming and writing. These skills develop concurrently and their acquisition affects the ease with which children learn to read and write (van Kleeck, 1990; Weir, 1989; Hiebert, 1988).

#### 2.4.1 Areas of emergent literacy

*Awareness of print* refers to a child's knowledge of its forms (i.e. the conventions of print) and functions (i.e. the purposes and uses of print). Through exposure to print, children learn that although print is different from speech it also carries messages and that in books it is print not pictures that tell the story (Morrow et al. 1990). They also learn the ways in which print is arranged on the page, namely that text begins at the top, moves from left to right, and continues on the next page (Ehri & Sweet, 1991). Children's early attempts at writing come in the form of scribbles and mock letters that reveal incipient awareness of the conventions of written language and that in time take on other characteristics of writing such a linearity (van Kleeck, 1990; Hiebert, 1988). As they progress developmentally, children's scribbles become mock letters and then actual letters and these early print skills play an integral part in the process of learning to read (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Mason & Allen, 1986). Children understand the purpose of print when they realize that words convey a message; and they understand the function of print when they realize that messages can serve multiple purposes (van Kleeck, 1990). The gap between oral and written language is bridged with the understanding that printed words contain messages that are independent of the child's immediate physical reality.

#### 2.4.2 Periods of emergent literacy

Emergent literacy is the child of cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics and its perspective takes a broad view of literacy, examining children's literacy development before the onset of formal instruction (Sulzby & Teale, 1996; Hiebert & Papierz, 1990; McGee & Lomax, 1990; Mason & Allen, 1986). Two distinct periods of emergent literacy have been identified: birth to five years of age, and five years to independent reading (McGee & Purcell-Gates, 1997). Literacy development begins long before children start formal instruction in elementary school (Hall & Moats, 1999; Burns, Griffin & Snow, 1999; Allington & Cunningham, 1996; Clay, 1991; Tealy & Sulzby, 1986) and proceeds along a developmental continuum from awareness of words in spoken

language to awareness of words in written language (Roberts, 1992). More specifically, Lomax & McGee (cited by Hiebert, 1988) have identified the following developmental pattern: awareness of print is followed by graphic awareness, after which come phonemic awareness, knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence, and last word reading.

### 2.4.3 Two different perspectives of emergent literacy

The introduction of the term emergent literacy gave rise to two lines of research on preparing children for reading: the “maturation” or “nature” camp versus the “accelerated readiness” or “nurture” camp - a distinction that underscores different philosophical foundations. The “nature” perspective, dominant from the 1920s to the 1950s, maintained that reading readiness is the result of biological maturation and that the mental processes necessary for literacy evolve naturally as part of every child’s normal development. As such, it was believed, one should not interfere with this predetermined process by rushing or attempting to force children’s abilities to develop prematurely. During the 1950s and 1960s, the dominant theory shifted from reading readiness as a result of physical and neurological maturation to readiness as the product of experience and educators were encouraged to employ a variety of methods to accelerate the development of literacy (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Direct instruction and structured curricula were used in early childhood and kindergarten programs to equip children with the necessary social, physical and cognitive competencies necessary for literacy (Morrow, 1997). In the 1970s, researchers like Marie Clay began to challenge the reading readiness attitudes and practices of the day and a new understanding emerged as to how literacy develops. Whereas the concept of reading readiness suggested that children arrived at literacy via a natural process dependent only on biological maturation and immune to outside intervention, emergent literacy maintains that there is a developmental continuum of reading and writing acquisition (Clay, 1975).

What is or is not “developmentally appropriate” remains subject to debate and while some early childhood educators promote activities that support emergent literacy development, others maintain that reading and writing are academic skills appropriate only for older children (Slegers, 1996). There are varying opinions on the best approach

to teach young children how to read and write. Some believe that instruction in conventional literacy should be based on early and intensive instruction in sound-letter relationships (phonics) while others emphasize immersion in language and literature.

#### 2.4.4 The importance of reading in emergent literacy

Whatever the approach, literacy, it is understood, requires a transition from the oral to the written register (Cox, Fang & Otto, 1997) since the written register includes linguistic devices that are not part of the oral register (Wells, 1987) and this is best achieved through social interactions with caring adults and ample exposure to literacy materials (Sulzby, 1991). One of the features of the written register not found in the oral is the use of *cohesive options*, devices that connect items in the text (such as the co-reference between nouns and pronouns, definite articles, and demonstratives, or the similarity chains of co-classification and co-extension) for the sake of cohesive harmony and clarity and that unless one is familiar with leads to misunderstanding or lack of comprehension (Hasan, 1984). Conversely, research shows a significant positive relationship between familiarity with cohesive options and literacy development, which reflects the positive effects of children being exposed to the literate register through experiences with books (Cox, Fang & Otto, 1997). Research findings also show a significant correlation between cohesive harmony and metacognition (Fang & Cox, 1999).

Reading to a child can never begin too early (McMahon, 1996) since children's experiences with oral language and literacy represent a foundation for later reading success (Burns, Griffin & Snow, 1999; Strickland & Morrow, 1988; Weaver, 1988). Throughout the literature, reading aloud to children is seen as a key component of early literacy acquisition and numerous correlational studies have documented this (Burroughs, 1972; Chomsky, 1972; Durkin, 1974-75; Fodor, 1966; Irwin, 1960; Moon & Wells, 1979). Reading takes on additional significance when one considers findings indicating that most successful early readers are children who have been exposed at home with written materials (Hiebert, 1988; Hildebrand & Bader, 1992; Smith, 1989; Teale & Sulzby, 1987) and, conversely, that the least successful readers are children who have



been deprived of this advantage (Scarborough et al., 1991; Dyson, 1986). Without sufficient storybook reading experience in early childhood - whether at home or at school - students may be missing a key part of the initial foundation of reading (Morrow et al., 1990).

More recent research shows that hearing stories and talking about them familiarizes children with the written register and this promotes “the development of metalinguistic skills that enable children to think and talk about language” (Robinson, Ross & Neal, 2000, 6). Exposure to literacy-rich environments leads to rapid growth in literacy skills (Burns, Griffin & Snow, 1999). The types of books used also make a difference in children’s emergent literacy and those with “content supported by pictures, repeated language patterns, and salient story elements” are better at fostering emergent literacy (Elster, 1998, 66) because they minimize the chance of ambiguities occurring in children’s minds and are better at promoting vocabulary growth (Pappas, 1993).

#### 2.4.5 Factors affecting emergent literacy

##### 2.4.5.1 Instructional methods

Instructional methods also have an impact on how effectively literacy is enabled in children. Repeated readings, for instance, help scaffold the child’s understanding of the text so that each subsequent reading leads to better understanding and greater literacy benefits (Pappas & Brown, 1987). Others have found that different beginning literacy programs are better than others at familiarizing children who come to school with little experience of the literate register (Purcell-Gates, McIntyre & Freppon, 1995). Neuman (1999) points out that placing books within easy reach of children is critical for early literacy and that “>physical access to books + >verbal interaction around literacy + >time spent reading and relating to books = >reading and writing development” (p. 302).

##### 2.4.5.2 Teaching style

Allison and Watson (1994) found two factors that predict emergent literacy levels: the teacher’s interactive style and the age at which parents start reading to their children. Because teachers are better than parents at eliciting more cognitive demands from

children while reading a text and scaffolding in relation to the children's level of emergent literacy they achieve greater literacy progress.

#### 2.4.5.3 Reading at home

Parents, however, have the potential to counteract their lack of professional knowledge simply by starting to read to their children early in life and thus providing consistent experience with the written register, which enables children to "experience the motives, goals, and conditions of reading" (p. 68). The importance of parents reading to children is confirmed by a plethora of other studies as well. Christian, Morrison & Bryant, (1998) found that family literacy and maternal education are predictable sources of children's academic achievement upon entering kindergarten. Bus, Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini (1995) found that reading to children is one of the most important factors in emergent literacy. Neuman (1996) observed that parents' proficiency level positively affects their children's literacy development, while Landry & Smith (2006) present evidence that parental skill can provide rich input and scaffold their children's engagement in activities that further language development from birth to age three.

#### 2.4.5.4 Parental involvement

Parental involvement is also important from an affective and not just a cognitive point of view. Pianta (2006), for instance, argues that literacy emerges when parents (or caregivers) provide the relational context of warmth and affection that enable children to master and coordinate multiple cognitive and affective systems. Hoff (2006) suggests that features of mother-child interaction (such as the variety of input and the complexity of maternal language) outweigh even social class in predicting language growth. Leseman & Tuijl (2006) add a new dimension to affective research by identifying culturally linked differences in patterns of emotional support between different ethnicities and social classes and by outlining a developmental theory that shows how culture affects reading development. With the same cultural perspective in mind, McNaughton (2006) explains that cultural groups are internally heterogeneous in their literacy practices and that any intervention should aim at enhancing the "cultural dexterity" of families, which

can only be done if schools bridge the cultural divide between schools and homes, thus creating consistency between the two cultures.

#### 2.4.6 Approaches to literacy acquisition

Children acquire literacy skills in a variety of ways and at different ages (Ramsburg, 1998; McGee & Richgels, 1996; Strickland & Morrow, 1988) yet their “reading, writing, and oral language develop concurrently and interrelatedly” (Sulzby & Tealy, 1991, 728). Previously, it was believed that children must first learn to read before they could learn to write. There is wide academic agreement that children’s growth from emergent to conventional literacy depends on three main factors: continuing literacy development, understanding literacy concepts, and the efforts of parents and teachers to promote literacy.

Children may take a variety of routes to reading and writing mastery. Because literacy learning is circular or “recursive” it does not develop evenly, and learners may progress in some areas while seemingly digressing in others while consolidating knowledge. Furthermore, children begin school with diverse experiences and understandings of print, which give rise to specific print skills and oral language competencies (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Mason & Allen, 1986). By and large, research shows that exposure to written language develops awareness of print, letter naming, and phonemic skills, while exposure to oral language develops preschool children’s listening comprehension, vocabulary, and language facility (Gunn, Simmons, Kameenui, 1998). Children who are behind in their literacy experience when entering schools are at risk in subsequent years (Copeland & Edwards, 1990; Smith, 1989; Mason & Allen, 1986) because without understanding the link between their oral language experiences and formal instruction they will advance at a slower rate than children who do (Ferreiro & Teberosky, cited by Mason & Allen, 1986). According to the emergent literacy perspective, the purpose of adult-child interactions, therefore, is to foster the child’s development of the literacy process and not to help the child get the “right” answers (Clay, 1991).

#### 2.4.7 Benchmarks for literacy concepts

The literacy concepts targeted as preschool benchmarks include increased vocabulary; familiarity with a variety of genres such as storybooks, expository texts, poems, labels, signs, and newspapers; left to right directionality; knowledge of the front of the book; the concept of print and letter; structural elements and organization of print; the ability to follow stories and to respond to questions related to it; connecting book facts and real-life experiences; and participating in verbal interaction about the text (Robinson, Ross & Neal, 2000). For this to occur, preschools need to provide literacy-rich classroom environments that are well designed and parents must engage their children in a variety of purposeful literacy acts, while both schools and parents must demonstrate that literacy is useful for solving everyday problems. Ultimately, literacy hinges on the ability of preschools and parents to inculcate the motivation to read and positive attitudes about reading, which can then serve as a foundation for early reading instruction (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998).

#### 2.4.8 Development of concepts of print

The following research throws light on how concepts of print develop in children. Roberts (1992) uncovered that children grasp the characteristics of words as elements of written language only as a result of exposure to written language, which advances their cognitive development to a level that allows them to see words as units of language; a process that is first tacit and only later explicit. Whitehurst et al. (1994), in studying the effects of dialogic reading, found that intervention helped children perform significantly better on concepts of print such as: “naming letters, identifying people reading, distinguishing between words, pictures, and numbers, and identifying components of writing” (p. 549). Similar research indicates that reading intervention allows children “to use what they had learned in kindergarten about early literacy concepts to profit more from what they were taught in subsequent grades” (Philips, Norris & Mason, 1996, p. 191). Weiss and Hagen (1988) found that children must experience the reasons for reading and writing before literacy development can begin and that reading and writing

develop “concurrently and interrelatedly” (p. 574). The positive effect on literacy of spontaneous free-play elicited by classroom settings enriched with literacy items has been reported by Neuman & Roskos (1992) and of dramatic play by Pellegrini, Galda, Dresden & Cox (1991) who observed better use of verbs and pretend reading tasks, which in turn signal improved metalinguistic awareness.

Children’s enrichment of vocabulary can be achieved through storybook exposure and parent teaching (Sénéchal, LeFevre, Thomas & Daley, 1998) and the data shows positive relationships between the family literacy environment and children’s receptive vocabulary and between maternal education and children’s receptive vocabulary (Christian, Morrison & Bryant, 1998). Research findings reveal that repetitive reading can be used successfully to target vocabulary increases and that children gain vocabulary gradually and incidentally as long as they have the benefit of repeated exposure to words in context (Eller, Pappas & Brown, 1988). Similar research found that hearing stories read twice improves the vocabularies of non-reading kindergartners, which shows that listening to stories is an “effective means of expanding subjects’ word knowledge” (Robbins & Ehri, 1994, p. 58), while others discovered that dialogic reading is a more effective way of improving children’s expressive (but not receptive) vocabulary than regular book reading (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000). Sénéchal, Oulette & Rodney (2006), while addressing the fundamental theoretical questions about early literacy, have argued “the contribution of book reading in literacy development has been underestimated because the role of vocabulary in phonemic awareness and reading comprehension ...has not been recognized” (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006, p.5). In *summa*, all data suggests that vocabulary size is a significant predictor of children’s success in learning to read (Chall, Jacobs & Baldwin, 1990; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998).

Not surprisingly, research also shows that one-on-one reading has positive implications for children’s understanding, allowing them a more complex grasp of the written word (Morrow, 1988), and that reading aloud has a facilitative influence on literacy development (Beck & McKeown, 2006), as has a child’s oral language, which can be enhanced by the content and style of language used by caregivers with children (Hall & Moats, 1999). Rowe (1998) found that toys and props used during reading events support comprehension “by creating a more concrete link to the child’s world

experiences” (p. 23). Positive effects on reading comprehension and narrative activities were also found in instances when dramatic play (Williamson & Silvern, 1992) or thematic-fantasy dramatic play (Pellegrini & Galda, 1982) and fantasy enactments (Pellegrini, 1984) were used. Furthermore, the ability of preschool children to distinguish between narrative and expository books after only minimal exposure to both genres, surprised researchers (Duke & Kays, 1998; Pappas, 1993).

#### 2.4.9 Phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness is an area that has traditionally received a lot of attention yet new research highlights the interdependence of phonemic awareness and letter knowledge. Lonigan (2006), for instance, argues that there is a single underlying ability that supports the development of progressively smaller linguistic units, so that vocabulary and letter knowledge are preconditions for phonological awareness and this in turn contributes to early reading. Burgess (2006) likewise conceptualises phonological awareness as a single cohesive underlying competence, but in which children progress with age and as a result of propitious environmental factors such as their parents’ active effort in helping them learn the names of letters and improve their oral language abilities. Others see phonemic awareness as fundamental to conceptual insight and skill development and point out that explicit instruction in phonology leads to reading fluency, because it equips children with a better ability to map the sounds of graphemes and this allows them to move from decoding unfamiliar words to teaching themselves new words (Phillips & Torgesen, 2006). More fundamentally, Ehri & Roberts (2006) regard knowledge of letter names as crucial for phonemic awareness and early decoding abilities, pointing out studies and presenting data which show that learning letter names contributes to early reading. They also stress the importance of foundational knowledge if children are to withstand the complex demands placed on them by formal instruction.

#### 2.4.10 The importance of literacy

The command of language, written and oral, is important for many reasons, not least of all because it enables communication and the more advanced civilization is the more complex its communication needs become. But language is more than just communication. Language allows children to make cognitive links, gather information, express their needs, label objects and experiences and store them symbolically for later recall, categorize and classify objects, plan and organize, cope, and finally to reason (Gonzalez-Mena, 2005). More than that, important intellectual gains arise from literacy in the cognitive abilities that enable reflective and 'disembedded' thinking and endow the literate with the capacity for self-reflection, mental reorganization and evaluation (Maynard & Thomas, 2004; Olson, 1977; Goody & Watt, 1968). Even though the view that literacy shapes human cognitive processes has been disputed (Fingeret, 1984; Scribner & Cole, 1981) no one has been able to prove negative cognitive repercussions from literacy and until such time one must at least concede that there is a "reciprocal relationship between language and cognition" (Williams & Sniper, 1990).

Literacy demands in a knowledge-based society are far greater now than ever before and literacy standards have consequently risen (Christie, 1990). Furthermore, the electronic and mass media have replaced the conventional person-to person oral communication with print or written communication, which makes literacy in the Information Age vital (Fingeret, 1990). These factors place high literacy requirements on adults and signal the need for changing literacy demands for children who must read and write competently if they are to meet ever-greater standards of literacy (IRA & NAEYC, 1998). Shanghai and Hong Kong have not been exempt and have had to accommodate ever greater literacy demands increasingly early in life, forcing curriculum compression on preschoolers and entirely redefining the role of kindergartens in the educational process.

The array of factors shaping literacy include communities, parents, schools, educational methods, socio-economic conditions, and the child's neurological and biological endowment. In attempting to facilitate the development of literacy none of

the above factors can be disregarded or considered in isolation and policy makers are challenged by having to draw lessons from all directions in order to improve education.

## 2.5 Bilingualism to biliteracy

To become biliterate one must first succeed in being literate in one language. Biliteracy implies literacy in the minority and the majority languages, the first and the second language, and, more often than not, the prestige and the indigenous language. Yet being literate, and, by implication, being biliterate means different things to different cultures since each culture has different uses and purposes for literacy. “Literacy is not a separate cultural event, but mirrors in its form and function general socialization patterns” (Baker, 2001, p. 304). Literacy, thus, includes the idea of social relevancy (Venezky, 1990). Furthermore, the level of literacy one attains largely determines how one functions in social networks (Mikulecky, 1990).

### 2.5.1 Ways of understanding literacy

In the West, literacy is understood as the ability to use the skills of reading and writing to accumulate and disseminate knowledge rationally, critically, and abstractly for the purpose of intellectual and scientific progress. In many parts of Asia, literacy is about promoting knowledge through memorization and repetition to ensure a continuous line for the faithful transmission of inherited cultural and intellectual traditions that, having withstood the test of time, are immune to further investigation. An even more traditional understanding of literacy exists in many parts of the Muslim world where the perpetuation of immutable religious beliefs and strict moral standards is seen as the most meaningful achievement of a literate person and, consequently, religious figures are given the highest respect and possess the greatest authority. A Buddhist understanding of literacy, as can be encountered in most of South-East Asia, though equally religious and unswerving, centres on the disciplined acquisition of detached awareness, unqualified empathy, and knowledge of the dharma. The concept of literacy then is culture specific and not universal and in many societies leans more towards religion than secularism.



Modern social science identifies three ways of understanding literacy: academic ability, construction of meaning, and socio-cultural (Baker, 2001). According to UNESCO's 1962 definition, literacy is the academic or technical ability that enables an individual to function in society and, as such, its aims are apolitical and universal. A more demanding definition expects literacy to endow human beings with the ability to construct meaning (Hudelson, 1994) by interpreting the written word in light of their past experiences, cultural background and purpose for reading. Last, there are those who argue that literacy must "empower action, thinking, and feeling in the context of purposeful social activity" (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992, 147). Each definition intimates more than what is immediately apparent and their distinct emphases have spawned different approaches to the pursuit of literacy.

### 2.5.2 Degrees and effects of biliteracy

Given the effort required to become literate, the question arises whether it is preferable to be semi-literate in two languages rather than thoroughly literate in one, since many believe that it is impossible to be thoroughly bilingual (whether ambilingual or equilingual) let alone biliterate. In the past decades, the notion that bilingualism was detrimental to intellectual development and even that it contributed to retardation (Darcy, 1953) was common currency, but it was erroneously based on verbal tests meant for native speakers, misused to measure the intelligence of bilinguals in their weaker language (Balkan, 1970) and, most likely, motivated by the researchers' ethnolinguistic narrowness and the prevailing political establishment's ethnocentric perception of other peoples and cultures. Once appropriate tests were devised that were mindful of the handicaps posed by bilingual interference, it was found that bilingual children performed better than monolinguals in non-verbal IQ measures – showing greater "mental flexibility, a superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified set of mental abilities" (Peal & Lambert, 1962) - whether the students were from advantaged (Cardinet & Rousson, 1965; Swain, 1980) or disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds (Lim Kiat Boey, 1980; Anderson & Boyer, 1970). More recent research has cautiously shifted away from standardised measures of intelligence to the cognitive effects of bilingualism. These

contemporary findings corroborate the earlier found positive evidence, qualifying the superiority of bilingual over monolingual children to specific measures of cognitive and meta-linguistic awareness (Kessler & Quinn, 1985) and linguistic and cognitive creativity (Kessler & Quinn, 1987). Others too add their voices and data in support of the positive rather than the negative effects of bilingualism/biliteracy (Lanauze & Snow, 1989; Torres, 1991; Hornberger, 1990; Calero-Breckheimer & Goetz, 1993).

Theoretical support for the relationship between cognition and bilingualism has been provided by Cummins (1979, 1981, 1984) who proposed that children who fail to achieve balanced proficiency in two languages yet who are immersed in a bilingual environment prematurely, so to speak, may be cognitively “different” and possibly “disadvantaged. Diaz (1985), on the other hand, maintains the opposite in suggesting that a bilingual’s cognitive “flexibility” is at its maximum during the early stages of bilingual development, before balanced proficiency is attained. So while there is unanimity today regarding the positive benefits of bilingualism/biliteracy, there is controversy as to when a bilingual/biliterate person can begin to reap those benefits. This discourse has greatly influenced Hong Kong’s educational authorities to adopt Cantonese, thus the mother tongue, as the medium of instruction (MOI) for most of the compulsory education system and to relegate English as MOI to only a minority, as will be discussed later.

The research of Lanauze & Snow (1989) shows that language skills developed beyond a certain point in the first language serve to aid and to shorten the process of L2 acquisition. But this is to be qualified by two points: first, the two languages in question must have similar writing systems and second, the greater the *language distance* (i.e. the extent to which two languages differ from each other)- as measured by Mackey (1976) - the less transferable are the skills of L1 to L2 because there is a greater gap in *mutual intelligibility* (Karam, 1979) that needs to be crossed. More positive news come from Swain & Lapkin (1991) who point out that biliteracy gives access to two different social and cultural worlds and in so doing the biliterate person is blessed with cognitive and curriculum advantages. But the universal applicability of this finding is weakened by how supportive the social and political environments are of the idea of bilingualism and biliteracy, i.e. the attitudinal disposition (Jakobovits, 1970), as well as by issues of language dominance - as measures by Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum’s (1957) *semantic*

*differential technique* or by W.E. Lambert's (1969) *matched guise technique* - and language status. If the majority resents the people and language of a minority and if the larger society accords the minority language a low status, the resultant negativity surrounding that language will prevent its acquisition and, therefore, its very survival. This is plainly evident in Shanghai where the local Shanghaihua is being undermined by the national Putonghua.

### 2.5.3 Motivation and bilingualism

A further consideration that affects how bilingualism/biliteracy is perceived is that of motivation, since a clear correlation has been shown between the nature of a learner's motivation and the quality of his bilingual ability (Lambert, 1969). Motivation is affected not only by the degree of support or lack thereof in the society, but also by the reasons for which an individual chooses to learn a second language. Those who learn a language just for utilitarian purposes, e.g. for their business or career, have an *instrumental motivation*, and they will most likely be content with a rudimentary knowledge of the language, whereas those who pursue a language to become part of the culture, have an *integrative motivation*, which tends to result in greater linguistic competence (Lambert, 1969). Generally speaking, instrumental motivation is behind most learners of English in Shanghai, while most learners of Hong Kong have integrative motivation in mind.

As we have seen, literacy and the educational methods that lead to it are subject to more than just academic theory and methodology. They are also the progenies of cultural norms and moral views, and often the victims of political demands, to say nothing of the importance played by attitude and motivation in the pursuit of bilingualism and biliteracy. Issues of power, emanating from the political environment and issues of perception, emanating from the cultural environment, determine, to a great extent, how bilingualism/biliteracy is perceived and approached in any given culture.

#### 2.5.4 Additive and subtractive bilingualism

Until and unless the controversial issues surrounding bilingualism/biliteracy are resolved (e.g. that attempting biliteracy leads to semilingualism, that biliteracy comes at the expense of national unity, or that bilingualism causes confusion of identity) by a society, any discussion of how to achieve it remains academic. For in the real world, in a *subtractive* environment, where social, cultural and political forces converge to conspire against bilingualism, the transfer of literacy skills between languages is impeded by factors outside an individual's influence, whereas in an *additive* context the strong cultural and social support and encouragement available to bilinguals from the outside unfailingly lead to individual success.

Compelling and recent data to support the positive role of an additive context comes from a longitudinal study (Lesaux & Siegel, 2003) undertaken in Vancouver, Canada, that tracked 1000 children in mainstream English classrooms and covered a city-wide population-base sample representing all social classes, immigrants and natives, and 33 different language backgrounds. Much to everyone's dismay it was found that students who spoke no English in kindergarten, by the second grade achieved higher reading skills (in a number of reading and language measures) than their native English-speaking peers (Lesaux & Siegel, 2003). This was achieved by using an intense literacy curriculum combined with constant monitoring, assessment and intervention as well as specific teacher training and the active involvement and support of parents, school board, and academics (Potier, 2003), thus with ideal environmental support.

#### 2.5.5 Theories of biliteracy and bilingual development

Leaving aside the complex intertwining of cultural, sociological, political, and psychological factors that act upon bilingual acquisition and biliteracy, the following theories regarding how bilingualism/biliteracy in children develops are based on three ground theories conceptualised by earlier research: the *balance theory*, also called the *underlying proficiency model of bilingualism* (Cummins, 1980); the *iceberg theory*, originally called the *common underlying proficiency model* (Cummins, 1980, 1981); and

the *threshold theory* (Toukamaa & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977; Cumins, 1976). The first theory envisions bilingualism as two separate languages occupying a single brain limited in its capacity and thus forced to balance increased knowledge in one language with decreased capacity in the other. The second, as already explained, conceptualises bilingualism as two icebergs whose separate crests above the surface become one shared mass below. This analogy suggests that while the two languages are different in outward conversation they are both fused and operate through the same central processing system, being dependent on the same integrated source of thought (Baker, 1996). The last theory, discussed above, envisions three separate levels of language competence. More current research has attempted to clarify which of these hypotheses is supported by empirical evidence, and the body of this data relies either on methodological, contextual or cultural considerations.

Zentella (1997) suggested that some children pass through an intermediate developmental stage in which the two languages they are learning merge and then gradually move towards two independent language systems. Dulay & Burt (1974) have postulated a universal "*creative construction process*" for second-language acquisition, according to which certain innate mechanisms cause children to use certain strategies to organize linguistic input. Krashen's (1981, 1985) "*natural order*" hypothesis considers this innate creative constructive process fundamental to a natural process, i.e. unconscious of grammatical rules, for second-language acquisition independent of experiences and proficiency. By the same token, he conceived the "*monitor hypothesis*" that concedes the possibility of conscious learning (as opposed to natural learning) of a second language when the learner has achieved a significant knowledge of structural rules in the first language, which he can then apply to the second. Other research has identified a distinct relationship between first and second language acquisition when observing that children learning a second language use the same strategies used by all children learning their first language (Wong-Fillmore, 1976; McLaughlin, 1984) and that there is a positive transfer of literacy skills learned in the first language to the second language (Canale, Frenette & Belanger, 1988; Hakuta, 1986; Weinstein, 1984; Cummins, 1981, 1984) especially if a certain level of proficiency is reached in the second language (Alderson, 1984; Cummins, 1981).

The sum total of the research available in this field can be summarized as follows: (1) natural communication is essential if bilingual acquisition is to occur, (2) the acquisition of two languages can be simultaneous or consecutive, (3) it may result in an intermediate phase of language convergence followed by independent development or it may develop independently from the very beginning, (4) bilingual acquisition will not structurally impede the learning of either language (Garcia, 2005).

Furthermore, converging lines of research show that literacy ability requires multiple linguistic-cognitive-affective systems to emerge and that linguistic, cognitive and affective domains are equally critical to literacy development and produce synergetic interdependencies that affect children's language abilities (Dickinson, McCabe & Essex, 2006).

## 2.6 Models of bilingual education

### 2.6.1 Elective vs. circumstantial bilinguals

That bilingualism is shaped by social and political conditions becomes apparent when the status of languages is examined (Mey, 1985). The acquisition of so-called 'elite' or majority languages, regardless of outcome or method, is commonly regarded as advantageous for the education of students, who are described in the literature as *elective bilinguals* because they choose to learn another language. By contrast, bilingualism involving indigenous or minority languages is often perceived as a social and educational impediment (May, 2002a, 2002b) and those students are referred to as *circumstantial bilinguals* because they are forced by circumstances to learn the majority language. Due to social and political support, elective bilingualism leads to the acquisition of a second language at no expense to the first, and thus enjoys a context of additive bilingualism; while circumstantial bilingualism, lacking such support, is often gained at the expense of the minority language, which is undermined by this context of subtractive bilingualism.

## 2.6.2 Weak and strong forms of bilingual education

The social factors that influence why a second language is learned dictate also how a second language is learned. As a result, different models of bilingual education have been conceptualized. They are generally categorized into *weak* and *strong* forms and both Baker (2001) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) define the former as those whose educational aim is to produce limited rather than full bilingualism, with dominance in one language, while the latter ideally lead to students who are proficient and biliterate in two languages. Transitional and submersion bilingual programmes are a good example of weak forms, whereas maintenance and enrichment programmes represent strong forms of bilingual education.

If schools aim to integrate minority students into the majority language and culture, then the education they offer is assimilationist in intent and their bilingual education is *weak*. Schools that aim to maintain students' mother tongue while also promoting the acquisition of another language for the purpose of full biliteracy and cultural pluralism are said to have *strong* forms of bilingualism.

There are generally six approaches to bilingual education: submersion, ESL withdrawal/pullout, transitional, immersion, developmental maintenance/heritage, and two-way immersion. In **submersion** programmes, minority L1 students are placed without planning or support in a mainstream classroom in which only the majority language L2 is spoken and the students must swim or sink (García, 1991). The rationale for this is the 'time-on-task' principle, according to which the more time is spent in L2, the more likely the student will become proficient in it. Since no effort is made to support the student's L1 or mother tongue, some argue (see Holmes, 1981) that this is a subtractive programme since it leads to the loss of L1 and thus does not even constitute bilingual education. By showing that subtractive environments have a negative effect on students (Cummins, 2000; Hamers and Blanc, 2000) bilingual research contradicts the 'time-on-task' premise of submersion programmes. They have also been criticized because the minority student's language and culture are excluded from the classroom, because they lead to great problems of social and emotional adjustment, and because they cause long-term decreased academic performance (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Submersion programmes are generally used for purposes of cultural and linguistic assimilation rather than bilingual development. Crawford (1999) has noted that submersion programmes treat children's native-language ability as a handicap to be overcome interrupting their linguistic development before they reach 'a minimum threshold of cognitive-academic skills' and making it unlikely that they will ever attain full proficiency in L2 (Crawford, 1999:144).

Like submersion, '**ESL withdrawal**' and '**Sheltered Instruction**' are also assimilationist in intent and adhere to a subtractive form of bilingualism, with no accommodation or use of the students' L1. In ESL withdrawal students are pulled out of their normal classes in order to receive English as a second language lessons at various times during the school week, but since there is little emphasis on active and experiential language learning, and a lack of language learning in authentic and meaningful contexts, these programmes are largely ineffective. Also, the teachers do not know the students' L1 and are thus unable to access that language as a resource for learning, building on the students' metalinguistics knowledge.

In the Sheltered Instruction model, known also as 'structured immersion' (SI), ESL and content area classes are combined and are taught by ESL-trained subject area teachers, but they still have assimilation as their principal aim. These classes are designed to deliver content area instruction in a form more accessible than the mainstream English-only classes, using additional material, bilingual aides and adapted texts to help students of diverse language backgrounds acquire the content as well as the language (Roberts, 1995). As Genesee (1999) observes, their principal advantage is that language acquisition can be enhanced by meaningful use of, and interaction in, the L2. The English level used in sheltered classes is continually modulated by the teacher and students, and content is made comprehensible through various means and techniques. SI recognizes that listening, speaking, reading and writing develop interdependently and thus organizes lessons around activities that integrate these skills (Genesee, 1999).

In **transitional bilingual education** (TBE) the minority language students are initially taught through their L1 or home language until they are deemed sufficiently proficient to cope in the mainstream English-language system (García, 1991), at which point they are moved to an English-medium class. Cognisant of the importance of L1 as



a bridge to the acquisition of L2, the transition to an English language class occurs either after 1-3 years (early-exit) or after 4-6 years (late-exit). Even though the long term aim of these programmes is still predicated on a subtractive view of bilingualism, TBE can be considered bilingual education because, unlike submersion and withdrawal programs, it uses bilingual teachers and the student's L1 to help with the transition to English (Lessow-Hurley, 2000).

Originally developed in Canada (see Lambert and Penfield), **immersion** is an enrichment bilingual education model that is most commonly associated with language majority students who are learning through their L2 (Hamers and Blanc, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Additive in their goals, immersion programmes aim to enable students the attainment of functional bilingualism and biliteracy in two languages by the time they finish high school (Hamers and Blanc, 2000).

According to Swain and Johnson (1997) there are several core features of a prototypical immersion programme, the main ones being that: L2 is the medium of instruction, there is overt support for L1, the programme aims for additive bilingualism, exposure to the L2 is largely confined to the classroom, students enter with similar (and limited) levels of L2 proficiency, the teachers are bilingual, and the classroom culture is that of the local L1 community.

The additive bilingual approach of immersion programmes allows for the development of a sufficient threshold of bilingualism for students to access the cognitive and educational advantages of bilingualism and to achieve biliteracy in both languages, via the interdependence principle.

In **developmental maintenance or heritage models** minority students are taught through the medium of two languages, a heritage language and a majority language. There are many varieties of heritage programmes, but most use the heritage language as the medium of instruction 50-90% of the time. They may begin as a 90:10 programme in the early years (with 90% in the heritage language) and change gradually to a 50:50 programme. Their goal is full bilingualism, biculturalism and biliteracy. In other words, the learning of the majority language is not pursued at the expense of the heritage language, which is why many indigenous education programmes have been developed worldwide along these lines over the last two decades (Hornberger, 1997).

**Two-way immersion** programmes are similar in structure to immersion programmes, but differ from these in student composition since they include a proportionate number of native and non-native speakers of the target or heritage language in the same classroom. Whether the proportion of time given each language of instruction is 90:10 or 50:50, the two most common models in use, all two-way programmes aim at developing bilingual and biliterate skills in both groups. Furthermore, two-way programmes not only integrate minority- and majority-language students in an environment that values both languages and cultures, they also never allow English to replace or outweigh the target language. They are also different from other immersion programmes in that teachers are trained to treat all students equitably and to have high academic expectations from all students (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). One other advantage is that since each language targeted is spoken by an equal number of students, every student has plenty of exposure to native speakers, allowing them abundant opportunities to interact and communicate with native speakers and enhancing their chances of developing native-like proficiency in their new language (Lessow-Hurley, 2000). In addition, this make-up is conducive to the development of appreciation and respect for one another's languages and cultures (Lindholm-Leary, 1994). In evaluating two-way programmes, Lindholm-Leary (2001) found them to be effective in promoting high levels of language proficiency, academic achievement and positive attitudes to learning in students. Similarly, Thomas and Collier's (2002) found that bilingually schooled students from two-way programmes equaled or outperformed their monolingually schooled counterparts on all measures.

## 2.7 Conclusion

Having defined or rather described bilingualism and shown its complex typology, I re-emphasize here how age influences its development, since much of the ongoing political and academic discourse, as we have seen, centers on what constitutes a critical age for the development of bilingual ability.

The review above, first of all, demonstrates that the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of first and second language acquisition elucidate how language is learned and how it affects a child's cognitive, affective and social development. These theories determine also how English is taught and learned in Shanghai and Hong Kong and how curricula and language policy are designed.

The next step in language development is literacy and the areas and periods of emergent literacy as well as the factors affecting its development and the approaches used to achieve literacy have been analyzed. The concept of literacy, as it was shown, is culturally determined and when, how and to what extent literacy is sought at preschool level differs widely from place to place, being also subject to economic and political factors. These differences shape or misshape the nature of preschool education, raising questions of what is age appropriate or not and what is effective or not, as will become plainly evident in the succeeding chapters.

Biliteracy is given the same attention. In addition, the factors that affect biliteracy on the social and individual level and the theories of biliteracy and bilingual development set the stage for understanding the complex issues that surround bilingualism and biliteracy; issues that are more often than not social and political rather than academic and educational.

Last, the review covers how bilingualism is approached in education, showing the merits and shortcomings of the existing models and the degree to which they depend on the specific circumstances of any given place. The experience of others will hopefully help inform later recommendations.

## CHAPTER III

### Contexts of Bilingual Learning in Hong Kong and Shanghai

#### 3.1 Introduction

True to Bronfenbrenner's conceptualisation of the factors affecting child development, and by extension bilingual development, the following highlights and analyses the contextual factors that shape the bilingual learning environments of the two cities. The political, economic, sociolinguistic, cultural, and educational contexts are scrutinised. The analysis is intended to serve as a cross-sectional examination of the macrosystem, exosystem and mesosystem that affect child development in Bronfenbrenner's conceptual framework.

#### 3.2 Hong Kong

From 1842 to 1974, thus almost for the entire duration of British governance, there was no statutory provision for official languages in Hong Kong and English was used exclusively for all official matters within the executive, judicial and legislative branches of the government as well as in tertiary education. Cantonese, despite being the indigenous language spoken by the vast majority, was relegated to use within the family and on the street. Hong Kong society was clearly separated into an English-speaking elite and a Cantonese-speaking majority (Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 1998). The divide was bridged by a limited number of bilingual Chinese who had received their education in exclusive English-medium schools and who served as intercessors between the British high administration and the people. When the sovereignty of Hong Kong was transferred to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1997, the official status of English was enshrined in the Basic Law, which was adopted in 1990 by the National People's Congress of the PRC and, replacing the Letters Patent and the Royal Instructions, it now serves as the constitution of the HKSAR. Yet the status of English in Hong Kong is safeguarded primarily not by political decree but by force of the international importance

the language enjoys globally and by Hong Kong's need to communicate and trade with the outside world.

### 3.2.1. Political context

Language has always been a central indicator of power relations in Hong Kong, so much so that it has led some to declare that "language issues have infected educational practice and policy from the very earliest days of Hong Kong's existence" (Sweeting, 1997). As the language of the colonial power, English was used in government, law, and tertiary education almost exclusively until 1997, as well as occupying a cardinal position as the medium of instruction in many primary and most secondary schools.

In 1997, the British authorities handed Hong Kong back to China, ending a century and a half of colonialism and setting the city on a course not to sovereignty but to reintegration with the motherland (Bray & Koo, 2004). Hong Kong ceased to be a British colony and became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and was thrust into an identity crisis.

Two divergent political cultures, one a British legacy and the other a Chinese implant, each with its own historical experiences, make up Hong Kong's political landscape and represent a constant source of tension between those who want to preserve Britain's political culture and those who desire Hong Kong's assimilation into the political culture of mainland China (Ho, Chau, Chiu & Peng, 2003).

The influence of the colonial and present political establishments of Hong Kong is detectable in the following language and education initiatives: (1) the constitutional perpetuation of English as one of only two official languages and the policy of biliteracy and trilingualism, which underscored the centrality of language at all levels of education, increased language requirements from bilingualism to trilingualism, and pushed English and Chinese literacy to the forefront of kindergarten curricula; (2) the Expatriate English Language Teachers (EELT) scheme and its reincarnation as the Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) scheme, which brought the issue of language standards and their measurability to the forefront of education, so as to pave the way for subjecting teachers to in-service examinations leading either to re-accreditation or job loss, and which was

then used to justify a bifurcation of the education system into an English-medium stream (EMI) - where English is the language of instruction - and a Chinese-medium stream (CMI) - where Cantonese is the language of instruction - on account of insufficient numbers of qualified English teachers, with the ultimate effect of forcing the attainment of English language benchmarks on kindergartens; and (3) the use and misuse of the medium of instruction (MOI) issue to achieve a politically dictated CMI-EMI bifurcation of the secondary education system, which reduced the scope of English-Cantonese bilingual education and increased opportunity for access to Cantonese-Putonghua educational environments by artificially reducing (from 90% to 25%) EMI education and just as artificially increasing (from 10% to 75%) CMI education, thus exacerbating competition for access to EMI schools and accelerating the selective and allocative function of schooling, with the end result being a washback and push down effect on parents who are now scrambling to position their pre-school children linguistically for the more prestigious and elite EMI stream.

All these initiatives, in one way or another, deliberately and not surprisingly involve language and have had a direct effect on language in education (LiE) and an indirect effect on ECEC.

### 3.2.2 Economic context

The globalization of the economy opened a gate through which the English language became internationalised and was made a necessity for every country on earth wishing to partake in economic exchange. Further to this global reality, two momentous economic events closer to home ensured that English became increasingly important for both Shanghai and Hong Kong: China's opening of its economy to foreign trade and investment in 1979, and Hong Kong's return to the motherland in 1997. The former offered Hong Kong new trade and investment opportunities and the latter completed Hong Kong's economic integration with the motherland. In less than three decades, the economies of Hong Kong and China have become indissolubly linked together, being each other's foremost partners in trade and investment.

In answer to global economic, technological, and scientific changes, and as a direct result of its integration with the Chinese economy, Hong Kong has been able to successfully transform its industrial economy into a knowledge-based economy, by shifting production processes that rely on cheap labour to the mainland and concentrating on emerging service industries dependent on knowledge, technology and innovation. The creation and application of knowledge has consequently become key to Hong Kong's success (Fan, 2006) and this has imposed new requirements on education that mirror those of the economy.

The demand for highly skilled service professions has increased as dramatically as the service sector and this has imposed higher educational and linguistic parameters upon Hong Kong's education system, which has had to supply sufficient numbers of well-educated bilingual and even trilingual workers. More people than ever before are now required to be proficient in English and/or Putonghua and to hold advanced technical or graduate degrees.

The economic restructuring Hong Kong has undergone over the last thirty years has seen its transformation from manufacturing centre, to finance and shipping entrepôt, and lately to that of a hub of management and knowledge-based services. In its newest incarnation, Hong Kong conducts many of its daily economic operations in English and a bilingual workforce is vital to meet the present and future demands of commerce and industry if the city is to retain its position in Asia. Therein lies not only the practical impetus to transform its education sector to more adequately fulfill the city's economic needs, but also the motivation to keep English as one of its official languages, a goal now enshrined in Hong Kong's constitution and pursued, with certain political qualifications, by the policy of biliteracy and trilingualism.

In addition to these regional considerations economic globalization has imposed its own inescapable conditions upon the education system. Since economic stability and growth can no longer be presumed and the government's response to revenue and budgetary pressures has been one of prudent social spending, the education system has been affected and has had to adapt accordingly. The tertiary system has been restructured "along entrepreneurial lines in order to provide flexible educational responses to the new model of industrial production," in which "the knowledge cycle is

short and information spreads fast,” and primary, secondary and teacher education have been reorganized “along lines that correspond to the skills and competencies (hence educational qualifications) required by workers in a globalizing world” (Fan, 2006). Hong Kong’s educational authorities have retooled curricula across the board and have embarked since 2000 upon a broad programme of education reform aimed at nurturing the skills and qualifications identified as crucial to survival in the new economy.

In this climate of global and regional economic pressures, the previously neglected preschool sector has attracted the government’s attention. Since 2006, Hong Kong is subsidizing early childhood education through a voucher system that offers public funds to parents whose children attend non-profit making kindergartens. Under the subsidy plan, parents receive an education voucher to cover their children’s school fees.

The pre-primary education sector has been entangled in Hong Kong’s new economic reality in several direct and indirect ways: (1) the expanded linguistic demands of society and their reflection in the compulsory education system, which compel all education stakeholders to raise present and future generations trilingually and parents to give their children simultaneous bilingualism environments at home and in kindergarten; (2) service economy imposes more ambitious academic requirements and calls for changing pedagogies, which have increased literacy targets as a result of the pre-primary sector’s integration with the compulsory education system, and compel parents to want their children to get an academic head start in life through kindergarten, and (3) through the intrusion of business management practices in education and the resultant calls for performativity, managerialism and efficiency, which has given rise to various measure and mechanisms that qualify and quantify education and to its treatment as a commodity, but also to a greater level of autonomy in managing operations and resources and planning for school development, the end effect being a level of competition hitherto unknown to the education sector.



### 3.2.3 Sociolinguistic context

In 1974, under sustained public pressure, the government enacted the Official Languages Ordinance and both English and Chinese were declared official languages of Hong Kong, of 'equal status' and 'equality of use'. However, the ordinance did not specify – and the post handover government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) continues not to specify - which Chinese dialect among its many existing varieties is recognized as the official one, leaving that to be determined by common practice and rendering both Cantonese and Putonghua *de facto* officially legitimate.

In the present sociolinguistic environment, Cantonese, the indigenous language of Hong Kong and parts of southern China, remains the predominant verbal medium of communication in formal and informal situations, while Modern Standard Chinese (MSC), although of a variety slightly different from that used on the Mainland and representative of Hong Kong's identity, is the norm in written communication. The main difference between the two written codes is that Hong Kong's uses traditional while China's uses simplified Chinese characters, the latter having less strokes. Increasingly, however, simplified characters are found on posters, road signs, and leaflets, especially in the tourist areas of Hong Kong and in the hospitality industry, since Putonghua is the lingua franca of all Chinese, be they from Singapore, Taiwan, Macao, or the ethnically diverse regions of the Mainland. Putonghua and Cantonese are mutually unintelligible.

English continues to be used widely in jurisprudence, education, business, finance, and the media, as well as in formal situations, but is no longer used exclusively in any single domain. While the use of Chinese has increased and the provision of a Chinese version for all government publications has become standard, English remains the primary medium for intra-governmental documentation and records, commercial contracts and activity, high courts and legal matters, as well as assessment and examination in secondary and tertiary education. Equality of use is a reality, perhaps more than in any other public domain, in the political arena and this has given rise to the need for simultaneous translation in government meetings where many councillors and legislators choose to speak Cantonese.

When the sovereignty of Hong Kong was transferred to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1997, the official status of English was enshrined in the Basic Law, which was adopted in 1990 by the National People's Congress of the PRC and, replacing the Letters Patent and the Royal Instructions, it now serves as the constitution of the HKSAR. Yet the status of English in Hong Kong is safeguarded primarily not by political decree but by force of the international importance the language enjoys globally and by Hong Kong's need to communicate and trade with the outside world.

According to the 1991 census, of the 95% who are ethnically Chinese, some 88% speak Cantonese as their usual language, another 10% speak one of several Chinese dialects (Chiu Chow, Hakka, Fukienese, Shanghainese, or Sze Yap), and more than 95% claim to be able to speak Cantonese (Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 1998). By comparison, only 18% of Hong Kong's population declared themselves capable of speaking Putonghua of which only 1% speak it as their usual language. Similarly scant, the census found English proficiency to be, with circa 30% of the population able to speak it, but only 2.2% using it as their primary language. Ten years later, the 2001 census reports that of the 95% ethnic Chinese population, 89.2% speak Cantonese, 5.5% other Chinese dialects, 0.9% Putonghua, while English is spoken by twice as many as in 1991, or 2.2% of the population. The rise of English in Hong Kong is further documented by government statistics that show those who 'know' English to be 9.7% in 1960, 38.1% in 1991, and 43% in 2001 (Hong Kong Government, 2001).

Past statistical data and empirical evidence indicated that despite its official recognition and preferential status for more than a century and a half, English fluency remained the language of a minority, who was also the elite and who acquired it by way of formal education (Dickinson & Cumming, 1996). But the current sociolinguistic complexities of Hong Kong have produced a dynamic linguistic environment that is difficult to describe by virtue of its constantly changing profile and numbers alone cannot capture the subtleties of its interplays. Consequently, scholars have struggled to find an adequate classification for Hong Kong's linguistic landscape and many perspectives have been put forth, each with its own merits and demerits.

Hong Kong has been called a diglossic society (Luke & Richards, 1982; Fishman, 1967). The model for diglossia (see Ferguson, 1959; Fishman, 1967, 1980) contends

that two or more languages survive side by side when their functions and domains are separate and complementary and, classically, one language is used in 'outer' or 'high' domains while the other is relegated to 'inner' or 'low' domains, reflecting distinctions of power and socio-economic status between a governed and a governing class. While this may have described the linguistic situation of Hong Kong during colonial times, it is, as some have pointed out (Pennington, 2001; Bolton, 2000), inaccurate today for several reasons: (1) English has lost ground to Chinese in all so-called 'high' domains; (2) English proficiency is prevalent among an ever-growing middle class that falls neither in the 'high' nor 'low' category; (3) the multilingual makeup of Hong Kong and the many varieties of mixed-code encountered there break the diglossic mould; (4) Hong Kong is an uncharacteristically flexible linguistic community whose active immigration and emigration patterns and entrepreneurial character tolerate no rigid linguistic allegiances; and (5) the need to accommodate Putonghua has established a new linguistic hierarchy with three not two contenders (Pennington, 2001).

Others see Hong Kong as a primarily monolingual and monocultural society (So, 1992; Yau, 1989; Yu & Atkinson, 1988; Fu, 1987) since the majority do not use English in their daily lives and explain its continued prominence as a combination of the following factors: (1) a history of British governance, (2) its use as an 'auxiliary language' (Luke & Richard, 1982) in business and administration, (3) its past and diminished present use as a medium of instruction in education, (4) and its utility as the foremost language of international communication (Tonkin & Regan, 2003). In line with this monolingual description of Hong Kong is Johnson's (1994) observation that the English language appears not to have a social role in Hong Kong. Many, however, challenge the monolingual description (Afendras, 1998; Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 1998; Patri & Pennington, 1998) because it fails to account for the presence of English, however scarce it may be, in the society at large, the media, the workplace and in the extensive code-mixing and code-switching one encounters in Hong Kong. A 1998 study by Bacon-Shone & Bolton, for instance, found that 54.7% of the people surveyed wrote notes and memos at work in English, close to 60% of those who reported reading various written materials did so in English, 56% of the surveyed population has an English name for use in social situation and 30% have an English name even on their

identity cards, and, the most telling statistic of all, 75% report code-mixing English and Chinese with friends at school. Furthermore, Chan Ling Ling (2001) has argued that many government departments and the media sections of most bureaus still use English as the primary mode of communication.

Genre analysis (Swales, 1990) focuses on language use in specific contexts and by specific groups and has been used to describe Hong Kong's various communicative domains and professions where dual language use is common, such as Hong Kong's bilingual radio genre, corporate offices, and the bilingual instructional genre common in schools. Just as in bilingual radio Chinese and English are used alternatively for different segments of programming, so in the education sector both Chinese and English are used in classroom instruction, English to introduce and conclude new material or to relay technical terms and Cantonese to elaborate, define and explain. A similar use of bilingualism is found in many Hong Kong offices and government departments where code-mixing and code-switching commonly take place. Code-switching and code-mixing are thus part and parcel of Hong Kong's language ecology and this evidence contradicts the notion that Hong Kong is primarily a monolingual society.

Scholars have also observed a degree of syntactic integration (Li, 2001), whereby Cantonese, as the language that provides the grammatical frame is the matrix language, and English, as the language that provides lexical items for borrowing is the embedded language (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Bilingual speakers in Hong Kong integrate English lexicon and even syntax into the Cantonese grammatical frame either for the psycholinguistic motives described above or because they have to make up for the lack of equivalent expressions in Chinese (Gibbons, 1987; Li, 2001), as well as to compensate for their own or the 'semantic deficiency' of the Cantonese language vis-à-vis English (Pennington, 2001). It has also been suggested that the mixing of English and Cantonese in Hong Kong is a method of communicating and diffusing innovations, be they ideas, practices, or objects, into the society at large, according to Rogers' (1983) model.

While no single bilingual model can account for the diversity of language use in Hong Kong, it is undeniable that the English language is alive and well, as attested by the literally bilingual mode of speech of many Hong Kongers, and that mixed language codes

signal a degree of linguistic hybridization that has been steadily growing (Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 2001) and that is bound to continue growing especially in light of the SAR government's policy of biliteracy and trilingualism and the continuing ascendancy of English as the world's favoured universal language. Furthermore, although the fertilization of Cantonese with English is often criticized as 'neither Chinese nor Cantonese' and is derisively referred to as Chinglish and its users as 'language-handicapped' by purists and nationalists, it is a novel and effective way of balancing and bridging the ever-closer coexistence of the English and Chinese languages, western and eastern cultural norms, outside novel ideas with existing traditional ones, imported popular culture with native art forms, as well as expressing emotional states, social subtleties, and group solidarity.

Given Hong Kong's complex and ever shifting linguistic landscape, the most accurate description one can give is that English and code-mixed utterances occupy micro-linguistic environments that are subsumed by a Cantonese majority macro-linguistic environment.

English in Hong Kong, for the above reasons and its economic importance, is now more relevant than ever and the numbers of speakers, currently 43% of the population, is increasing even though competency levels are still below the government's expectations. To raise the standards of English among the workforce, from taxi drivers to executives, various government-backed schemes, such as the Workplace English Campaign, initiated in 2000 and using benchmarking and financial incentives, have begun to bear fruit (Bolton, 2002). This shows that the government of Hong Kong, post handover, is keenly aware of the crucial importance English has for their society's economic success in a globalized world. More importantly, the attitudes of the people of Hong Kong towards English have changed from mainly negative in the past (Lyczak, Fu & Ho, 1976; Fu, 1975), when social pressure worked against the use of English for intra-ethnic oral communication (Gibbons, 1987; Li, 1996, 1998, 2002), to mainly positive in the present (Lai, 2001), as mixed code has become part of Hong-Kong's very identity. Shortly after the handover, Chan Hok-shing (1998) could already observe that code-mixing, which was viewed with hostility during British times, was being used not only in private, casual

conversations but also in public and even in the media and that the people doing so were not only young students but also adult professionals.

Of great consequence to the early acquisition of English and literacy development (Tse et al., 2007), yet labouring in obscurity and representing perhaps the most unsung contributors to Hong Kong's English environment, are the circa 170,000 Philipinas, who as caregivers to thousands of infants are the first language teachers and the most economic way in which working middle-class couples can enable their children to grow up bilingually (Afendras, 1998; Bolton, 2000). Furthermore, they, along with thousands of other non-Chinese minorities, add to the multilingual and multicultural flavour of Hong Kong and given that their numbers are growing it is to assume that their international orientation, which makes them rather biased in favour of English, will pull Hong Kong towards the outside world and, to a degree, help counterbalance China's centripetal force

Cantonese, despite being a dialect and lacking a written form, is not only tenaciously persisting, there is even evidence of it spreading and has partially displaced English at the elite level. Unlike in the rest of China, where Putonghua is promoted by the central government to the detriment of all other indigenous dialects, Cantonese is safe and Hong Kong, "with its financial and trading might, its popular films and the secure foundation for Cantonese it provides through government, business, education and broadcasting, the territory is the force behind Cantonese today" (So, 1987). Having survived unscathed 150 years of British rule and its attendant predominantly English secondary and tertiary education systems, one is inclined to believe, and there is little evidence to the contrary, that it will fare just as well in the present climate of political and social integration with the PRC and the ongoing onslaught of globalization. This being said, it is inevitable that its domains of use will shrink once Putonghua gathers momentum and assumes more importance.

As for Putonghua, the rising star of China, there can only be a smooth road ahead, paved by favourable policies and growing economic integration with and dependence on the motherland and no amount of Cantonese ethnic pride and social resistance will be able to stand in the way of its economically and politically propelled ascendancy.

In light of the above facts and of the government's long-range plans to make today's generation biliterate and trilingual, it is safe to say that all three languages are destined to survive. What is also certain, is that a different sociolinguistic alignment than at present will emerge due to the need to accommodate Putonghua as an equal player alongside Cantonese and English.

Since the hand-over in 1997, both English and Cantonese have been equally used as working languages in the new government. Education reform policies have displaced English as the medium of instruction in most primary and secondary schools where English is now taught as a second/foreign language, as it was predicted (Postiglione, 1992; Tse et al., 1995), and Putonghua is offered to all grades. Putonghua will inevitably assume greater significance in administration and education, and will gradually become more commonly used in the workplace; English will continue to dominate communication in international commerce and finance while losing some ground in tertiary education, the media, and politics; and, while Cantonese prevails as the language of paramount importance for the speech community of Hong Kong, it will most certainly have to partially give way to Putonghua in administration and education, where the latter will emerge as a strong rival to both English and Cantonese, as it must if Hong Kong is to become a trilingual society. Cantonese will remain dominant in the family, the marketplace, and on the street as the language of personal intimacy (Johnson, 1994). Hong Kong's linguistic situation will gradually begin to resemble that of the province of Guangdong, where Cantonese has been displaced in government and education, but not in the family or on the street. As anticipated, "Putonghua and the notably different socio-political culture of the PRC will impact forcefully on the unique Chinese culture of Hong Kong, presenting new challenges to 'Cantonese vitality' by attempting to alter the present sociolinguistic alignment of languages in Hong Kong in some hitherto unknown way" (Pierson, 2001, p. 92). Yet unlike previously anticipated, the PRC is proving to be far more sensitive to Hong Kong's sovereignty and right to self-determination, allowing economic and not political imperatives to take centre-stage in its sociolinguistic transformation.

Given these circumstances, it is inevitable that Hong Kong's sociolinguistic landscape will continue to change even further until a new linguistic hierarchy is

achieved that conforms to Beijing's wishes and that more accurately reflects Hong Kong's altered political and economic status.

*Fig.2 is given to show Hong Kong's past, present and future sociolinguistic landscape: (PAST) English is the language of government and of the elite and though it is at the centre of Hong Kong's political, administrative, juridical, higher educational and business life it is spoken only by a small and mostly foreign minority, Cantonese being the language of the masses; (PRESENT) English has been displaced by Cantonese and is no longer the language of the ruling class even though it remains central to trade, business, finance, and tourism, while Cantonese has taken the place of English as the formal language of civic matters and is widely used at home and in schools, in media and social and cultural domains, as well as in government, whereas Putonghua is only beginning to be pursued from below, by a population aware of its growing significance and future predominance, and from above, by a government vested with the task of achieving greater integration with the mainland; (FUTURE) Putonghua is the legal and official language of government and law, instrumental in the local and national economy due to increased interdependence with China, and the primary medium of instruction for most of the compulsory education system as well as a growing proportion of tertiary education, while English is still the language of technology, commerce, finance, parts of tertiary education and a minority of primary and secondary schools, whereas Cantonese is relegated to informal domains as the language of family and intimacy, parts of media and ever-decreasing from the city's cultural life.*



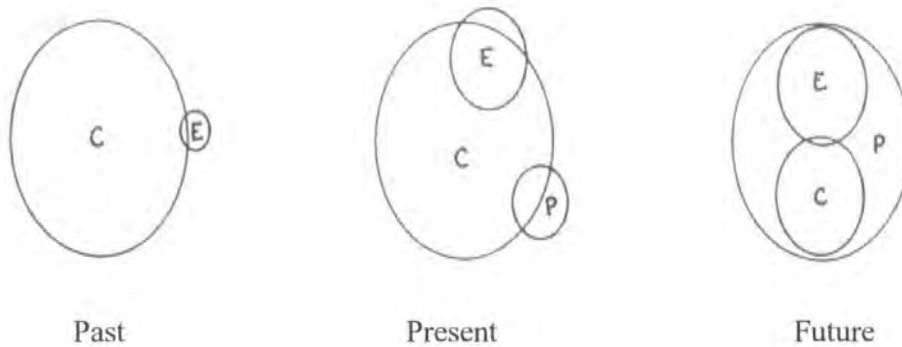


Fig.3-1: Linguistic landscape of Hong Kong

During the colonial past English was the language of the British and the two linguistic groups of English and Cantonese were isolated from one another and could connect only via a few bilingual speakers. In the present, English is mastered by a good percentage of the population and many of Hong Kong's citizens are bilingual. The English language is far more integrated in Hong Kong society than it was in the past. In the near future, Putonghua will be as common and as integral to Hong Kong society as English is today and all three languages will be common currency.

### 3.2.4 Cultural context

Chinese culture developed under the influence of four crucial forces, the three great intellectual orthodoxies of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, and the practical reality of agrarianism. These centuries-old forces, however, are currently being challenged by a single contender, that of modernism, which in many ways is alien and hostile to Chinese traditionalism.

In addition to the four cultural strands described above, Hong Kong's unique culture has also been shaped by a fifth, that of Britain, more specifically, by Judeo-Christian, secular humanist, and liberal individualist values that have originated in

the West and have been superimposed on the Chinese populace by the British colonial administration primarily through its political framework but also, towards the end of British rule especially, through education. While Western influence in Shanghai

is a relatively new phenomenon and has been freely imported by China first in its drive for modernization and more recently under the impetus of globalization, in Hong Kong western cultural influences have coexisted alongside Chinese from the very beginnings of the colony.

In Chinese society, parental involvement with and expectations for their children's bilingual development are mutually supportive. Most Chinese parents believe that the faster children learn, the greater their academic achievements will be and their success in later life. Parents are not only overprotective, but also involved and in direct control of their young children's lives (Lin & Fu, 1990). With the western influence in Hong Kong and the second/third generation in Hong Kong has less exposure to Confucian principles and traditional Chinese cultural values. As the family's ecological systems change, so do their structures and values, leading to changes in parental attitudes, expectations, and behaviours. Due to the fast pace of globalisation, greater levels of education and increasing exposure to Western notions of child rearing and education (Jose et. al., 2000), the Chinese cultural beliefs have been diluted by outside influence and in Hong Kong, especially, one may even speak of a devaluing of tradition (Rao, Ng & Pearson, 2007). Consequently, there is now a dissonance between traditional child rearing practices that still call for obedience and respect (Chen & Uttal, 1988) and the progressive views of modern pedagogy, such as learning through play (Rao, Ng & Pearson, 2007), which seek the development of self-determination, creativity, and originality.

Hong Kong parents value higher education and expect their children to exhibit good academic performance, even when the children are at a very young age. Parents play a significant role and are highly involved in helping their children's development (Kelley and Tsang, 1992). Hong Kong parents believe that the faster the children learn the English language, the greater their competitive advantage.

### 3.2.5 Educational context

#### 3.2.5.1 Typology of bilingual education

Hong Kong's education system offers bilingual education for majority language students (see Christian & Genesee, 2001; Johnson & Swain, 1997) and has features that are consistent with all three models of bilingual education – *transitional*, *maintenance*, and *enrichment* - as described by Hornberger (1989).

In the EMI stream English is L1 and Cantonese L2, the reverse being the case in the CMI stream. The types of bilingual education available in Hong Kong's schools vary from level to level, from school to school, and cover the entire spectrum from weak to strong forms of bilingualism. They share however the general goal of bilingual proficiency along with grade-appropriate L1 development and academic achievement. Weak forms of bilingualism are characterized by short lessons of English as an L2 language alongside the mainstream majority language, Cantonese, which serves as the MOI. Strong forms of bilingual education are offered by mainstream bilingual/ partial immersion schools where both the majority and minority languages are used side by side, providing an additive linguistic environment that produces bilingual and biliterate children with two languages, intercultural competence and cultural enrichment.

On a continuum scale of Hong Kong's bilingualism typology, CMI secondary schools and typical kindergartens would be at the far end of weak form of bilingual education and tertiary institutions and EMI at the other end with strong form of bilingual education. The former offer the perfect examples of weak forms of bilingual education, since English is taught as a foreign language on a limited basis in a mainstream language environment, with most of the lessons conducted in the majority language, Cantonese, whereas the latter offer full immersion environments, with most lectures held in English. The middle ground would be occupied by EMI and International schools, where English full immersion coexists with the development and maintenance of the heritage language; followed by bilingual schools, where both languages are used side by side and code-switching is common.

The general trend in the preschool sector concerning bilingual or international programmes is one of strong bilingualism; with English and Cantonese given great

attention, so as to avoid academic difficulties due to late immersion (see Marsh et al., 2000). To be in line with the EMB's guideline that the mother-tongue must be used as the MOI until L2 develops sufficiently, in order to take full advantage of the cognitive benefits of using L1 as a bridge to the acquisition of L2, and in acknowledgement of Cummins' (1979) Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis (which holds that a child's L2 competence is partly dependent upon the level of competence achieved in L1) and Threshold Theory (see also Toukoma and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977), kindergartens (such as Victoria) offer partial immersion programmes.

Broadly speaking then, preschools and primary schools adhere to the goals of the *transitional immersion* model (Freeman, 1998) of education, as they aim to gradually shift students from L1 (Cantonese) to greater use of L2 (English); secondary schools are consistent with the *maintenance* approach (Hornberger, 1991), since both L1 and L2 are used as mediums of instruction and they aim to maintain L1 until academic proficiency is achieved in L2; and universities subscribe to *enrichment* bilingualism (Fishman, 1976), since they teach majority language students (L1, Cantonese speakers) through a minority target language (L2, English).

Given the emphasis placed on bilingualism and the resources lavished on accomplishing it, balanced bilingualism (i.e. age-appropriate competence in both language plus positive cognitive advantages), as described by the Threshold model (see Cummins, 1976), is achievable in Hong Kong's education system.

### 3.2.5.2 Linguistic environment of Hong Kong kindergartens

A number of preschools cater to expatriates and use English as the main language of instruction, but they are a minority. Most of Hong Kong's preschools follow the government's recommendation (SCOLAR, 2003) and use the mother tongue, Cantonese, as their medium of instruction. However, since the preschool system is in the hands of private operators the government cannot impose the use of the mother tongue as the MOI of kindergartens as it does for the fully funded compulsory education system by demanding that schools wanting to use English as the MOI must fulfill three preconditions: teachers with the capability to teach in English, students with the

proficiency to learn in English, and the provision of suitable support measures (SCOLAR, 2003).

Therefore, the prevailing linguistic environment in English-medium (EM) kindergartens is that English is the MOI, Cantonese is taught as a second language and Putonghua as a third or foreign language. Conversely, Chinese-medium (CM) kindergartens use Cantonese as the MOI, and, depending on the wishes of parents, English and Putonghua are taught either as second or as foreign languages.

The linguistic environment prevalent in Hong Kong's kindergartens adequately reflects the government's policy of biliteracy and trilingualism (*liang wen san yu*) and its stated aim that today's students will be educated to be literate in Chinese and English and capable of speaking Cantonese, English and Putonghua. It does so, however, not because the government promotes English learning early in life, but because parents recognize the enduring importance of English proficiency for success in life and the necessity of acquiring it early on so as to qualify for enrolment in an artificially decreased number of English-medium instruction secondary schools.

### 3.2.5.3 Penetration of English in preschool education

The most unique feature of Hong Kong's education system from top to bottom is its language-based bifurcation into Chinese-medium (CM) and English-medium (EM) schools. Cantonese prevails from preschool to secondary and English dominates at the tertiary level. This, however, has not always been the case. Statistics show that in 1958 EM schools (then known as Anglo-Chinese Secondary Schools) and CM schools (then known as Chinese Middle Schools) attracted approximately the same number of students at the secondary level, but thirty years later the EM stream had grown to be tenfold the size of the CM stream (Hong Kong Annual Review, multiple editions) and by 1994 over 90% of all secondary schools were at least nominally English medium (Johnson, 1994).

So (1992) traces this language-based bifurcation back to 1926 and identifies a number of external (the collapse of the Nanjing regime and the rise of the anti-intellectual and totalitarian regime of the PRC) and internal (local government aid such as the Grant-in-aid Scheme to EM schools only, socio-economic dynamics, and the rise of

English as the language of trade and academic discourse) factors behind the rise and ultimate dominance of English in education, with the incremental effect that English became to be viewed as the language of power and prestige and Chinese as the language of servitude (So, 1992).

Despite the fact that the Chinese language was afforded official status in 1974, and since 1986 the colonial government adopted a policy of positive discrimination in favour of CM schools, the dominance of English as the MOI at the secondary level was not reversed until 1997, when the newly installed HKSAR government, in an attempt to displace English as the high status language of Hong Kong (Lai & Byram, 2003), legislated that 70% of Hong Kong's schools adopt Chinese as the MOI and the remaining 30% English (currently the ratio is 75% to 25%). However, since the importance of English for upward mobility has not changed but has only grown, neither has the demand for an English education, which has always been perceived as being superior, and this has exacerbated competition for access to the few remaining (25% or 114 schools) EM secondary schools (So, 2000).

To be able to select the few (i.e. 25%) students allowed to enrol in EM schools the government imposed a system of examinations for English competency for primary students. The blowback effect of this increased competition for EM secondary schooling is that students are now subjected to English competency examinations in primary school to be eligible to apply for a place in a secondary school that uses English as its MOI and, consequently, acquiring English proficiency in preschool has become the norm rather than the exception that it once was. Furthermore, parents also try to spare their children the agony of selective examinations in local schools by making great financial sacrifices to secure for them a place of study in international schools that use English as their MOI from the primary level onwards and that are through-train. Therefore, unwittingly, a measure that was supposed to make Chinese more important than the English language in education has had the opposite effect – at least at preschool level - since now more parents than ever scramble to get their children proficient in English by the time they finish kindergarten, with great effect on curriculum and pedagogy.

Since 1997, English has become so important for preschools that every kindergarten must meet parental demand by offering some form of English instruction and most attempt to be bilingual. Prior to 1997, there was no urgency to get children fluent in English because the entire compulsory education system was bilingual and, despite criticism of the poor quality of English or mixed code (Chinese-English) instruction available in most schools, everyone, regardless of social status, had the opportunity to be gradually immersed in the English language and become sufficiently proficient in the language to access tertiary education, which in Hong Kong has always been provided almost exclusively in English.

Prior to 1997, schools were not required by law to follow a particular language curriculum. English was mostly ignored by all preschools save for a few international kindergartens. It was, however, part of the core curriculum in primary and secondary education and it was taught as a subject in all primary and secondary schools while also being the MOI of some 10% of all primary and 80% of all secondary schools. The major difference in the way English was taught depended on each school's policy on the medium of instruction, whereby in the CM sector English was taught as a subject and in the EM sector English, being the MOI, was used to teach all other subjects. (Dickson & Cumming, 1996).

Post 1997, schools are required by law to use Chinese (of an unspecified variety) as their MOI. English is taught by all of Hong Kong's preschools, many of which operate as bilingual kindergartens. English continues to be part of the core curriculum in both primary and secondary education where it is taught as a core subject, while also being the MOI of 25% of all secondary schools. Currently, English continues to be taught as a core subject by all CM schools, but a good proportion of them offer a limited number of courses (no more than 15%) with English as the MOI. In the 25% of schools that continue to be designated EM, English, as the MOI, continues to be the language through which all other courses are taught.

Mass English penetration of Hong Kong's pre-primary education system is a response phenomenon to the language legislation introduced and enforced after the 1997 handover, which used the mother tongue issue as the main argument for mainstreaming CM instruction. English in preschool education has become universal in less than ten

years because parents perceive the politics of the mother tongue issue as an attempt to exclude their children from the opportunity to secure the social privileges and benefits associated with English proficiency. The government's language policies are seen as socially divisive (Bolton, 2000) and are resisted accordingly. While at the secondary level EM instruction was reduced to one-third of its size and CM instruction was increased sevenfold, at the pre-primary level – where the government has little or no influence and parental choice determines the form and content of education - English instruction (whether in the bilingual mode or as a second language) has increased to cover nearly 100% of all kindergartens. The reason for this unintended consequence is clear:

“English in Hong Kong was, is and will be a valuable cultural capital of elite social groups that parents want to transmit to their children through schooling because English will give them more symbolic capital and more economic, social and political advantages, and power in society” (Lai & Byram, 2003).

#### 3.2.5.4 Rationale for English in education and bilingual education

In early colonial times, English education was the domain of the elite and the few Chinese that received such an education did so in order to provide the colonial government with the ability to communicate with the people. In late colonial times, the system of elite schooling in English shifted towards mass bilingualism and the proportion of the population able to speak English grew from 9.7% in 1961 (when the population was 3.1 million) to 28.2% in 1996 (when the population reaches 6.2 million), thus from c. 300,000 to c. 2,300,000 people (Bolton, 2000).

Today, English is part and parcel of the HKSAR government's policy of biliteracy and trilingualism (*liang wen san yu*), which is attempting a new linguistic realignment in order to ensure the coexistence of the three languages that are of perceived crucial importance to Hong Kong's present and future prosperity – Cantonese, Putonghua and English. English is given continued priority at the tertiary level, Cantonese at the pre-primary level, and transitionally at the primary and secondary levels, where Putonghua, the government has signalled, is its preferred choice for the near future (Oriental Daily News, 2001; SCOLAR, 2003). However, while the use of English has



been legislated out of 75% of the secondary education sector, the government is averse to impose a similar “firm guidance” in legislating the teaching of Chinese in Putonghua throughout the compulsory education system, though it is its stated preference. Instead, it has opted to tread lightly and allow schools and parents to voluntarily take up the cause of replacing the vernacular Cantonese with the national language Putonghua to learn Chinese language throughout the compulsory education system (SCOLAR, 2003, p. 83 and Annex VI). The political motivation of the MOI issue comes through in the way the government discriminates against English and favours Putonghua, though both are foreign languages since both are mutually unintelligible to Cantonese speakers and despite its avowed concern for the ability of students to learn in their mother tongue. Under the current MOI policy, “Chinese-medium schools may use either Cantonese or Putonghua to teach Chinese Language and other academic subjects” (SCOLAR, Final Report, 2003, p. 35).

Given the government’s obvious bias against English and in favour of Putonghua, it is not surprising that English in pre-primary education is therefore occurring not because of public policy but despite of it and in a very real sense in direct antagonism to it.

SCOLAR (Consultation Document, 2003) refers to the direction of Hong Kong’s language education policies and measures as focused on two major issues: (1) “specifying a clear and realistic set of language competencies expected of our students” and (2) “creating a more motivating language learning environment”. SCOLAR (Final Report, 2003) also gives three putative reasons why Hong Kongers “need to be biliterate and trilingual”:

*“(1) Language is a critical feature that defines culture... The ability to understand and master language has a profound impact on the cognitive and social development, academic achievement and career prospects of every individual.*

*(2) ...the language ability of a community is key to its prosperity... Part of the reason for Hong Kong’s success as an international city has been the ability to bridge the gap between the English-speaking, global business community and the Chinese-speaking merchants and traders in Hong Kong and the mainland of China. Being biliterate and trilingual has been our competitive advantage.*

*(3) Increasing globalisation and a more open China market have made it more important than ever to enhance the language abilities of the community to meet the challenges of greater competition” (p. 3).*

Connecting it to the overall aims of education, SCOLAR (Final Report, 2003) states, “good language ability is essential for life-long learning and the communication of knowledge, ideas, values, attitudes and experience. It enables our younger generation to realise their full potential and cope effectively with the challenges of a rapidly changing and keenly competitive knowledge-based society” (p. 3).

In regards to entrenching the vernacular Cantonese dialect at the pre-primary level SCOLAR (Consultation Document, 2003) advises, “the development of a child’s mother tongue should take precedence over the acquisition of other languages” and since “for most young children in Hong Kong, Cantonese and written Chinese is their mother tongue” it “should be used as the medium of instruction in pre-primary education” (p. 16).

Aware of their inability to control the spread and use of English in pre-primary education, because the private sector and not the government provides education at that level and because continued parental demand sets the agenda, policy makers resign themselves to merely advising that exposure to a second language should be informal and developmentally appropriate (SCOLAR, Consultation Document, p. 16).

While learning English in Shanghai early in life in a bilingual kindergarten environment is partly the result of general dissatisfaction with the poor progress made when English was taught as a foreign language in China and partly to achieve better integration with primary school, in Hong Kong it is mostly the result of parental antagonism to the government’s attempt to reduce the footprint of English medium instruction in the compulsory education system and the resultant competition for the few remaining EM instruction schools.

### 3.2.5.5 Implementation of English in Hong Kong's curricula

Although there is no formal pre-primary language curriculum, language is an important part of young children's learning activities and the government, being aware of the pressure put on kindergarten children to learn English and on kindergartens to teach it, advises education providers to give the development of a child's mother tongue precedence over the acquisition of other languages (SCOLAR, Consultation Document, 2003).

English taught in various forms of intensity in pre-primary education, however, is ubiquitous, as shown above, due to the public's reaction to post-1997 language policies which have exacerbated decisions made in the early 1990s by the *Curriculum Development Council* (CDC) to adopt 'bands of performance,' which describe what learners must be able to do in each key stage, progressing from Primary 1 to Secondary 5 in four *Key Stages*. Also, in 2002, the CDC issued a new curriculum framework for English that describes in detail the learning targets for each Key Stage, which comes in addition to a subset of learning outcomes called *basic competencies* (BC) that are essential for all students to achieve at the end of each Key Stage. The *Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority* (HKEAA) has developed Basic Competency Assessments (BCA) to monitor students' attainment of the basic competencies, and these examinations are conducted on students at the end of Key Stages 1 to 3 (i.e. in Primary 3, Primary 6, and Secondary 3). Furthermore, assessment for basic competencies is now done according to English proficiency scales used internationally, such as the common European Framework of Reference for Languages, thus raising the bar. Beyond Secondary 3 there is the *Hong Kong Certificate of Education* (HKCE) and the *Hong Kong Advanced Level* (HKAL) English examinations to assess the language competencies of students at the end of Key Stages 4 and 5 (i.e. Secondary 5 and 7), which, as of 2007, are no longer norm-referenced (i.e. performance is compared relative to other candidates) but standards-referenced (i.e. a candidate's performance is compared to a set of performance standards). This has created an environment of continuous and periodic examinations to determine the language performance of students and schools. (SCOLAR, Final Report, 2003).

A survey conducted in 2000 by the Education Department “found that over 97% of the 491 kindergartens surveyed provided some form of English activities for their students” and though most used informal teaching methods “some 55% of the kindergartens also taught English by means of textbooks” and “32% of them gave an increasing quantity of penmanship assignments to children from Kindergarten Grades 1 to 3 (SCOLAR, Final Report, 2003, p. 40).

To protect children from the pressures of formal teaching, SCOLAR advises that “exposure to a foreign language should be introduced if suitable teachers are available to do it through an informal approach,” e.g. in the form of simple rhymes, songs, conversation and language games. The underlying belief being that children should first master their mother tongue, which would provide them with a tool for thinking and communicating as well as a firm foundation for the learning of other languages (SCOLAR, Final Report, 2003, pp. 38-9). Then it proceeds to recommend “that kindergartens should provide English or Putonghua exposure to their students only if the teachers they deploy to do so meet the Language Proficiency Requirement for English or Putonghua in speaking (SCOLAR, Final Report, 2003, p. 39).

With regard to teaching approach SCOLAR “firmly endorses the informal approach” and emphasizes that exposure to a second language at the pre-primary level should be “developmentally appropriate, authentic, accurate, in context, pressure-free, and enjoyable” (SCOLAR, Final Report, 2003, p. 40). To make sure that this happens, SCOLAR recommends that the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) “closely monitor through inspection visits that language activities provided in kindergartens for pre-school children, and make its findings available to the public” (p. 41). To curb parental over-eagerness, SCOLAR also suggests that the EMB “educate parents on appropriate approaches to facilitating the language development of young children” (SCOLAR, Final Report, 2003, p. 42).

### 3.2.6 Education reforms

Seen from a global perspective, the trends and developments characterizing education reform in Hong Kong and Shanghai have come in three waves. The first wave, initiated in the 1970s, was government directed and top-down, and focused on improving “internal school performance generally and the methods and processes of teaching and learning in particular” and can be called the *internal effectiveness* wave. The second wave, since the 1990s, emphasizes *interface effectiveness* and seeks accountability to the public, quality education, stakeholder satisfaction, and market competitiveness. The third wave, currently in full swing, seeks initiatives to revitalize schooling and pedagogy to prepare the young generation for the challenges of globalization in a knowledge-driven and information-dependent economy. Emphasizing *future effectiveness*, it pursues “new visions and aims at different levels of education, life-long learning, global networking, international outlook, and use of information technologies” (Cheng, 2002, pp. 3-4).

Lai and Lo (2007) have identified three common threads running through the educational reforms of Shanghai and Hong Kong: (1) the need to raise their international competitiveness through educational reform, (2) the need for reform to enhance the quality of education, and (3) the need to foster greater innovation in teaching and learning.

### 3.3 Shanghai

When Shanghai became a major treaty port as a result of the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, foreign capital led to the development of local industries and a strong international orientation. As a result, the English language gained a modest foothold in Shanghai by the middle of the nineteenth century and by 1930 the city was home to more than 60,000 foreigners living in international settlements or concessions. With the Japanese occupation during World War II and the subsequent takeover of the country’s political control by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the British and Americans relinquished their extra-territorial powers and the international concessions and left China. With

them the English language disappeared from China and did not find favour with the nation's political leadership until the late 1970s when China initiated its modernization programme and the English language became once again a vital link with the outside world (Maley, 1995). In the last three decades, the English language has gained steadily in importance and with China's increasing presence on the world stage and Shanghai's growing importance for the global economy English proficiency has become universally desired (Wu, 2001) and a cornerstone of the city's prosperity (Gao et al., 2002).

### 3.3.1 Political context

The English language, like education itself, has been caught up in the abrupt shifts and reversals that have marked and marred leadership change in China's political establishment.

When through reform and the adoption of the Open Door Policy in 1978 the CCP under Deng Xiaoping (de facto leader of the CCP from 1976 to 1993) made economic development its key task, Shanghai became the instrument through which China could 'use the (domestic) market to obtain (foreign) technology' (*yi shichang huan jishu*) (Wu, 2006). In this context, education in general and English proficiency in particular became a necessary mechanism by which to receive and internalize western knowledge and the English language was reintroduced into education.

The following Chinese administration - that of President Jiang Zemin (from 1993-2003), Premier Zhu Rongji, and Vice Premier Wu Bungebao, who were all part of Shanghai's political establishment before moving to Beijing - designated Shanghai Asia's next finance and trade centre, reopening it for the world and allowing it to once again internationalize its outlook. As a result, Shanghai became the focal point of reform, investment, and development, surging far ahead of the rest of the country and necessitating English proficiency from a broad spectrum of its populace in order to interact with the world.

In looking across the sweep of time, the CCP's political decisions with the greatest repercussions upon English language teaching (ELT) and early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Shanghai and elsewhere in China are: (1) the emancipation of women and

their mass incorporation into the workforce, which brought on the need for child care facilities and kindergartens, the institutionalization of child care and pre-school education, and a quantitative increase in ECEC access and provision; (2) the one-child policy, which resulted in the qualitative improvement of childcare and education due to greater academic expectations imposed by parents on both children and the education system, and more resources available for families to spend on that one child and for the state to allocate per student capita; and (3) the policy of Han bilingualism, which has resulted in greater emphasis on English language teaching, an explosion in the number of English learners, the inclusion of English as a core subject in the school curriculum, and to the primacy of English proficiency for upward social and economic mobility.

All three strategies are the result of policy reversals occurring at the top: the government initiated women's emancipation movement challenged Confucian traditionalism with Communist social progressivism, the one-child policy replaced Mao's pronatalist stance with Xiaoping's Malthusian position, and Han majority bilingualism transformed past perceptions about English as the language of the enemy to English as China's main instrument for technological and scientific advancement, due to the government'

### 3.3.2 Economic context

*Shifts in Shanghai's economic fortune have always reflected changes in China's political leadership and the reorientation of its national goals. The globalization of Shanghai has occurred in advance of China's transformation from a centrally-planned to a market-oriented socialist economy; a process started in 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, continued by Jiang Zemin (General Secretary of the Communist Party of China and President of the PRC from 1993-2002), and still ongoing during the current administration of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao.*

*When Deng Xiaoping pioneered 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' he initiated economic reforms to transform China into a 'socialist market economy'. As the architect of China's open door policy, Xiaoping urged the CCP to focus on economic development. Henceforth, Shanghai was used "as an experimental site to initiate such a*

*transition from the socialist productionist regime based on industrial surplus to a regime of flexible accumulation based on the service sector” transforming Shanghai into a service-oriented economy and an export powerhouse (Wu, 2006, p. 308) with “large economic, cultural and symbolic roles” (Yusuf & Wu, 2002, p. 1213). As a result, Shanghai is currently more integrated in the world economy than any other place in China (Wu, 2006).*

Shanghai, more than any other place in China, is subordinated to the global standards implied by WTO membership and is forced to defend its place in the world economy from its peripheral upstart position by ‘using the (domestic) market to obtain (foreign) technology’ (*yi chichang huan jishu*) - a strategy devised at the national level but achieved first in Shanghai. As such, Shanghai is still a bridgehead between China and the world and between China’s past and its future.

Seen in this context, English proficiency among its populace represents a necessary mechanism by which to access and internalize western knowledge, by which to facilitate trade and discourse between China and the world, by which to consolidate its tenuous position at the periphery of the global economy, and by which to reinvent its challenged centrality in the nation’s intellectual and cultural life. English, it is hoped, will aid Shanghai’s institutional transformation from a national to an international outlook by generating new momentum of market transition as it strengthens and expands the city’s traditional abilities and functions.

The changes that have occurred in Shanghai’s pre-primary education sector in response to internal economic factors and external economic pressures have the following aspects: (1) the importance attached to the English language by the government’s economic strategy and the globalization of the world economy have elevated the English language to the rank of core subject and have pushed its acquisition to the top of the educational agenda of pre-schools, creating a hitherto unknown need for bilingual education; (2) with economic progress has come greater affluence and families are now able to afford and willing to demand better education for their children, which, in light of the allocative and selective structure of China’s education sector, is increasing competition for key schools and raising the academic stakes at kindergarten level; (3) educational authorities have decided to mask the government’s unwillingness to increase



education spending while at the same time better accommodating parental choice in education by allowing and promoting greater private participation to compensate for insufficient public funding, which has proliferated private schools and pre-schools as alternatives to government institutions, increasing the cost of education for those who value it sufficiently and can afford to invest more of their own money for their children's education.

Given that competition in education starts at kindergarten level in Shanghai, that the pre-primary sector is funded entirely by parents, and that there are large income disparities in the population (World Bank, 1998, Li & Zhao, 1999), kindergartens are stratified into those that cater to the well to do and those for the general population. One of the most attractive features of well-funded kindergartens is their ability to hire native English-speaking teachers, which means that in Shanghai's current economic climate many more parents who have the financial foundation for choice will opt to give their children a bilingual kindergarten education.

### 3.3.3 Sociolinguistic environment

China has 56 ethnic groups of which the Han form the largest and number over 93% of the country's total population. Of China's ethnic groups only the Han people and two other groups, the Hui and Manchu, use the Han or Chinese language with its many different dialects; the Wu dialect, which includes Shang Hai Hua (SHH) or Shanghainese (or the Shanghai dialect), being one of them. Although Shanghai's indigenous people belong to the Han majority, their local language/dialect, like other Wu dialects, is distinct and mutually unintelligible to speakers of the national language, Putonghua or standard Chinese, known as Mandarin in the West, even "though they share a common word order, a common stock of lexicon, and a common orthography" (Li, 2001, p. 82).

Shanghainese is spoken also in southern Jiangsu and northern Zhejiang provinces and, with nearly 14 million speakers, it is "the largest single coherent form of Wu Chinese" while "the total number of speakers in all Wu dialects is over 80 million, the second largest Chinese language after Mandarin" (Wikipedia). By comparison, more than

133 million Chinese can claim Putonghua as their mother tongue, although 95% of China's 1.3 billion people speak it.

Shanghai's linguistic environment, therefore, comprises two widely spoken languages, the indigenous Shang Hai Hua and the national Putonghua. Given the linguistic strength of the Wu and the economic importance of Shanghai, and due to governmental fears of regionalism, Shanghainese is actively suppressed from public life. Schools, newspapers, radio and television broadcasts, and, as of late, even workplaces are discouraged from using the local language. A plethora of measures designed to suppress Shanghainese while endorsing Putonghua/Mandarin emanates from the government.

Shanghainese is for Shanghai what Cantonese is for Hong Kong, a beleaguered local dialect/language without a written form, while English is for Shanghai what Putonghua is for Hong Kong, a language of necessity imposed upon the population by changing economic and political realities.

Although "Shanghainese is considered the highest example in the Wu school of languages, the most refined dialect of one of seven main Han Chinese linguistic groups" (The Standard, Mind your Language, November 19, 2005) its existence is threatened by two factors: internal immigration and central government policies. Contemporary observers describe the situation as follows:

*The thriving port of Shanghai has long been a magnet for outsiders. In the 1930s, the city's northern districts of Yangpu and Hongkou housed sizeable communities from Hubei and Guangdong. With internal migration controls eased, immigrants are again flooding into Shanghai from every province on the back of the economic boom. Following a recent relaxation in the city's hukou (resident registration) system, new arrivals are now free to live wherever they please. The upshot of these developments is that native Shanghainese increasingly find themselves in a minority, surrounded by neighbours with whom they are forced to speak Putonghua. ...immigration is having a disintegrating effect on the Shanghai dialect.*

*In tandem with the demographic shift, the central government also has Shanghainese in its sight with a raft of pro-Putonghua policies. Continuing the aims begun by Sun Yat-sen and the nationalists who deposed the empire in 1911, today's leaders have their hearts set on nation building (The Standard, Mind your Language, November 19, 2005).*

The government's effort to popularize Putonghua is not the only reason for the decline of Shanghainese. An even greater threat to China's dialects in general and Shanghainese in particular is the ongoing process of modernization.

*As China moves towards a market economy, there is greater mobility and more interaction between different communities, giving rise to the need for a common tongue. In Shanghai, people congregate from all regions in search for better economic opportunities, and only by using Putonghua can they communicate with one another (Prof. Qian Nairong).*

*Dialect expert Zhou Lei noted that in Shanghai, while there are still more than 10 million speakers of the Shanghai dialect, the sphere in which it is being used has become smaller. Agreeing, Prof. Qian placed part of the blame for the decline of dialects on measures to restrict its use in newspapers and on television. Others have pointed out that as young people gain fluency in Putonghua, it affects their usage of dialects. Overall, the number of dialect-speakers is declining (Goh Sui Noi, Modernisation a threat to dialects in China).*

The evidence suggests that the pressures of modernization and government policy are imposing a hierarchy of importance in language use upon the populace, with the result that Putonghua is perceived as most important, English as second in importance, and the local dialect, which happens to be the mother tongue, is seen as least important

China's fear of separatism and regionalism fuels the marginalisation if not suppression of dialects, sending the message that dialects, and by extension their users, are not only inferior, backward and undesirable, but also dangerous to Chinese national unity, with an impoverishing effect on China's cultural plurality and national confidence (Larry Teo, China: Dialect use on TV worries Beijing, Straits Times, April 12, 2006).

Shanghai's complicated linguistic scene is only a snapshot of a truly complex national picture, which Beijing has sought to understand, master and simplify since 1949. During this time, the government has employed different strategies to tackle the language issue and in retrospect scholars have identified three specific stages within an accommodationist-integrationist divide: a pluralistic stage (1949-1957), which "recognized minorities' language rights, established infrastructures for minority education, and developed prototypes of bilingual education"; a Chinese monopolistic stage (1958-1977, which "unified language policies for Chinese and minority languages,

promoted Chinese over minority languages in education, and reduced bilingual education to the minimal”; and a second pluralistic stage (1978 to the present), which “has legislated for bilingual education, revived it, and significantly developed it,” but is contradicted by the ever-diminishing space allowed minority languages and their attendant ethnic identities (Zhou, 2001).

During this time, the PRC has steered the country according to the following language planning goals: the eradication of illiteracy, the promotion of a standard national language, Putonghua, the use of simplified Chinese characters, and the promotion of a Romanised alphabetic writing system or ‘pinyin’ (Cheng & Pasierbsky, 1988).

In addition to this internal language situation, the era of globalization is imposing its own linguistic requirements on China and especially on Shanghai, which has always been China’s gateway to the world. English now complicates an already complicated national linguistic picture and Beijing has had to adopt by finding a way to use English without being used by it.

In this contemporary context, Feng (2005) identifies two parallel conceptions of societal bilingualism in China’s sociolinguistic context, a traditional and a modern. On one hand, the central government’s language policy vis-à-vis its internal languages/dialects is coercive in that it promotes the universal use of Putonghua to the detriment and even demise of local languages/dialects. In so doing, it is animated by several factors: (1) national unity, since it is feared that separatism and regionalism threaten the cohesion of the country; (2) the need to inculcate a sense of identity among China’s ethnic population to better assimilate them culturally and economically; and (3) a persistent bias against minority languages/cultures which, according to the ‘great Han mentality’ (Lin, 1996, 1997), are seen as inferior to Putonghua. These factors converge to raise Putonghua nationally above all other minority languages/dialects as the *lingua franca* of all Chinese and to relegate most others to the private domain. The idealized, official version of this state-sanctioned traditional bilingualism for minorities goes under the name *Min-Han Jiantong* (master of both the home language and standard Chinese) and purports to create a bicultural identity, preserving the native alongside the national, while in reality it is ideologically motivated and attempts to submerge ethnic groups

within the mainstream culture so as to strengthen allegiance to the state. On the other hand, a much different rationale prompts the central government in Beijing (and by extension the local government of Shanghai) to promote English amongst the majority Han group, giving rise to a new form of modern accommodating bilingualism for the majority - as opposed to traditional coercive bilingualism for the minorities. This new form of bilingualism is known as *Zhuanye Waiyu Fuhexing Rencai* (talents with integrated skills in specialization and a foreign language) and it is pursued to improve foreign language competence in China's large economic centres with the intent of modernizing the economy and raising the technological and scientific standards of the country. While the traditional form of Putonghua/ethnic language bilingualism for minorities at least implies biculturalism, the modern Putonghua/English bilingualism for the Han majority is ethnocentric, as it avoids the cultural dimension out of ideological concern that learners' perceptions of themselves and of China as a society will be negatively impacted by foreign cultures (Feng, 2005).

Shanghai's sociolinguistic environment is shaped by these two conceptions of bilingualism, the subtractive nature of minority bilingualism, which undermines the continuing use of Shanghainese for the benefit of Putonghua for reasons of national unity, and the additive form of modern bilingualism, which promotes English amongst the Han majority as a foreign/second language alongside Putonghua as the national tongue of all Chinese for the sake of modernization, technical and scientific progress.

China's, and by extension Shanghai's, coexisting bilingual conceptions bodes well for the development of English while foretelling the gradual extinction of Shanghainese and its replacement with Putonghua even in informal and intimate domains.

Fig. 3 gives a graphic representation of the changes in Shanghai's linguistic landscape: (PAST) Shanghainese is at the centre of Shanghai's cultural, intellectual and administrative life as the indigenous language while Putonghua is only beginning to be superimposed on the city from Beijing; (PRESENT) Shanghainese has been displaced from the centre of Shanghai's cultural, intellectual, and administrative life by Putonghua, retaining only a few business and intimate domains and no longer being the medium of instruction in any school at any level, while English is widely pursued from below for

status and economic success and from above as a necessary instrument for national advancement; (FUTURE) Putonghua is firmly established at the centre of Shanghai's cultural, intellectual, administrative and educational life, English is spoken by a good proportion of a bilingual (English-Putonghua) population employed in business, finance, international communications, and science, while Shanghaihua may become extinct or remains only among the older generations and a small circle of linguists, its transmission chain having been severed.

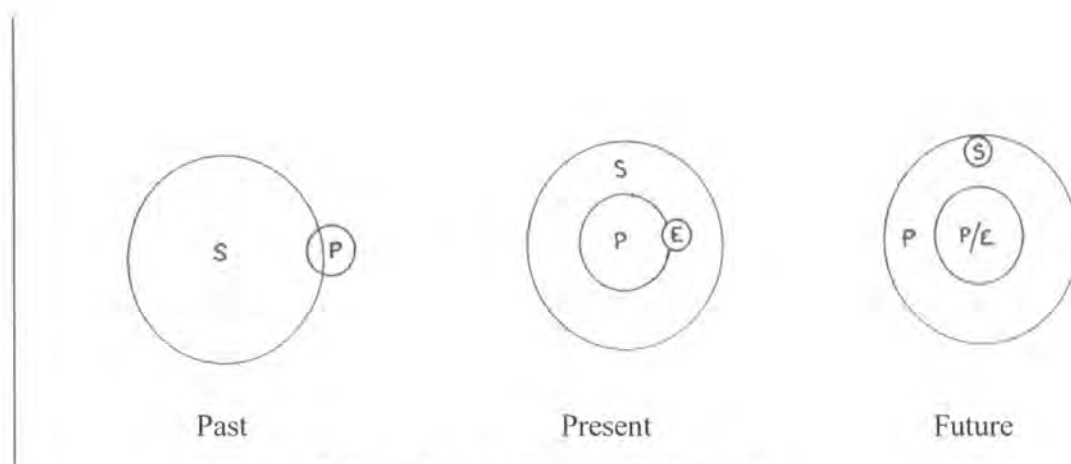


Fig. 3-2: Linguistic landscape of Shanghai

*Given that Shanghai is not an autonomous entity and that policy is made in Beijing, the nation's capital, it would be futile to consider Shanghai in isolation and fail to frame it into the larger national picture. Therefore, like any minority language, the micro-linguistic landscape of Shanghai is likely to be submerged in the macro-linguistic landscape of China, as shown in Fig. 4.*

China's past, present, and future sociolinguistic landscape may look as follows: (PAST) minority languages, including dialects such as Shanghaihua, are being drawn into the cultural and linguistic sphere of Putonghua, which is being promoted by the central government as the language of all Chinese, but they still retain enough linguistic domains to ensure their predominance among the indigenous people who speak them, albeit on the periphery of the national scene; (PRESENT) minority languages have been partially

absorbed into the cultural and linguistic sphere of Putonghua and having lost many formal linguistic domains are now endangered; (FUTURE) minority languages have been fully absorbed into the cultural and linguistic sphere of Putonghua and the chain of transmission from one generation to another has been severed.

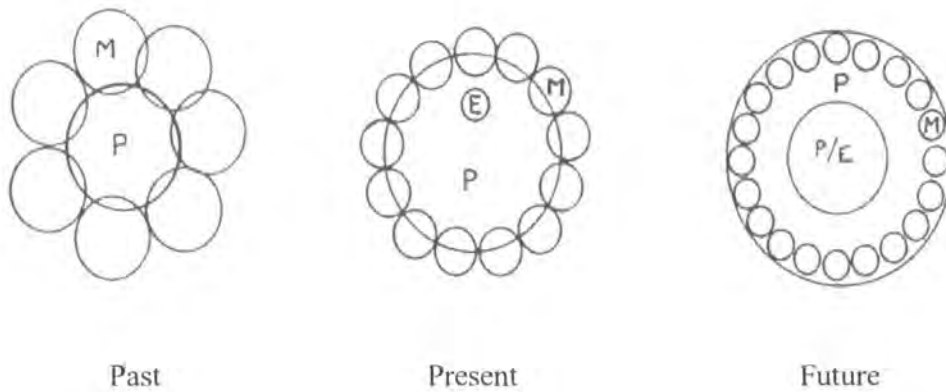


Fig. 3-3: Linguistic landscape of China

### 3.3.4 Cultural context

Chinese parental values and practices, like Chinese culture, embody a long and continuous tradition of thought that is primarily Confucian and secondarily Taoist and Buddhist (Jose et al., 2000; Hsue & Aldridge, 1995; Lin & Fu, 1990).

In line with Confucian principles, Chinese parents employ strict control, close supervision and authoritarian oversight (Jose et. al., 2000; Chao, 1994; Kelley & Tseng, 1992). Chinese parenting methods, derived from Confucian thought, stress the importance of the following factors: environmental influences upon child development and the necessity to control or at least carefully select the proper environment, teaching by example and the importance of role models, controlling the children’s affective displays, inculcating an early understanding of *dongshi* (moral understanding), and not

“spoiling” the children (Wu, 1996). Since the ability for moral reasoning, or *dongshi*, represents a developmental stage according to Confucian thought, behavioural

coaching must begin as early as possible as a result of which Chinese parents emphasise early child training (Chao, 1996). Fundamentally Confucian is also the mythical importance the Chinese attach to education (Legge, 1963) and the belief that education is not only a source of joy and of supreme morality, but also a bridge that crosses all social class barriers (Chin, 1988). Traditional Chinese cultural beliefs are recognised as still fundamental in Chinese family socialisation (Wu, 1996). Previous research has indicated that Chinese culture strongly emphasizes academic achievement because it “will likely result in personal advancement, wealth, respect, and high social status” (Wu & Smith, 1997, p.3).

According to Sharpe’s studies (1997), most Chinese believe that preschool age is an appropriate stage for young children to start their second language. Parents are concerned about the importance of the preschool stage, especially the progress and attainment of their children. The important characteristics predicting children’s bilingual competence include the parents’ selection of preschools, the parents’ educational level, the language use and attitude toward language teaching and the provision of materials and resources in the home (Sharpe, 1997)

Since the Ministry of Education in China announced that English would be included in the formal curriculum of first grade in 2003, many parents send their children to kindergartens or preschool with an English curriculum. Parents believe that the earlier their children can learn English, the better they can succeed. Although most parents have higher educational backgrounds and higher expectations than other ethnic group (Jose et al, 2000), the majority of Shanghainese do not speak English on a daily basis.



### 3.3.5 Educational context

#### 3.3.5.1 Shanghai's Typology of bilingual education

Shanghai's education system offers Putonghua-English bilingual education for minority language students (see Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; August & Hakuta, 1997) whose native tongue is Shanghaihua. English, therefore, is for Shanghai's children a third language (L3) and for the most part it is taught as a foreign language. In Shanghai's kindergartens children learn English by way of "additive bilingualism" as defined by Cummins (1986) and Lambert (1980), that is, not because they need to replace their native language in order to fit into another culture, but because the new language has utilitarian value.

Shanghai's secondary and primary schools offer mainly a weak form of Putonghua-English bilingual education, with English taught as a foreign language and receiving at most 1.5 hours of instruction per day. Increasingly, however, schools in Shanghai have adopted a so-called "transitional bilingual model", whereby English is used as the MOI for science subjects - in a context where code-switching is prevalent - and Chinese for social science subjects; with English being used progressively more at higher levels (Zhang, 2002 & Xinwen Chenbao, 2003, cited by Feng, 2005).

In kindergartens the situation varies from weak to strong forms, with dual language international kindergarten or mainstream bilingual programmes proliferating. Strong forms of bilingual education throughout the entire system are obstructed by a lack of competent English teachers and, therefore, by insufficient exposure to authentic language experiences. In this context, only limited bilingualism seems within reach of Shanghai's education system, while the ideal of balanced bilinguals remains largely a dream.

### 3.3.5.2 Linguistic environment of Shanghai kindergartens

Shanghai is the most rapidly developing and economically important city in mainland China and, as the hub of the nation's burgeoning international trade, Putonghua and English proficiency are essential. None of these languages, however, are native to Shanghai.

Forces of social policy and institutional focus, as reflected in China's official stand on societal bilingualism, *Min-Han Jiantong* (master of both the home language and standard Chinese) (Feng, 2005; Yang, 1998), have made Putonghua the medium of instruction (MOI) throughout Shanghai's education system, preschools included. Since Shanghaihua and not Putonghua is the majority language, and still the prestige dialect/language, indexing status distinctions between natives and outsiders (Angus & Lei, 2001), children's first exposure to Putonghua is in kindergarten (*yòu er yuán*) and they grow up fluent in China's national language, which is for them a second language, largely because of the linguistic instruction they receive in such institutions. For Shanghai's children, access to compulsory education depends on mastery of Putonghua, just as access to higher education and specialized skills is contingent on English competence.

This being the case, it is erroneous to speak of bilingualism and appropriate to define the linguistic environment prevalent in the current preschool institutions as trilingual, with Putonghua and English actively pursued and Shanghaihua silently suppressed.

Parents recognise, however, that their children must become fluent in the national language if they are to succeed in life and be able to function in the modern workplace and they freely support and are actively involved not only in their children's speech development (in L1, Shanghaihua), but also in their learning of the second dialect/language (L2, Putonghua) (Angus & Lei, 2001).

It is in this environment that English has arrived in the 1970s and has been gradually superimposed on Chinese education through the official policy of *Zhuanye Waiyu Fuhexing Rencai* (talents with integrated skills in specialization and a foreign language), desired by the country for its economic and technical development (Feng, 2005; He & Deng, 2003), and the unofficial public demand for a language that has great economic relevance.

English is for Shanghai's children a third language and for the most part it is taught as a foreign language. At *yòu er yuán* they learn Putonghua in what Cummins (1989) characterizes as "immersion" and Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) refer to as "full immersion," a model in which majority language students are taught in L2, while, at the same time, they learn English by way of "additive bilingualism" (or more exactly additive trilingualism), as defined by Cummins (1986) and Lambert (1980). What both forms of language learning have in common, however, is the motivation of parents for their children to acquire fluency in Putonghua and English, which constitutes what Gardner and Lambert (1972) call "instrumental motivation," the desire to obtain something practical and concrete from the study of English, in this case the need to meet the academic requirements of school and later the professional skills necessary in a modern society.

#### 3.3.5.3 Penetration of English in preschool education

English education can be traced back to 1862 in China (Guo, 2001), but it made few inroads in the society at large partly because it was not aided by an official foreign language policy (Chang, 2006). When such policy came into being in the 1950s it was the Russian and not the English language that benefited from it (Lam, 2002).

With the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, English began to displace Russian as the main foreign language in China by the early 1960s, but its presence was limited to a few universities, some newly established foreign language schools, and a select number of urban senior secondary schools. During the Cultural Revolution (from 1966 to 1976) learning English was taboo, as anything foreign was condemnable, and foreign languages disappeared from education. English-language education came to a standstill during this time.

In 1978, shortly after Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping announced the Policy of Four Modernizations, followed by the Reform and Opening Policy, which made it crucial for the Chinese to learn English and marked the onset of English into secondary and even primary education. In 1982, English was announced as the main foreign language in secondary education and became an integral part of a newly designed syllabus, but its presence in primary schools was limited to a few key or elite schools in the major centres.

Since 1991, when the Soviet Union disintegrated, China has adopted a more international stance and has become an integral and active part of multinational bodies such as the World Trade Organization and the United Nations, catapulting English learning/teaching to the forefront of education throughout the compulsory education system in both urban and rural areas (Lam, 2002).

With the globalization of English and its position of uncontested supremacy (Lysandrou & Lysandrou, 2003), language policies and practice have been affected around the world (Block & Cameron, 2002), English has become the medium of global communication (Short et al., 2001), and standardised English curriculum practice is now the rule rather than the exception throughout the world (Rhedding-Jones, 2002). This is a reality that every country must face and China has wisely decided to draw maximum benefits from English by embracing it at all levels of the education system. China's policy makers are keenly aware that it is only through the communicative and instrumental function of English that China can ensure its economic prosperity and increase its foreign trade. China's economic, political and educational agendas now converge and English has centre stage in this new climate (Hu, 2003).

All impediments to the penetration of English down to kindergarten level have been removed and Shanghai, perhaps more than any other city in China, has given free reign to bilingual nurseries and kindergartens. Even as the city continues to officially reject total immersion in English at preschool level (Xinwen Chenbao, 2004), and instead refers to its English teaching/learning model as one of "transitional bilingualism" for reasons of political correctness (Feng, 2005), fact is that English is now commonly taught in Shanghai's kindergartens and, surveys show, also commonly accepted by the general public (Xinwen Chenbao, 2003).

Despite official warnings by the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission that English-only kindergartens will not be tolerated and their graduates will not be allowed to enter primary schools, further stipulating that preschools must emphasize Chinese language and that the mother tongue remains the basis for teaching in kindergartens, bilingual preschools have become increasingly popular since the middle of the 1990s and currently around one-fifth of the city's kindergartens offer English courses and advertise themselves as "bilingual schools" (China Daily, 16 March 2004).

Mass English penetration of Shanghai's education system has been occurring at the tertiary level since the 70s, at the secondary level since the 80s, at the primary level since the 90s, and at kindergarten since the first decade of the new millennium. Shanghai's current curriculum starts teaching English formally from the third year of primary school, but the majority of the population start much earlier.

#### 3.3.5.4 Rationale for English in education and bilingual education

Long gone are the days when China feared cultural contamination and English is being pursued at great cost and effort (Niu & Wolff, 2003) from below by millions of Chinese and from above by a farsighted government. Individuals understand that proficiency in English brings economic advantages, social prestige, and educational opportunities (Hu, 2003; Jiang, 2003), while their government assigns English education priority in its plan for national development (CTMRI, 2001, HERC, 1993).

Nearly thirty years ago, the U.S. International Communication Agency visited China and concluded:

*"The Chinese view English primarily as a necessary tool which can facilitate access to modern scientific and technological advances, and secondarily as a vehicle to promote commerce and understanding between the People's Republic of China and countries where English is a major language"* (Cowan et al., 1979)

The same reasons motivate China to learn English today:

*"They learn English because it is the language of science, specifically perhaps of the majority of research journals. They learn it because it is the neutral language of commerce, the standard currency of international travel and communication. They learn it because you find more software in English than in all other languages put together"* (Bowers, 1996, p. 3).

The mass aspect of English learning is due to the fact that "China is in a phase of industrial, scientific and commercial expansion" and "in order to function efficiently in

this role it needs to bring large numbers of its people to high levels of proficiency in the use of English for a wide variety of functions (Maley, 1995, p. 47).

Shanghai pursues English with particular vigour due to its ambition to establish the city as a first-class international metropolis (SCTMRC, 1999). As such, it recognises English “as an important resource that the municipality can harness in promoting international exchange, fostering economic progress, acquiring scientific knowledge and technological expertise, and facilitating educational development” (Hu, 2002).

Increased exposure to the outside world has brought escalating demands for English and this in turn has catapulted English to the curricula of kindergartens in Shanghai. Furthermore, learning English early in life in a bilingual kindergarten environment is also partly the result of general dissatisfaction with the poor progress made when English was taught as a foreign language in China. This earlier experience has given rise to the belief that only bilingual teaching in Chinese and English at all levels of the education spectrum can produce large numbers of fluent speakers (Jiang 2003; Wang & Wang, 2003).

#### 3.3.5.5 Implementation of English in Shanghai’s curricula

Following the decision by the *State Education Commission* (SEC) to give seven economically developed regions the autonomy to develop their own English in education programs for primary and secondary schools, Shanghai set up the *Curriculum and Teaching Materials Reform Commission* (SCTMRC, 1999) in 1988 to start working on its own English curriculum, syllabus and textbooks and thus initiate reform. The Commission’s effort bore fruit in a draft curriculum for both nine-year basic education and senior secondary education that gave English great prominence, designating it as one of only three core subjects, and aided its fast expansion into primary schooling (from Primary Five to Primary Three and most recently to Primary One), as well as overseeing the introduction of content-based English instruction (CBEI) in a number of key primary and secondary schools. By 2001 all of Shanghai’s primary schools had succeeded in offering English classes at Primary One and by 2005 most schools have introduced CBEI,

both measures being meant to ensure strong English competence by the time of graduating from senior secondary school (Hu, 2002).

Although English instruction is not mandated by Shanghai's kindergarten curriculum, the existence of three levels of curricula – national, local, and school (Li & Li, 2004) – gives individual kindergartens a great degree of leeway in how much and how fast they want to instruct their students in English. Impediments to English language instruction are therefore not due to policy, curricula and syllabi, as they are due to a shortage of qualified teachers. Nonetheless, at the last count, more than one-fifth of Shanghai's kindergartens billed themselves as bilingual (China Daily, 16 March 2004).

The *Shanghai Municipal Education Commission* has enabled schools to exercise autonomy in their curricular decisions by (1) allowing them to develop school-based curriculum (SBCD) and (2) giving them the freedom to choose the curriculum they want to use and to even mix features of several existing curricula according to the criteria established from the mission, educational philosophy, children's profiles, parental demands and community needs (Zhu, 2003). This has given rise to two categories of kindergartens in Shanghai, those who choose and mix already existing curricula and those who develop their own (Yan, Gao & Jiang, 2004), resulting in a great degree of variation as far as English teaching is concerned.

English at kindergarten level is gaining increasingly more importance due to the need to closely interface preschool with the primary school curriculum so that students will find the transition easier. Since the goals of English instruction at the primary and secondary level, according to the SCTMRC (2000) is to (1) help students acquire an essential knowledge of English and develop basic communicative competence, (2) develop good study habits and a solid foundation on which to build, (3) foster an interest in English learning, and (4) develop the ability to “memorize, observe, think, and imagine” (Hu, 2002), kindergartens with students whose parents have high academic ambitions are expected to get their students well on their way to meeting these targets and such kindergartens place great emphasis on the development of communicative competence. Moreover, since English is one of the subjects tested in the *National College Entrance Examinations* (NCEE), which is the main access route to university, and successful completion of English competency examinations are a precondition for

taking the NCEE (Hu, 2002 b), parents start preparing their children early on for success in the *Matriculation English Test* and kindergartens are vested with the task of doing the groundwork for bilingualism.

Testing students' English competence in Shanghai, however, is not limited to the Matriculation English Test in the NCEE and starts with the *Banded English Proficiency Test* for primary and secondary students, which consists of five bands and was introduced in 1998. Band One qualifies students for primary English, Band Two and Three represent the basic and advanced levels of junior secondary English, and Bands Four and Five are the basic and advanced levels of senior secondary English (SCTMRC, 2000; Hu, 2002 a). Given the existence of so many English competency examinations at all levels of the education system, and the central importance English occupies in the curricula of education at all levels, it is paramount that children start learning English as early as possible. Since most Shanghai parents have no knowledge of English, kindergarten is the first and most obvious place where their children can be exposed to the language and each kindergarten copes with this responsibility as best it can, given its human resources.



### 3.4 Conclusion

Sociolinguistically, Hong Kong is determined to become a trilingual society by making Putonghua the third language of Hong Kong beside Cantonese and English. In contrast, Shanghai is replacing Shanghaihua/Putonghua bilingualism with Putonghua/English bilingualism, and in the process it is about to become, temporarily at least, a trilingual society. However, whereas Hong Kong has an additive linguistic environment, Shanghai has a subtractive one. This means that while Putonghua is embraced in Hong Kong as the new language, neither Cantonese nor English suffer. By contrast, while English is embraced in Shanghai as the new language, Putonghua is promoted and Shanghaihua is suppressed. Shanghai, therefore, is about to become a bilingual society by adding English to the state-sanctioned Putonghua and gradually eliminating Shanghaihua. Hong Kong is on the way of becoming a genuinely trilingual society.



Politically, Putonghua/English bilingualism is promoted in Shanghai under the influence of globalization, the first language for its importance to national unity and the second for its importance to China's presence on the world stage. The political environment surrounding language issues in Hong Kong is more favourable than that of Shanghai, in that all three languages (Cantonese, English, and Putonghua) are sanctioned and supported by the government, but neither city is interference free. Questions of language in education and in society remain highly charged political issues in both Shanghai and Hong Kong. Hong Kong education authorities experience political interference in order to accommodate Putonghua as an equal language to Cantonese and English, while in Shanghai political pressure has caused Putonghua to replace Shanghaihua as Shanghai's official language. The politics of bilingualism in Shanghai and of trilingualism in Hong Kong are executing ideologically motivated language shifts that affect language in education - in Hong Kong from English to Chinese and in Shanghai from Shanghaihua to Putonghua and English. This new sociolinguistic alignment coincides with Beijing's desires and interests in light of the political realities and goals of Greater China. In this environment, the footprint of English in education is rapidly growing in Shanghai and modestly diminishing in Hong Kong.

Economically, Hong Kong can neither afford to lose English nor fail to make Putonghua as important as Cantonese. By the same token, Shanghai cannot afford to waver in completing the transition from Shanghaihua to Putonghua as the official language and the language of commerce throughout China nor can it afford to fail in making English its second-most importance language, as the language of global communication and trade. Economic reality dictates that Hong Kong elevates its linguistic expectations from bilingualism to trilingualism and that Shanghai abandons Putonghua/Shanghaihua bilingualism, which is seen as outdated economically (and politically), in favour of Putonghua/English bilingualism. This economic reality has elevated linguistic expectations to bilingualism in Shanghai and trilingualism in Hong Kong, raising at the same time the academic stakes for current and future generations of students and setting new and higher linguistic and academic benchmarks even for pre-schoolers. While these trends are similar in both cities, the roles the governments of Shanghai and Hong Kong play in funding pre-primary education are counter directional,

since the former is offsetting more of its originally substantial financial responsibility onto the shoulders of parents while the latter is assuming more financial responsibility over a sector that was entirely parent funded in the past.

In the context of education, both cities are making great strides. The number of kindergartens is growing despite a decreasing student population, teacher qualifications are improving through benchmarks set for people in or entering the profession, kindergarten is seen as the beginning of formal education and is being closely integrated with the compulsory education stream, and preschool education is taken seriously because both cities want to develop into knowledge economies and headstart learning societies. Both cities have harmonized ECEC services and in both cities the education aspect of ECEC is taking centre stage over the care aspect. In both cities conditions are improving: class size is decreasing, the ratio of students to teachers is coming down, access and conditions are improving as well as the quality of education and care. On the negative side, the cost of kindergarten is rising. Well-designed and specific curricula for preschool which are child developmentally appropriate are adopted. Professionalism and high standards follow increased academic expectations.

Culturally, Western and modern ideas and pedagogies (such as focus on individualized learning, teacher/child interaction, and the perception of children as autonomous social groups) are displacing traditional teaching methods, which by their authoritarian/authoritative nature inhibit creativity and intellectual autonomy. The teacher's role is changing from that of transmitter of knowledge to that of facilitator and motivator of children's learning. And both societies struggle to preserve the positive aspects of a traditional Chinese education – which discourages aggressive individualistic behaviour and promotes empathetic and caring communal values – while incorporating Western pedagogies and ideologies without their attendant negative aspects in terms of moral and social decay.

The preceding contextual analysis has shown certain counter-directional trends in the ECEC and ELT of Shanghai and Hong Kong. However, since the two cities were, in many respects, at polar opposites in the past, these counter-directional trends have led not to more divergence but to greater similarities and if continued will lead, in the near future, to foreseeable convergence. This seems to suggest a single influencing source,

that of Beijing. So it is, for instance, that while Shanghai, starting from a vacuum of English, has expanded English education to more students, whereas Hong Kong, starting from a state of English being almost universally the MOI in secondary schools, has moved towards better English for fewer students, with the result that while the number of English speakers is growing in Shanghai, it is probably shrinking in Hong Kong for that age group. So it is that while English was formerly taught as a foreign language in Shanghai, government policy has propelled it to second language status for a good percentage of the population, while in Hong Kong the opposite seems to be true if one considers that the EMI stream is 25% strong and the CMI stream (where English is taught only as a foreign language) covers 75% of the student population. So it is that in Shanghai, where preschool education was entirely publicly funded, the private sector now holds sway over a growing percentage, while in Hong Kong, where ECEC was formerly wholly privately run, public money now controls a growing percentage. Similarly, Shanghai, which in the past had its entire ECEC system government controlled, now experiences less regulatory interference from the government, while Hong Kong, where the government had no say whatsoever in early childhood education in the past, now exerts regulatory influence to a substantial degree.

Uni-directional trends are observable in both cities in areas where their two systems started from the same point, such as teacher qualifications (both low in the past but now greatly improved) or curriculum development (formerly non-existent for pre-primary education but now the object of much attention). Clearly then, Hong Kong and Shanghai's education authorities are acting according to a common vision that emanates from the nation's capital and seeks to harmonise their ECEC and bilingual education systems throughout the spectrum of education.

## CHAPTER IV

### Methodology

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the differences and similarities among parents, teachers and principals of preschools about bilingual education on: (1) their attitudes and beliefs towards bilingualism, (2) their expectations regarding English learning and cultural values, (3) the teachers' expectations of an effective English curriculum and, (4) the difference between NETs and local teachers in facilitating English learning. This chapter presents the study design, survey instrument design, survey development, data collection and data analysis.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were adopted for the study as part of the triangulation method. In relation to the comparative approach, the main task is to identify differences and similarities between the two cities. In terms of the interpretative approach adopted for the data analysis, we identified beliefs, attitudes and expectations across different stakeholders through questionnaires, and then used interviews to complement the findings.

#### 4.1 Research questions

The research attempts to answer several crucial questions that, for the sake of clarity and on account of their nature, are divided into two types: archival, or literature based, and empirical, or evidence based. Falling in the first category are the following:

1. *To what extent have contextual factors influenced English language learning at preschool level in Hong Kong and Shanghai?*
2. *Considering the cultural commonalities and socio-political dissimilarities of the two cities, what roles - according to current research - do parents, teachers and principals play in children's English learning?*

As for the second category, that of empirical questions, this research asks and answers:

3. *What are the beliefs and attitudes of parents, teachers and principals towards bilingualism, and what similarities and differences are there in terms of their language expectations for preschool children?*
4. *In light of the two cities' distinct socio-linguistic environments but shared cultural traditions, what parental involvement and support do children receive at home in their efforts to learn English?*
5. *Due to high and increasing demand for English in early childhood, what language learning approaches are favoured by each city and what are the prevalent opinions about how to improve bilingual learning?*
6. *What role do native English-speaking teachers (NET) play in English learning and are there differences between them and local teachers in how they create environments that enable children to feel immersed in language and culture?*

#### 4.2 Methods Used

Multiple methods were used in this study. This kind of blended method of evaluation was used in order to seek convergence, corroboration, and correspondence of results through different means and to increase the validity of the research. In line with a more naturalistic setting, the subjects were interviewed face-to-face in addition to filling out the questionnaire, so as to enable an analysis of the results from different perspectives and thus lend a more in-depth and broad scope to the inquiry (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989; Borland & Kenneth, 2001; Hsu, 2005)

a. Document analysis of government documents, literature and press materials was used regarding the development of language policy and bilingualism, particularly at preschool level.

b. Questionnaires were distributed to parents, teachers and principals to study their beliefs and attitudes towards English learning at preschool, their expectations and satisfaction with their children's language proficiency, and the underlying objectives



of learning the language. The full texts of the questionnaires can be found in appendixes 4, 5 and 6.

c. Interviews were conducted with the kindergarten directors to provide more background information about teacher qualifications, their objectives for offering English programmes, and their preference of English teachers.

d. Post-questionnaire interviews with parents and teachers were conducted in each city after the result analysis in order to provide in-depth understanding and verification of the survey, as part of the triangulation methodology.

#### 4.3 Role of Researcher

The above measures are particularly important given the researcher's professional position and prominence, which would have likely influenced the respondents' answers. As the chief principal of a preschool educational organization with a 40-year history in Hong Kong and a ten-year presence in Shanghai, the researcher has openly advocated bilingual dual-language immersion programmes while running her kindergartens on similar bilingual models in the different socio-linguistic contexts of the two cities.

As Landsberger (1958) has established, the effects of being studied impacts the research subjects, a phenomenon coined the *Hawthorne effect*. This form of reactivity would have also applied to the respondents of this research study, who, especially given the researcher's position, would have invariably been inclined to make causal inferences about what they thought the researcher wants.

To lessen the effects of reactivity, with the help of school principals, the researcher managed to keep her identity as the researcher undergoing the study hidden from the parents whose children attend her schools and who have volunteered to fill out the questionnaire. This was not possible for the subsequent interviews, but since the questionnaire was the major instrument of acquiring the empirical evidence needed and the interviews were only used to supplement and clarify the survey findings, the anxiety

associated with the phenomenon of reactivity would have been minimized. As for the teachers interviewed, in order to elicit their own concerns and feelings, the researcher encouraged them to be reflective rather than give succinct answers to narrow questions. In one case, she even interviewed two principals at once in order to encourage interaction and to expose them to contradictory points of view.

#### 4.4 Quantitative Approach -Questionnaires

##### 4.4.1 Modification of Questionnaires

The questionnaires (see appendix 4, 5 & 6) were based on the questionnaire prepared by the Hong Kong Education Department in 2000 (Education Department, 2000) and which was distributed to all kindergartens in Hong Kong. The questionnaire was the first of its kind and represented a symbolic act of official policy making, since English learning up to that time was an unspoken and hidden practice devoid of curriculum guidelines from the official education authority, the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB). Its purpose was to seek information about the English teaching situation prevalent at that time in Hong Kong and was accordingly designed to examine the actual practice of English teaching at preschool. It was sent to all 784 Hong Kong kindergartens in 2000 and probed issues such as duration of lessons, qualification of teachers, delivery approach, and scope of teaching content, but only 419 of them returned it. The slightly modified questionnaire (which also suits parents and teachers besides principals) used for this research likewise aims to study the pedagogies, teaching approaches, teacher standards, and teaching materials available for teaching English in preschool, and also to obtain personal opinions on the effectiveness of current pedagogies and on the difficulties teachers encounter in the classroom.

#### 4.4.2 Pilot Study

The researcher adopted this questionnaire without much modification of the pilot study that was conducted in order to verify the clarity of the early version questionnaire, which revealed several areas that required improvement. Although the questionnaire was originally designed for kindergarten principals, this researcher used it for different stakeholder groups in order to compare their views on children's English learning. Four parents, two teachers and two principals in Shanghai, and four parents and two teachers in Hong Kong were invited through personal connections to participate. It was not necessary to give the questionnaire to principals in Hong Kong since the researcher used data from the government's findings. A majority of parents found themselves to be unfamiliar with the professional jargon on curriculum approach, such as whole language approach, spiral curriculum, etc. Parents also found it difficult to rank the items according to preference, as they would have rather marked their choices.

The researcher then tailored the questionnaire to understand the issue of home involvement in English learning and adopted the Home Literacy Environment Scale by Li Hui (2002) in order to cover several facets of the home literacy environment, which is important to the bilingual development of young children. These were mainly on exposure measures (e.g. time spent with children, their linguistic background, level of knowledge, skills and values involved in these practices) and parental facilitation of English learning (e.g. parental educational attainment, and their own exposure to the language). We adopted some items mentioned in a major survey done by an education research group in Shanghai to keep track of 1000 principals and the situation of English teaching at preschool (Jiaxiong & Nianli, 2005). Since we did not get access to a copy of the questionnaire, we incorporated some of its key questions from the report - such as the importance of bilingual education, which language is considered more important, whether English learning hinders the development of Chinese, the underlying reasons for learning English, and so on - into our own, which we abstracted from this survey conducted in Shanghai in 2003.



#### 4.4.3 Sampling strategy

Four schools in both cities were then chosen to distribute the questionnaires to: two non-profit making and two private independent kindergartens in each city. They were chosen for their reputations as relatively competitive schools known for their English teaching and because of their locations in catchments areas with young professional parents, most of whom are university graduates. This helped avoid any sampling bias due to different socio-economic backgrounds. Most schools have employed additional teachers like NETs and Chinese English teachers to conduct English lessons. A volunteering sampling strategy was adopted, with schools volunteering upon being invited by the researcher or by a friend of the researcher. The questionnaires were distributed on a cluster random basis to all parents with children from 4-5 years of age.

We looked at parents, teachers and principals from preschools offering English as a second language, and the balance of two privately run and two government/NGO/enterprises subsidized by each city. Parents are mainly double wage earners. Teachers are Chinese or native English-speaking teachers (NET), and principals or assistant principals are mainly in charge of the curriculum. One of the kindergartens in Shanghai and one in Hong Kong are affiliated with the researcher. The researcher purposely chose these affiliated schools for their pioneering roles in English teaching in Hong Kong, which date back to the 1960s, and for their unique model of co-teachers in the classroom throughout the day, which represents a strong form of bilingual education. Correspondingly, the kindergartens chosen in Shanghai operate similar programmes and have identical curricula, but a different socio-linguistic context. It was deemed important to incorporate the researcher's kindergartens for the comparative study due to their least discrepancies in certain variables.

#### 4.4.4 Design of Questionnaires

Three types of questionnaires were designed to address different stakeholders, with common questions as well as specific questions for each type of stakeholder. General common questions on beliefs, attitudes and expectations of learning English were asked to all three groups. For the parents' survey, their involvement in learning English at home and exposure to English were also examined. For the teachers' survey, their use of strategy and challenges in implementation were studied. Specific questions were designed for the three groups regarding NETs and non-NETs in order to understand their roles in facilitating English learning. Questionnaires in English or Chinese language are available to cater to the different language needs of the participants. Questions have been formatted as mostly close questions that include check listing, banding, and the Likert Scale (Cadder, 1998).

#### 4.5 Qualitative /Interpretative approach - Interviews

##### 4.5.1 Interview Design

Two participants from each group were interviewed, for a total of 12 interviews conducted. The researcher conducted most of the interviews except with the one principal from her affiliated kindergarten. The researcher interviewed the parents of the graduates from her kindergarten in order to avoid any hold-back on negative comments. Semi-standardized (guided and semi-structured) interviews were conducted in which the interviewer is free to modify and adapt questions in light of the responses (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

#### 4.5.2 Design of Interview questions

Questions were based on the questionnaire findings and sought more in-depth understanding. Few questions were raised with a scale of intensity, the exceptions being: the importance of all three languages, the importance of NETs in the classroom, and the effectiveness of the Western way of teaching (free and exploratory) versus the Chinese way (structured and close-ended).

Each question had an underlying rationale. Common questions like “Why do you want your children to learn English? and Why is English important in your view?” were asked to seek clarification on whether English is sought because the government deems it important, because parents think the language will open doors to better employment and high earning power later in life, because it is prestigious to know English and a precondition for social mobility, or because of global demand.

Other questions were of a more judgmental type, as for instance: “Do you think today’s literacy demands are too high in kindergartens, that the curriculum is too hard and that schools are running the risk of overwhelming children? If so, would you rather preschools allow children to enjoy childhood rather than push them in preparation for primary school?” The researcher was aware that they may be leading questions, but the main purpose was to make the interviewee clearly indicate whether the demands built into the education system are pushed from below, by parents, or imposed from above, by policy makers.

Others yet, sought a clear yes or no answer, such as: “Do you think the government is at odds with parents concerning how preschool education should be? And do you feel the education policy is helping or hindering education?”, which intended to uncover whether there is a gap between the government and parents. This type of questions was usually followed by a probing question.

Some questions were restricted to Shanghai, such as: “Would you like to see more English books, such as those authentic books imported directly from abroad, in libraries and bookstores?”, and sought to uncover whether or not China’s censorship of

foreign publications has a negative impact on the English learning process and impedes the government's own agenda to educate future generations as English-Putonghua bilinguals.

And some questions were restricted to Hong Kong, such as: "Do you think Putonghua will become more important than English during your children's lifetime? If so, do you welcome this development?" This was intended to shed light on whether the government's plan for biliteracy and trilingualism has the populace's endorsement and thus whether it would succeed or fail in accordance with Hong Kong's changing landscape.

#### 4.5.3 Subjects

Questionnaires were sent out to parents and teachers through the school and they were asked to return them in two weeks time. 200 questionnaires were distributed to parents in both Shanghai and Hong Kong and 146 were returned from Shanghai (a return rate 73%) and 117 from Hong Kong (a return rate of 58.5%). 100 teachers' surveys were distributed to each city and 78 returned from Shanghai and 74 from Hong Kong. For the principals' questionnaires, we have collected 11 from Shanghai and 12 from Hong Kong, a 100% return rate. The lower return rate from parents in Hong Kong is mainly due to the smaller size of the schools.

As we requested, the parents of the target group of 4-5 year olds with one or two years of experience in learning English in preschools come from relatively small schools in Hong Kong that have only 30-40 students fitting into this category. The schools we chose from public or subsidized schools in each city, we preferred to be of two categories: preschools with Chinese teachers to teach English and preschools with NET and local Chinese teachers to teach English, so as to be able to compare.

Eleven principals or administrators among eight kindergartens were selected to be interviewed - all in charge of English curriculum - in order to give a full account of their beliefs, attitudes and expectations. As heads of their schools and major designers of the English learning curriculum, they would have a thorough understanding of curriculum

development, parental needs and education policy on English learning from the official guidelines.

The interviews were conducted and analyzed by using an interview protocol along with field notes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the interviewer asking main questions followed by probing questions for in-depth information. The interviews were conducted in Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin) at the convenience of the participants and recorded in whole. The interviews were audio taped so that the researcher was able to analyze the information received. Verbatim transcripts were utilized for analysis. Five procedures of data analysis in qualitative were used: listening, transcribing, categorizing, reviewing and validating (Collins, 1992; Marshak & Wood, 2000).

#### 4.5.4 Settings and Participants

Table 4-1: Parents' educational background

	Shanghai (%)		Hong Kong (%)	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Below the tertiary	13.1	18.1	29.2	28.7
University	55.2	69.4	59.3	65.2
Master	31.7	12.5	11.5	6.1

In terms of education background, we found higher educational qualifications among fathers in Shanghai than in Hong Kong, whereby the former city had one-third of the fathers with Masters degrees, more than half with university degrees, and a minority with high school graduation diplomas, while the latter city had around one tenth of fathers with Masters, more than half with university degrees, and one third with high school graduation diplomas. In regards to mothers, those in Shanghai have higher qualifications than their counterparts in Hong Kong, with a slighter higher percentage of mothers with Masters and university undergraduate degrees. Overall, both Hong Kong and Shanghai parents have similar educational backgrounds, with around half of them holding university degrees without sampling bias.

#### 4.5.5 Language Usage of Parents

Table 4-2: The language parents use to communicate with their children at home

	Shanghai (%)	Hong Kong (%)
<b>Language used by the mother</b>		
Not English	84.6	66.1
English and bilingual language	15.6	33.9
<b>Language used by the father</b>		
Not English	78.7	74.3
English and bilingual language	21.3	25.7

A majority of parents from both cities are not using English at home, but as expected, due to Hong Kong's colonial background, both fathers and mothers in Hong Kong have a higher prevalence of adopting English or bilingual English and Chinese at home compared with parents in Shanghai. Furthermore, a higher percentage of English or bilingual conversation was noted from mothers than fathers.

#### 4.5.6 Language background of preschoolers

Table 4-3: Child's native language

	Shanghai (%)	Hong Kong (%)
<b>Child's native language</b>		
Not English	90.1	76.9
English and bilingual language	9.9	23.1

A good percentage of children (almost a quarter) in Hong Kong are bilingual from a very young age, but only a few children in Shanghai grow up with this type of simultaneous bilingualism

Table 4-4: Time for English activities

	Shanghai (%)	Hong Kong (%)
<b>Less than 150m</b>		
K1	67.6	40.5
K2	54.1	45.8
K3	62.5	44.0
<b>150m-350m</b>		
K1	14.7	21.6
K2	16.2	12.5
K3	21.9	8.0
<b>More than 350m</b>		
K1	17.6	37.8
K2	29.7	41.7
K3	15.6	48.0

Eight kindergartens were chosen. As they conducted English lessons, it was observed that Hong Kong kindergartens had a longer duration of English lessons, as almost half of the Hong Kong kindergartens conducted English lessons to the tune of 350 minutes in one week, with 70 minutes of daily English lessons. One of the kindergartens in Hong Kong had native English-speaking teachers (NET) throughout the day, and introduced a bilingual co-teaching programme with one Chinese and one English class teachers in the classroom throughout the session.

#### 4.5.7 Background of principals and teachers

For teachers, the demographics show that most schools employ only those with tertiary level training, as can be judged from the principal's survey. Over 57% of the teachers in Shanghai are NETs and 43% are Chinese teachers of English. Correspondingly, over 90% of teachers in Hong Kong are NETs and only 9% are Chinese. It is a very common practice for Hong Kong kindergartens to employ native English speakers to teach English. In terms of school administrators, the data shows that altogether 23 principals or deputy principals were approached to fill out the questionnaires. Because this is considered too low a number to draw statistical conclusions, interviews have been conducted to complement the qualitative value of their viewpoints. A majority of the Hong Kong administrators who filled out the

questionnaires have over 10 years of teaching experience, while a majority of the principals from Shanghai have over 3 years or less of administrative experience.

#### 4.6 Validity and Reliability

The concepts of validity and reliability are multi-faceted. Reliability is defined by consistency and replicability over time, over instruments, and over groups of respondents. Exclusive reliance on one method likely provides only a limited view of the complexity of any given issue, distorting the researcher's picture. The researcher needs to ensure the data are reliable and not artifacts of one specific method of collection. In this research study, the validity of the qualitative data is safeguarded by the honesty, depth, richness and scope achieved, by the participants approached, the extent of triangulation, and the objectivity of the researcher. Quantitative data validity is reached through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation, and painstaking statistical treatment (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Concurrent validity is adopted in this research and the data acquired using one instrument, such as the questionnaire, is correlated with the data gathered by using another instrument, such as the interviews.

Triangulation is the use of as many methodological perspectives as possible when studying some phenomena to avoid bias (Denzin, 1989:234). The present research makes use of triangulation in order to achieve greater reliability and a deeper level of understanding than would be possible with one single instrument. In this research, multiple triangulations are adopted: (1) subject group triangulation since we involve parents, principals and teachers; (2) methodological triangulation through the survey and the interview; and (3) data triangulation through quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

One research assistant was involved to transcribe the questionnaires in SPSS format.



#### 4.7 Data Analyses

All questionnaires data were put into computer files according to each item with the help of a research assistant. SPSS was used to analyze the data and to find results. A two-tailed independent samples t-tests was performed to evaluate the differences at a  $= .05$  or  $.01$  significance level. The Pearson Correlation analysis was performed for the correlation analysis. The chi-square test is a statistical test used to examine differences with categorical variables whereas T-tests were used to find out whether the means of two populations on some outcome differ from each other. For example, there are many questions in which we want to compare two categories of some variables (e.g., reasons for learning English, most effective way, importance of English from perspectives of different stakeholders) or two populations (parents and teachers) receiving different opinions in context of an experiment (effectiveness of curriculum). The two-sample t-test is a hypothesis test for answering questions about the equality of means or proportions where the data are collected from two random samples of independent observations, each from an underlying normal distribution.

For the post questionnaire process, interviews were conducted and audio taped and the researcher took field notes. Qualitative research was adopted for this interpretative approach, whereby differences and similarities were identified and interviews used to reconfirm the findings. In the process of interpreting the gathered data, we emphasized the importance of understanding the intentions of the interviewee and the unique reasons behind each individual being interviewed.

#### 4.8 Ethical Issues of the study

Given the competitive and even elitist aspects of education in Shanghai and especially in Hong Kong, the sensitive nature of the questions asked in the survey and interviews will have certainly raised red flags in the minds of the respondents; since, be they parents, teachers or principals, all interviewees would have critical personal interests to defend.

To assuage such fears, the consent forms are explicit in that all results of the study will be kept confidential, that the identity of the respondents will be permanently safeguarded, that no name is physically attached to any final data to ensure everyone's anonymity, and that all interviewees are unnamed and referred to only by their stakeholder role and the type of bilingual programme they are involved in. All participants were assured that the names of schools, parents and teachers will not be associated in any way with any published or disclosed results or with any presentation, the research being mainly intended for academic purposes.

#### 4.9 Limitations of the study

The weakest link of this research is that it partially relies on data gathered from a body of teachers that are a combination of locals and native speakers. The cultural conclusions drawn from this mixed group are therefore misleading in as much as they are to throw light on the cultural norms and values characteristic of Shanghai and Hong Kong. Under ideal circumstances, the questionnaire results should have differentiated between NET and Chinese teachers. A further weakness is the decision not to consider the chronosystem. This was due to the fact that in order to give it proper attention it would have necessitated research into areas of expertise (such as environmental and medical sciences) that go beyond my abilities and beyond the size of this thesis, since they represent a daunting task that is best left to further research. Last, this thesis has not observed children or classrooms in order to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching strategies, and has not engaged in any ethnographic study so as to measure learning outcomes.

## CHAPTER V

### Analysis of Results

This chapter describes results obtained through the questionnaires and supportive qualitative data from the interviewees' responses. We begin with an overview of attitudes towards learning English of parents, teachers and principals from the two cities. We then follow this with how parents, teachers and principals view the importance of English learning. Beliefs in the importance of English and expectations of English competence for preschool children among three groups of people are presented here to show differences and similarities.

The remainder of the chapter explores parental involvement in bilingual development between two cities. Analyses of interviews among representatives of three groups of people display the results of investigation on the perceptions of native English-speaking teachers (NET), and curriculum implementation thus relevant comparisons are drawn between Hong Kong and Shanghai.

#### 5.1 Attitudes towards learning English

The attitudes towards leaning English of parents, teachers and principals from the two cities are juxtaposed in three areas of inquiry: reasons for learning English, perceived advantages of learning English, and factors that affect children's interest in learning English.

##### 5.1.1 Significant findings

The following points out clear differences between the three groups in and among the two cities, which reveal both cultural and societal fault lines. It shows also areas of broad unanimity, which suggest that attitudes are largely shaped by societal trends.

- In comparing *reasons for learning English* different emphases were found, with Hong Kong parents viewing it as a necessary “foundation for later learning” while their Shanghai counterparts seeing it as a way to “nurture

their children's interest" in the language.

- Overwhelmingly, parents, teachers and principals in Shanghai perceive the main *advantage of learning English* to be that "it widens children's vision and helps them learn more about another culture". In Hong Kong the three groups widely disagree with one another: parents choosing "it lays a sound foundation...;" teachers, "it facilitates learning...;" and principals, for the same reason as Shanghai.
- All three groups in Shanghai see "interesting learning materials" as by far the most important *factor affecting the children's interest in learning English*, while in Hong Kong only the principals deviate from the parents and the teachers, who are in accord with Shanghai, and shatter cross-group unanimity by their 100% choice of the "chance to use English".
- Overall, the cultural importance of English dominates in Shanghai and its pragmatic value seems to be of primary concern in Hong Kong.

Table 5-1: Comparison of Attitudes (Parents, Teachers, Principals) towards learning English in two cities

	Shanghai (%)			Hong Kong (%)		
	Parent	Teacher	Principal	Parent	Teacher	Principal
<b>Reasons for letting children learning English</b>						
1.To understand western culture (for parents')\To fulfill parents' request (for teachers' and principles')	23.2*	25.6	45.5	12.8	33.8	16.7
2.To lay a sound foundation of learning English in the future	60.6***	46.2**	9.1**	87.2	86.5	66.7
3.To match children's linguistic development needs	61.3	48.7	36.4	55.6	40.5	41.7
4.To equip children with the same level of competence as other children of the same age	4.2	6.4	18.2	4.3	12.2	0.0
5.To link with primary one curriculum	12.0***	15.4	9.1	32.5	28.4	0.0
6.To nurture children's interest in learning English	80.0	83.3**	81.8	81.2	56.8	75.0
7.To meet the challenges of globalization (for teachers' and principles')		44.9	36.4		37.8	75.0
<b>The advantage of learning English (single choice)</b>						
1.It facilitates their learning of English in the future	21.8***	16.7***	0.0 *	23.9	42.5	8.3
2. It helps children build confidence	9.2	3.8	36.4	7.7	11.0	0.0
3.It widens children's vision and helps them to learn more about different cultures	47.9	52.6	45.5	17.1	21.9	50.0
4. It lays a sound foundation of their future development	21.1	26.9	18.2	51.3	24.7	41.7

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**Factors that affect children's interest in learning English**

1. Children's age	20.1	21.8	9.1	19.7	21.4	8.3
2. Level of teaching	59.7***	48.7*	72.7	36.8	30.0	91.7
3. Interest in learning materials	71.5	76.9	81.8	74.4	75.7	66.7
4. Teachers' nationality	10.4	7.7	0.0	13.7	4.3	0.0
5. Family environment	48.6	60.3	36.4	53.8	68.6	41.7
6. Chance to use English	64.6	57.5	72.7*	68.4	67.1	100.0

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Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

### 5.1.2 Similarities

Without significant statistical differences all three groups in Shanghai indicated as their most popular choice “widen outlook” and “exposure to Western culture” as the foremost *advantages of learning English*.

Regarding the *factors affecting children's interest in learning English*, no significant differences were found among the three groups in Shanghai. Both cities agree across the board that “interesting learning materials”, “chance to use English”, and “level of teaching” are the major factors affecting children's interest in learning English.

### 5.1.3 Differences

Concerning the reasons for learning English, the two groups of teachers show very significant differences in perception. The objective “nurturing their interest in learning English” received far greater emphasis in Shanghai than in Hong Kong ( $\chi^2(1) = 13.157$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Meanwhile, Hong Kong teachers believe that “building a good foundation” is of utmost importance (86.5% vs. 46.2%). We also found different expectations between the two groups in regards to “nurturing an interest in learning English” and “transition to primary schooling”, whereby Shanghai teachers placed a stronger emphasis on the

former ( $p=.000$ ) and Hong Kong teachers showed a stronger preference for the latter ( $p=.051$ ).

For the *advantages of learning English*, parents and principals in Hong Kong had notable differences ( $\chi^2_{(6)}= 22.858, p < .01$ ). Over half of the principals viewed the aspect “widen outlook and exposure to Western culture” as the primary advantage of learning English, but far fewer parents and teachers shared the same belief (with only 21.9% of the teachers and 17.1% of the parents). More than half of Hong Kong parents (51.3%) indicated their preference for “laying a solid foundation for future development” while the teachers (42.5%) chose “facilitating their learning of English in the future” which has the same underlying meaning as the principals’ choice of building up English competence. The findings indicate that the principals have a broader outlook aimed at preparing tomorrow’s global citizens, whereas parents and teachers want merely to ensure that their children are not lagging behind in English learning.

When comparing the perceived *advantages for learning English*, nearly a quarter (23.2%) of Shanghai’s parents believed that exposure to western culture will widen their children’s outlook while only 12.8% parents from Hong Kong chose “widen outlook and exposure to Western culture” as their preferred reason, with significant differences ( $\chi^2_{(3)}=36.326, p=.000$ ). Meanwhile, a majority of Hong Kong’s parents strongly advocate English learning for building a foundation for later English learning (87.2 %) as opposed to only 60.6% of parents in Shanghai; a significant difference was found between the two groups ( $z=-4.78$ ). A third of Hong Kong parents believe that English learning will smooth the transition to primary school while only relatively few Shanghai parents (12.2%) chose this item as their purpose for learning English – thus a very significant difference of ( $z=-4.02$ ) was found between Hong Kong and Shanghai. Hong Kong’s parents prefer children to learn English by force of necessity and as a foundation for later learning, as opposed to Shanghai parents who only expect their children to build up an interest in the language and to have more exposure to western culture. Parents in Shanghai, by and large, have a more relaxed view of preschool English provision than parents in Hong Kong.

The principals differed on the underlying purpose for the introduction of English at school. There are significant differences in their view concerning “laying a sound

foundation for future learning” ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 8.811, p=.003$ ), as principals from Hong Kong highly emphasized this aspect while those in Shanghai highlighted their objective to “fulfill parents’ requests” or “to ensure their children are not lagging behind others.”

Concerning *factors affecting the interest of children learning English*, in Hong Kong there are significant differences in three different aspects. First of all, the “abilities of teaching” – with the significant level  $\chi^2_{(2)}=17.393, p<.01$  - was perceived by principals as a very important element and 91.9% chose it, compared with only 36.8% of the parents and 30% of the teachers. There were substantial differences ( $\chi^2_{(2)}=7.242, p<.05$ ) on “the nationality of teachers,” with some parents supporting this notion while none of the principals indicating this as their preference. Interestingly, 100 % of the principals believe that “chance to use English” is one of the most important factors stimulating children’s interest, whereas only two-thirds of the teachers and the parents expressed a similar viewpoint; constituting a high degree of divergence among the three groups ( $\chi^2_{(2)} = 8.971, p<.05$ ).

#### 5.1.4 Qualitative findings

The interview data seem to be inconsistent with the questionnaire. Two parents from Shanghai elaborated that their main purpose of learning English is to lay a sound foundation in the future (SHPA 02, line 03 and SHPA 01, line 08). When the interviewer raised the question regarding the penetration of western culture, the parent from a kindergarten with NET agree, but not the parent coming from a school with Chinese English teachers.

Principals hold strong beliefs in the importance of teachers in arousing children’s interest in learning English. For example, the principal from a bilingual kindergarten in Shanghai stated:

“I think that language is just a tool, learning depends mainly on environment, children at this young age need more interaction with native English teachers, language context is important (SHP 01, line 76). Only teachers with good English will directly influence children’s interest and expressive skills” (SHP 01, line 68).



Most educators agree that ample opportunities should be given to children to practise their English in order to arouse their interest in learning. A NET teacher from Shanghai stated that “learners are self-motivated, interested, always engaging and exploring, willing to share and express” and make up an ideal English learning setting (SHT 01 line 45).

Another teacher from Hong Kong’s bilingual kindergarten reinforces the importance of daily immersion:

“Children should have a chance to be immersed in the language and have ample opportunity to use it outside classroom. I also believe in lots of positive reinforcement so children are secure about speaking and using the language” (HKT 02 line 58-62).

Dissonance exists in Hong Kong between government policy and parents’ expectations. For instance, a parent in Hong Kong stated very clearly that children are very receptive to language especially in phonology and she criticized the inadequate support forthcoming from the government, explicitly mentioning that kindergarten teachers should undertake benchmark assessments just like their counterparts in primary and secondary schools. This view is consistent with the survey data, which shows that HK parents have higher expectations.

#### 5.1.5 Interim summary

In Hong Kong, English being one of only two official languages, if children are not able to build up their English competence they stand to suffer far-reaching effects throughout their entire adult lives. What the data seems to suggest is that the motivation for learning English in Hong Kong is primarily practical or “integrative,” whereby learners pursue the language in order to become part of the culture, which tends to favor greater linguistic competence (Lambert, 1969), whereas the motivation for learning English in Shanghai is less ambitious and thus only “instrumental,” since most are likely to be content with a rudimentary knowledge of the language and with having a better understanding of the West in mind. Conversely, in Hong Kong, language learning is

dominated by its relevance to lifelong success and this, for its populace, means that one must be able to function in English in all linguistic domains, which, it is believed, contributes to a better intellectual foundation.

A clear culture clash prevails in Hong Kong between what Westerners recognize as unrealistic and overly ambitious academic and developmental expectations and what locals consider as normal and necessary demands and who criticize Westerners as unfamiliar with the local culture. This clash is not visible in Shanghai, where the expectations are age-appropriate by everyone's reckoning. This would indicate that Hong Kong's entrepreneurial society is driving the education agenda by imposing its ethos of 'survival of the fittest' on the education system and on children too young to be able to withstand let alone understand the burden of these expectations. Hong Kong's entrepreneurial mentality has therefore a distorting and damaging effect on the entire education system, which explains why despite huge financial and human investment it is often seen as under-performing. Unlike in Shanghai, where speaking is deemed sufficient, in Hong Kong kindergarten children are expected to "have a sound foundation", which means that they are expected to be able to read and write in English by the end of kindergarten.

Underscoring the differences in attitude towards English learning between the two cities, is the divergence between stakeholders (especially parents) in both Hong Kong and Shanghai and their respective governments concerning education. In Hong Kong the issue of the use of the mother tongue as MOI meets with disapproval since the pragmatism of the populace resents the government's underhanded attempt to artificially create a different linguistic arrangement whereby the domains of English are controlled to make room for increased space for Putonghua under the guise of promoting the "mother tongue". Similarly, in Shanghai the government's lack of encouragement for simultaneous bilingualism gets a thumb down from parents who, obviously, do not share their nationally prescribed socio-political agenda of promoting English without its cultural influence, as implied by the policy of *Zhuanye Waiyu Fuhexing Rencai*. In Hong Kong, some also see a clear separation between parents who push and those who don't push English proficiency in their children; a development which could have been brought to the forefront by the government's recent bifurcation of the education system

into EMI and CMI streams, but which ultimately is a symptom of a highly competitive market economy and a society that has assimilated the survival of the fittest ethos.

Clearly then, the way one perceives English is very much determined by where one fits in the social fabric as much as by how close one is to the nation's socio-political agenda.

## 5.2 Beliefs about English learning

How parents, teachers and principals view the importance of English learning is examined through the questionnaire with items such as: critical time to learn, necessity of learning, importance of learning English compared with Chinese, and the effect of English on the acquisition of the mother tongue. Understanding their beliefs is critically important, as this may strongly influence the support and acquisition of English at this young age and could eventually help inform decision making by preschool educators.

### 5.2.1 Significant findings

The differences and similarities identified below are significant because they suggest that an individual's beliefs in the importance of English are shaped by one's relation to the child first and by the society's relation to the language second.

- There is across the board agreement that English learning should begin before the age of six.
- No group considers English unnecessary and both cities agree that English learning is either very necessary or necessary. However, teachers and principal see the acquisition of English as "necessary" while parents deem it "very necessary," which shows that pressure exerted upon children to be bilingual is greater at home than in school in both cities.
- In Shanghai most parents and principals and many teachers agree that English facilitates the learning of the mother tongue, while in Hong Kong all groups agree that it has no effect at all.

- A comfortable majority of parents, teachers and principals from both cities consider both languages important, with parents clearly attaching greater importance to bilingualism than the other two stakeholder groups, with significant statistical data showing that teachers and principals from Shanghai think that Chinese is more important.
- Of all stakeholder groups regardless of city, parents attach the greatest importance to English, seek it for their children earlier than either teachers or principals, are the least inhibited in its pursuit by government influence, and are the most positively inclined as to its value.

Table 5-2: Comparison of Beliefs (Parents, Teachers, Principals) in the importance of Bilingualism in two cities

	Shanghai (%)			Hong Kong (%)		
	Parent	Teacher	Principal	Parent	Teacher	Principal
<b>The critical age for learning English(single choice)</b>						
1.From birth	42.5***	34.6	27.3	26.5	27.4	58.3
2.After 3ys	48.6	56.4	63.6	73.5	67.1	41.7
3.After 6ys	8.9	9.0	9.1	0.0	5.5	0.0
<b>The necessity of learning English(single choice)</b>						
1.Very necessary	48.6**	20.5**	9.1	65.8	27.0	8.3
2.Necessary	47.2	64.1	81.8	31.6	63.5	91.7
3.Not necessary	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	4.1	0.0
4.No comment	4.2	15.4	9.1	0.0	5.4	0.0
<b>Learn English Affect Chinese(single choice)</b>						
1.It facilitates the learning of MT	60.4***	43.6**	72.7***	32.8	31.9	0.0
2.It creates an adverse effect on the learning of MT	0.0	1.3	18.2	6.0	12.5	8.3
3.No effect at all	39.6	52.6	9.1	61.2	55.6	91.7
<b>Importance of English and Chinese (single choice)</b>						
1.English	2.8*	1.3	9.1	8.6	1.4	0.0
2.Chinese	22.5	44.9	45.5	9.5	33.8	25.0
3.Both are important	74.6	52.6	45.5	81.9	63.5	75.0

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

### 5.2.2 Similarities

Both groups of parents, in Hong Kong and Shanghai, value the importance of English and a majority of them agree that it is important to learn English at preschool age or even from birth. Shanghai parents have two major points of view on the critical age to begin learning English, with 42.5 % of them judging it to start from birth and nearly half (48.6 %) from the age of 3 and up. There is a minority of parents (8.6%) who opted for the age of 6 or after as the best time to begin learning English. Among Hong Kong parents, almost three-quarters (73.5%) think that children should learn English after three years of age and close to a third (27.5%) chose birth as the best time to begin learning English. Interestingly, none of the parents from Hong Kong indicated as their preference to start learning English age 6 or up. There is consensus on the critical age of learning English among school principals and teachers from two cities, a majority of them believing that children should start learning English at the age of three or even from birth.

### 5.2.3 Differences

In regards to the importance of learning English, both groups of parents indicate its necessity. However, there is significant variation in the degree of necessity ( $\chi^2_{(3)}=14.339$ ,  $p=.002$ ). Almost half (48.6%) of Shanghai parents strongly believe that English learning is “very necessary” for this age group and an even higher number of Hong Kong parents, two-thirds (65.8%), chose the same category of intensity. Nearly half of Shanghai (47.2%) believes that it is “necessary” while only a third (31.6%) of Hong Kong chose this second level of intensity. Both groups of teachers and principals also believe that it is “necessary” to learn English, but not too many consider English “very necessary”, and quite a number of Shanghai’s teachers (15.4%) did not even indicate their standing. Parents in general, by force of necessity, prefer children to learn English from school personnel. Parents in Hong Kong clearly consider learning English a higher priority than their counterparts in Shanghai.

On the question which language is more important, English or Chinese, there are significant differences in parents’ viewpoints ( $p=.012$ ). Although both Shanghai and

Hong Kong parents believe that English and the native tongue are of equal importance, with 74.6% and 81.9% respectively, Shanghai parents (22.5%) differ significantly from their Hong Kong counterparts (9.5%) in their belief that Chinese is more important than English. It appears that Hong Kong parents consider learning English a higher priority than their counterparts in Shanghai, who believe that both Chinese and English are of equal importance and some of them even rate Chinese as a higher priority.

In asking their belief on whether English facilitates or hinders the development of the mother tongue, significant differences between the two groups of parents came to the fore ( $\chi^2_{(3)} = 34.76, p = .000$ ) with 60.4% of the parents from Shanghai thinking that learning English will facilitate the learning of their mother tongue, whereas only a third (32.8%) of Hong Kong parents agree with this viewpoint. Significant discrepancies were found among teachers and principals with a degree of difference between findings of ( $\chi^2_{(3)} = 12.042, p = .007$ ) and ( $\chi^2_{(2)} = 21.138, p = .000$ ) respectively. Overall, Shanghai's groups of parents, teachers and principals perceive more advantages in learning English for mother tongue development than their counterparts in Hong Kong.

#### 5.2.4 Qualitative findings

Most parents interviewed confirmed that it is critical to learn English at the preschool stage, and especially middle class parents prefer to have more English earlier in life, forcing schools to respond to their demand. Data also confirms a clear divide between the high aspirations of the middle class and the more modest expectations of parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Parents from Shanghai's traditional kindergartens mentioned, "Everyone is starting at the kindergarten stage. We learn Chinese from a younger age, so English learning should also be started earlier" (SHPA -02, line 18-20). Mirroring this viewpoint, a parent from Hong Kong stated:

"Due to the brain development, children's minds are as sponges under the age of six.... I think that we should make use of this natural development of the brain, the mind of children expose them to the English language in a fun way... It is very important at kindergarten stage to start with them" (HKP 02, line 06-13).

Adversely, a parent from a lower socio-economic background said:

“I do not have high expectation of my child’s proficiency in English, meanwhile, I do not want him to be afraid of English. I am satisfied as long as he demonstrates some kind of interest at preschool stage” (HKPA 01 line 62 to line 68).

In regards to the importance of English and Chinese, all the parents interviewed give equal standing to both Chinese and English when rating the importance of each language from 1 to 10, and in Hong Kong, their rating for Putonghua is higher than Cantonese (SHPA 02 line 180-183, HKPA 01 line 176, HKPA -2 line 166).

A Chinese teacher from Shanghai also reinforced the necessity of learning English as she stated in the interview: “I think that it is a global demand and parents from different parts of the world have the same idea on this issue” (SHT 02 line 140). A parent from Shanghai also stated that according to his experience a higher salary is always for better English even though teachers may have the same education background.

Based on the interviews, the interviewers felt that parents are more anxious for their children to learn English than the English teachers of Chinese nationality who stated that English is taught because everyone else is doing it routinely and, having become the norm, schools have little choice but to offer English programmes. This reaffirms the quantitative findings that parents value the perceived advantages for learning English more than teachers, and that their intensity is one of necessity and therefore higher than that of any other stakeholders.

### 5.2.5 Interim summary

A clear contradiction is identified in Hong Kong between the value of English for social mobility and the government’s more guarded standpoint on English learning, whose enthusiasm for English is tempered by the need to put Cantonese first and to make room for Putonghua alongside the two already existing languages. The belief among Shanghai parents that their children must learn Chinese for survival while English is only considered a second language is different from Hong Kong parents’ belief in the supreme importance of English, motivated by the diglossic language situation introduced there during colonial times and which forced the populace to learn English to survive in the context of a society where English was and still is considered an elite language. The historical role English occupies in Hong Kong and the relative novelty of English in

Shanghai explain why bilingualism has developed into a societal phenomenon in Hong Kong while it is still mainly an individual aspiration in Shanghai.

The great language distance that separates both Putonghua and Cantonese Chinese from English has caused difficulties in English pronunciation for Chinese speakers of English throughout Greater China. Consequently, everyone sees an early start in life as the best way to prevent Chinglish pronunciation and modes of expression from dominating the speech of the new generations of English speakers, whose bilingual aptitude is expected to be far better and far more common than their parents'.

The fact that teachers and principals see the acquisition of English as "necessary" while parents deem it "very necessary" shows that pressure exerted upon children to perform well and to take English learning seriously is greater at home than in school in both cities. In addition, parents in both cities value bilingualism more than unilingualism in greater numbers than either teachers or principals. This seems to suggest that parents in both cities are the group which has most successfully separated the English language from its negative historical connotations (as the language of imperialism in Hong Kong and the language of capitalism in Shanghai) and are consequently the least inhibited by ideological considerations, or, at the very least, has the shortest memory. More than anything, this shows that individual aspirations are far more important than national goals in determining the spread of bilingualism once a particular language has established its social and economic importance. Last, it demonstrates that the general population is more attuned to global forces and more capable of quickly adapting than the institutions and governments that organize their lives.

Due to the introduction of phonological elements in recognizing simplified Chinese characters, Shanghai parents think that learning English will enhance the *pin yin* skills of their young children. By contrast, parents in Hong Kong are not able to identify commonalities between English, an alphabetically and phonologically based language, and Chinese, an orthographically and visually based language. This is probably due to the fact that in Hong Kong people continue to use traditional Chinese characters that lack the aid of phonological elements which in the case of Mainland Chinese have been added



when the writing system was simplified, standardized, and subsequently the phonetic notation system of *pin yin* was introduced.

In the last analysis, the ease, speed and passion with which parents have embraced bilingualism demonstrates that in today's global world institutional and governmental control are powerless in the face of sweeping global forces. It also shows that the enthusiasm parents have for English is not tempered by hands-on experience with what it takes to make children bilingual and so the results they expect teachers to produce in their children's language acquisition are often unrealistic.

### 5.3 Expectations of English competence

*The English standards* children are expected to achieve and the *factors attached importance to* in English learning, as well as the *parental level of satisfaction with their children's English*, are the three issues probed in this section in the hope of shedding light on what it is that parents, teachers and principals expect from English learning.

#### 5.3.1 Significant findings

The following findings are deemed significant because they reveal not only much greater linguistic expectations in Hong Kong than in Shanghai, but also only marginally higher levels of parental satisfaction, which indicates that only few children are equipped to meet the ambitions of a generation of parents who are highly demanding.

- Three-quarters or more of all respondents from both cities deem “speaking and listening simple English” and “having an interest in learning English” to be the first and second most important skills in regards to children’s English learning. However, Hong Kong parents and teachers expect their preschool children in much higher numbers than their Shanghai counterparts that they also be able to “read simple English materials on their own,” “to recognize letters and some words,” and “to write simple English words,” which shows a much greater emphasis on literacy skills in Hong Kong as opposed to merely speaking and listening in Shanghai.
- Overwhelmingly, the factor considered most important in children’s English learning is having an “interest in English,” chosen by more than 80% of the respondents across the board. In Hong Kong, however, all three groups deem “understanding the meaning of words” to be of much greater importance than in Shanghai.
- Parents in both cities are satisfied with their children’s “interest” in English primarily and “confidence” with English secondarily. In addition, twice as many parents in Hong Kong than in Shanghai are satisfied with their children’s

“reading” and “writing”.

- Overall, questionnaire data suggest that the three groups in Hong Kong attach greater weight to the achievement of literacy skills like reading and writing than their counterparts in Shanghai, who have less ambitious language learning expectations.

Table 5-3: Comparison of expectations in children’s English learning

	Shanghai (%)			Hong Kong (%)		
	Parent	Teacher	Principal	Parent	Teacher	Principal
<b>The expectation of English standards</b>						
1. No requirement at all	6.3*	2.6	9.1	0.0	4.1	0.0
2. Speak and listen simple English	78.9	91.0	90.9	80.3	81.8	83.3
3. Recognize letters and some words	39.4	28.2*	27.3	50.4	44.6	16.7
4. Read simple English materials on their own	20.4**	11.5**	27.3**	44.4	41.9	91.7
5. Write simple Engl. words	9.9**	5.1**	0.0**	28.2	24.3	41.7
6. Have interest in learning English	76.1	82.1	72.7	72.6	81.1	75.0
<b>Factors attach importance</b>						
1. Understanding meaning of words	24.6**	17.9*	0.0	49.6	36.5	25.0
2. pronunciation	71.1	59.0	72.7	60.7	52.7	33.3
3. Recognizing words	12.7	3.8	0.0	19.7	2.7	16.7
4. reciting	2.8	1.3	0.0	1.7	1.4	0.0
5. writing	3.5*	2.6	0.0	11.1	4.1	0.0
6. Reading aloud	11.3	3.8	9.1	2.6	10.8	0.0
7. listening	46.5	48.7	45.5	44.4	60.8	50.0
8. Understanding western culture	19.0**	19.2	45.5*	6.0	12.2	8.3
9. Interest in English	83.1	85.9	100.0	77.8	90.5	100.0

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

Table 5-4: Comparison of parental satisfaction with children’s English learning

	Shanghai (%)				Hong Kong (%)			
	satisfaction of Children’s English standard							
	Very satisfied	satisfied	Accept-able	Not satisfied	Very satisfied	satisfied	Accept-able	Not satisfied
1. Oral	8.3	35.3	45.9	10.5	8.7	30.4	48.7	12.2
2. Listening	7.6	36.6	43.5	12.2	11.3	31.3	42.6	14.8
3. Reading***	4.8	9.6	56.0	29.6	12.4	20.4	46.9	20.4
4. Writing	3.3	14.8	52.5	29.5	3.5	26.5	50.4	19.5
5. Interest	21.8	38.3	33.8	6.0	14.0	39.5	34.2	12.3
6. Confidence in English learning	19.4	45.5	26.9	8.2	12.3	39.5	35.1	13.2

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

### 5.3.2 Similarities

In both Shanghai (78.9%) and Hong Kong (80.3%) a majority of parents focus on listening and speaking simple English as their primary expectation from preschool education. A majority of teachers from both groups are satisfied with their children's English standard, and the highest satisfaction rate shows up on "interest," about which there are no significant statistical differences.

In terms of *parental satisfaction with their children's English standard*, more than half of Shanghai's parents indicated that their children are confident in English learning (64.9%) and have displayed a keen interest (60.1%), much the same as Hong Kong parents even though they trail behind with 53.5% having checked "confidence" and 51.8% "interest".

### 5.3.3 Differences

There are differences between the two cities in regard to *parental expectations about English learning*. Interestingly, only 20.4% of Shanghai's parents indicated "independent reading" as their choice while more than twice as many Hong Kong parents (44.4%) did so, which is obviously significant statistically ( $z = 3.81$ ). Accordingly, a higher percentage of Hong Kong (28.2%) than Shanghai parents (9.9%) expect their children to write simple words ( $z = 3.81$ ). We also found different expectations between the two groups of teachers in regards to "nurturing an interest in learning English" and "transition to primary schooling", whereby Shanghai teachers placed a stronger emphasis on the former ( $p = .000$ ) and Hong Kong teachers showed a stronger preference for the latter ( $p = .051$ ). As for teachers' expectations of English learning, those in Hong Kong are more demanding of children's abilities than those in Shanghai. There are significant differences on "recognizing some letters and words" ( $p = .035$ , which is  $<.05$ ), "read simple materials on their own" and "write simple English words;" differences that are particularly flagrant on the latter two items.

When reviewing the different aspects of English, a majority of parents are satisfied with their children's speaking and listening skills (Hong Kong, 39.1% in oral and 42.6% in listening and Shanghai, 43.6% in oral and 44.2% in listening). On the other hand, notable differences between Hong Kong (32.8%) and Shanghai (14.4%) were found on reading skills ( $\chi^2_{(3)}=11.857, p = .008$ ). Hong Kong parents devoted more time and emphasis to reading, as statistics also showed more opportunities for reading at home and parents regarded it as the most common means to teach English at home.

As for *factors parents attach importance to*, statistically significant differences have been found in all elements. Concerning understanding vocabulary, Hong Kong parents place higher emphasis on it than Shanghai parents (49.6% vs. 24.6%), the statistical data being  $\chi^2_{(1)}=21.736, p = .000$ . We also find different expectations between the two groups in regards to understanding western culture, with Shanghai parents giving it a higher priority (19%) than Hong Kong parents (6%) and thus giving this objective more emphasis. However, the percentages are low. Interestingly, Shanghai parents believe in the importance of pronunciation while Hong Kong parents are concerned with English writing. When addressing the similar question of "the most important element in English learning" among two groups of teachers, there are statistically significant differences on "understanding meaning of words" ( $\chi^2_{(1)}= 6.704, p = .01$ ). Hong Kong teachers (36.5%) are more concerned about expanding the vocabulary of young children than Shanghai teachers (17.9%).

#### 5.3.4 Qualitative findings

One of the parents from a local kindergarten in Hong Kong affirmed that her expectation of children's learning English is merely "interest":

“Researcher: what is your expectation from your child learning English? Why do you want your child to learn English?”

Interviewee: I do not have high expectation on my child, I just hope that he is not afraid of English; this is very basic, if he meet foreigners, he is willing to greet them, my child may not understand their talking nor speaking English to them, but I just hope that he is not afraid of English.

Researcher: In other words, you just hope that your child is not afraid of English then?

Interviewee: I will be very satisfied if he demonstrated interest in this language at preschool stage.

Researcher: do you think that the kindergartens in Hong Kong have heavy emphasis on English? Very high literacy demands?

Interviewer: I think that reputable kindergartens do have the expectation, but I believe that it is not the majority, only learn from TV news programme, however, they are overdoing this.” (HKPA 01, lines 62 -67)

This opinion clearly suggests her disagreement with developing children’s literacy skills and mirrors the same reasonable expectations found among the two teachers interviewed in Shanghai; the first declaring that “*as long as learners are fond of English and see it as a practical and useful skill for one of their ways of expression*” (SHT 01, lines 32-3) than she is satisfied, while the other teacher said that she wants students to use English as an “*Application and expressive skill, [so as to be] able to conduct dialogue with others*” (SHT 02, line80). In answering the same questions, the two principals from Shanghai revealed that expectations differ from kindergarten to kindergarten. The principal of the bilingual kindergarten, in declaring that she expects “*that English speaking becomes routine in the classroom, [and that children] have English cognition, ...[and are] able to tell simple story [and also have an] awareness of different cultures*” (SHP 02, line 74), is clearly more ambitious than the principal from the local kindergarten with only Chinese teachers of English, who declared that she only “*Expect[s] proper pronunciation from children and vocabulary learning*” (SHP 01, line 66).

The researcher asked a parent from a bilingual kindergarten in Hong Kong the same questions regarding her satisfaction with her son’s English standard in a bilingual kindergarten, and she replied that she is satisfied with her child’s English in reading and speaking but not in writing. She spent 2-3 hours a day reading English to him and five days a week speaking English at home. Despite this, she thought that the child was not able to express himself in writing, which demonstrates that her expectations are much higher than the parent whose child attends a local kindergarten.

In Shanghai, the following view given by this parent (SHPA 02), is quite representative and contrasts with Hong Kong:

“Listening and speaking are appropriate for young children, and reading for older children, but not writing at kindergarten level, speaking is important at kindergarten level.” (Line 98-102)

A principal from a local Hong Kong kindergarten also commented about the limited access to English learning in her school - 2 hours of NET teaching per week – and that over 80% of her students attended English tutorial courses as extra curricular activities outside school. (HKP 01, line 83-85)

A teacher from Hong Kong reinforced, although with qualifications, the importance of learning letters, sounds and sights words by stating (HKT 02, line 11-20):

“I think children should leave kindergarten with a strong foundation of English. If the children are not given a well planned programme and have a good knowledge of letters, sounds and sight words, they need to catch up more at the primary level, or they will lag behind their peers. ....Balanced literacy is the best approach, but when children are very young, I think that we should focus on listening and speaking..... lots of positive reinforcement so children are secure about speaking and using the language.” (HKT 02, line 60-62)

In terms of the four aspects of language competence, most parents and educators from both cities voted for speaking and listening, thus oracy as the top priority, except for one parent from a Hong Kong bilingual kindergarten who prefers the literacy skills of reading and writing as the ultimate goals of English learning at kindergarten.

We also raised these questions to the principals in order to find out the reasons for parents seeking English learning. A principal (native English speaker) from a bilingual kindergarten answered:

“Parents will expect that they can read, they can write and they can spell.....Writing, for instance, maybe parents will see that’s the priority but it’s not the priority if you want to teach English. For me, the most important is to expose the child in a way which is fun filled. Diversity is needed....” (HKP 02, line 17-18)

When the researcher asked about the importance attached to all four language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking - the interviewee answered:

“I think that they should focus on all four. Writing, for instance, maybe parents will see that as the priority but it’s not the priority if you want to teach English..... It’s all about self confidence, self esteem and how a teacher can make sure that the children feel good about themselves, they feel that they learn something. So the approaches again, the first is they are able to listen automatically, do singing first, writing is not a priority.”

Principals disagreed with parents for expecting writing when the appropriate expectations should be listening and singing, that is speaking, not writing and spelling.

The interviewer, wanting to find out more about the government’s support and role in English learning at kindergarten level, asked questions regarding the government’s recognition or support in this respect. One parent from a local kindergarten in Hong Kong stated:

“Government places more emphasis on Chinese, due to the promotion of mother tongue language learning, government has never recognized the importance of learning English, no specified curriculum, no training for the kindergarten teachers. Government always places low priority in preschool education when comparing with primary and secondary school. Not the issue of language, mainly they just neglect preschool education all the time.” (HKPA 01, line 159-165)

When the researcher asked parents whether the Hong Kong government deems English at preschool level important or not, another parent answered:

“The impression from the government is not too good, I attended the parents’ session for Quality Assurance Inspection of the school, the inspector did not encourage too much English learning at preschool stage, since Chinese is our mother tongue, it is important to establish better Chinese, children will be happier.” (HKPA 02, line 105) “Parents’ motives and social mobility for English are very clear at this stage; it is time for the government to take action.” (HKPA 02, line 121)

The expectations education stakeholders have from preschoolers’ English competence are related to several factors that have been identified below.



### 5.3.5 Correlation of possible factors affecting parental satisfaction with children's English learning

#### 1. Reading Exposure at Home

In Hong Kong, parental satisfaction with their children's reading and writing ability is greatly related to exposure to reading at home, with the coefficient of 0.00. In other words, parents are satisfied with their children's English literacy when the children have the opportunity to benefit from more exposure to reading. In homes with reading exposure, both in Hong Kong and Shanghai, parents showed their satisfaction with their children's listening ability. Both Shanghai and Hong Kong data indicates that children who are interested in English learning are also beneficiaries of good reading habits at home. In Hong Kong, children with confidence in learning English are positively correlated with good reading habits.

#### 2. Watching TV programmes and English broadcasts

In both cities, watching English TV programmes and English broadcasts on a frequent basis positively correlates with parental satisfaction in their children's speaking, listening, interest in English, and also their confidence. In addition, watching TV programmes/broadcasts correlates highly with parental satisfaction in children's reading and writing. TV programmes/broadcasts is one of the most common tools for learning English at home. English TV programmes and broadcasts are more common in Hong Kong, since there are free English channels available there.

#### 3. Watching English DVD and Listening to English Tapes

In both cities, watching English DVDs and listening to English tapes on a frequent basis positively correlates with parental satisfaction in their children's speaking and listening, as well as in their English interest and confidence levels. Meanwhile, the Hong Kong situation shows parental satisfaction in reading and writing abilities due to close association with watching English DVDs and listening to English tapes. This may reflect

the findings of the previous analysis, namely that it is not common for Shanghai parents to expect proficiency in reading and writing from their children.

Table 5-5: The correlation between the frequency with child is in contact with the following aspects at home and parents' satisfactions with child's English standard

Shanghai		the frequency with which child is in contact with the following at home (often\not often)				
		Watching English programme	Reading English materials	Watching English VCD/DCD	Listening to English tapes	Listening to English broadcastings
The satisfaction with child's English standard (satisfied \ not satisfied)	Oral	.517**	.348	.473**	.536**	.658
	Listening	.588**	.643**	.533**	.492**	.835*
	Reading	.452	.495	.076	.367	.623
	Writing	.318	.111	.044	.574*	.563
	Interest	.639**	.409*	.355*	.571**	.731*
	Confidence in English learning	.614**	.389	.418*	.755***	.998**

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

Hong Kong		the frequency with which child is in contact with the following at home (often\not often)				
		Watching English programme	Reading English materials	Watching English VCD/DCD	Listening to English tapes	Listening to English broadcastings
The satisfaction with child's English standard (satisfied \ not satisfied)	Oral	.835***	.834***	.608**	.664**	.998*
	Listening	.881***	.881***	.640***	.661**	.989*
	Reading	.761***	.807***	.658***	.571*	.998*
	Writing	.613**	.676***	.544**	.531*	.998*
	Interest	.831***	.920***	.668***	.459*	.989*
	Confidence in English learning	.790***	.913***	.704***	.479*	.898*

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

### 5.3.6 Correlation between parental education background and their expectations/beliefs

Highly educated Hong Kong mothers with university degrees are associated with expectations of their children being able to read English materials independently.

Shanghai parents with better proficiency in English tends to play a more active role in reinforcing English at home.

Table 5-6: Parental education background and their expectations/beliefs

<b>Their expectations</b>	<b>Education background (Hong Kong)</b>	
	Father	Mother
1. No requirement at all		
2. Speak and listen simple English	.179	-.052
3. Recognize letters and some words	-.359*	.284
4. Reads simple English materials on their own	.469**	.468**
5. Write simple English words	-.336	-.138
6. Have interest in learning English	-.160	-.291

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

Hong Kong mothers with university degrees expect their children to be able to read English materials independently. They strongly believe that reading is an effective way to learn English. Higher educated parents from both cities believe that travelling to English speaking countries is an effective way to learn English; the only exception being found in the dissenting opinion of Shanghai fathers. In Hong Kong, the parents' education level is highly associated with their thinking about effective methods for learning English. Parents with a higher education are closely associated with beliefs in the effectiveness of approaches such as: reading English materials, watching English TV programmes, and travelling to English speaking countries.

No correlations were found for Shanghai parents.

### 5.3.7. The correlation between bilingual background of children and parental beliefs

In Shanghai, parental views in the significance of learning English are highly correlated with linguistic background. Parents whose children are from monolingual families place high value on their children's speaking, listening and reading English abilities, with a coefficient of .012 and .011 respectively. Shanghai mothers with higher educational attainments also believe in the importance of learning English at school with reinforcement at home. This is quite understandable, given their higher proficiency in English and academic achievement, which equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills.

### 5.3.8 Interim summary

The findings indicate that parents in Shanghai attach more importance to spoken English while their counterparts in Hong Kong put emphasis also on English writing. This is primarily the result of more systemic and structural pressures for English learning existing in Hong Kong, where the language is used for formal communication in daily life, than in Shanghai; giving the latter city the chance to approach English learning in a more relaxed manner and to touch upon the cultural aspect of the language. Moreover, it can also be explained due to the use of conventional methods for learning English, which place heavy emphasis on the mechanical writing of the alphabet and words at the kindergarten and primary stages in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong government's *Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines* (1996) only advises kindergartens not to engage in any mechanical writing, while Shanghai kindergarten children are categorically not allowed to write before the age of 6. As a result of these factors, Hong Kong parents have a higher expectation of their children's linguistic outcome, which requires reading and writing. By comparison, Shanghai's parents only expect that their children learn English for communication purposes. These different emphases in parental expectations are mimicked by preschool English provision and this may have an effect on later linguistic development.

The data of this section has also revealed that a clear contradiction is identifiable in Hong Kong between the value parents attach to English for social mobility and the government's standpoint on English learning. This is reflected in dissonance between the curriculum guideline of the Education Bureau and parents' expectations, the former being subject to the government's hidden socio-political agenda (which includes the desire to put Cantonese first in education and the need to accommodate Putonghua in society alongside English and Cantonese) while the latter are free to consider only their children's socioeconomic future. This discrepancy of goals has led to a discrepancy of expectations as far as English is concerned. In pursuing English competence in their children, Hong Kong's parents tend to be consumed by the perceived need to meet the demands of globalization for social mobility and marketability of skills, leading them to linguistic ambitions that often overestimate their children's capabilities to acquire English

even in the highly effective bilingual environments provided by kindergartens and also to find relatively little value in the potential of the English language for cultural enrichment. On the other hand, in pursuing English in education, Hong Kong's education authorities are hampered in doing it as efficiently as parents would like them to, because policy makers are forced to put political ahead of linguistic objectives, with the end result of underestimating the children's ability to learn English as early as preschool and discouraging bilingual learning environments at kindergarten. Between these two antipodes there is room for compromise that, if found, can lead to great improvements in environmental support for English at preschool and much better English learning outcomes.

Parents and their governments do not see eye-to-eye on issues pertaining to the education of preschoolers. It can be argued that while parents have much to learn from professional advice in regards to what are age-appropriate literacy targets, governments too have much to learn with respect to education and should be aware of the goals parents set for their children, the concerns they voice and the things they treasure. Finding common ground and facilitating dialogue that leads to compromise is precisely what the last chapter of this thesis will attempt to accomplish.

## 5.4 Parental involvement in bilingual development

As the previous section has demonstrated, parents in both cities in general perceive the importance of English and have high expectations for their children's language competence. This section will examine how parents commit themselves to helping with their children's English learning - by providing them with ideal settings, by spending time with them studying English, by the frequency of English activities offered children at home, and by the ways in which parents help their children learn English – and to what extent this commitment dictates the success children have in second language acquisition. Research into parenting is important, having shown that it has a direct and positive bearing on children's cognitive and language development (Tijus et al., 1997; Tizard & Hughes, 1984), school readiness and academic achievement (Pianta et al., 1997), social and emotional development (Lees & Tinsley, 2000), and physical well-being (Farquhar, 2003).

### 5.4.1 Significant findings

The following findings are deemed significant because they reveal that parents in both cities, and especially in Shanghai, have largely uploaded the responsibility of teaching their children English onto teachers and schools even though as a group they continue to have, as previously shown, the greatest expectations and to be the most demanding of children.

- An absolute majority of parents from both cities consider school the best environment for learning English.
- Hong Kong parents spend more time with their children learning English than their counterparts in Shanghai.
- More parents in Hong Kong than in Shanghai engage in reading English materials to their children at home.
- Not surprisingly, given the richer English language environment in Hong Kong,

parents there see “learning English in daily life” as the best way in which to help their children with English, while in Shanghai, where fewer parents have command of English, they rely first and foremost on their children “watching English DVDs”. Also, about half of the parents from both cities adopt the method of reciting from flashcards to help their children learn English, while watching DVDs and listening to tapes are two other common activities.

- While parents in both cities rely primarily on schools to teach their children English, parents in Hong Kong are clearly more engaged and play a more active role in helping their children learn English at home. Parents in both cities expressed their unambiguous preference for contextualized learning.

Table 5-7: Parental Involvement in Bilingual Development

	Shanghai (%)	Hong Kong (%)	Sig.
<b>Best setting for learning English**</b>			
1. Taught by parents	6.2	13.9	
2. Supplementary class	2.8	0.0	
3. Learned from school	76.6	70.4	
4. Taught by private tutor	4.8	3.5	
5. Both taught by parents and learned from school	9.7	12.2	
<b>The time parents spend helping their children learn English***</b>			
1. Less than 1 hour a week	34.3	15.4	
2. 1 to 3 hours a week	37.3	38.5	
3. More than 3 hours a week	13.4	37.6	
4. Never	14.2	8.5	
<b>The frequency with child is in contact with the following aspects at home</b>			
1. Watching English programmes	42.4	39.5	**
2. Reading English materials	28.9	41.7	*
3. Watching English VCD	44.6	41.4	
4. Listening to English tapes	29.4	20.3	
5. Listening to English broadcastings	8.1	5.0	
<b>The way that parent help child learn English</b>			
1. Letter cards or word cards	44.6	52.6	
2. Reading English materials	32.3	52.6	**
3. Paste English word cards on different goods and utensils	11.5	15.5	
4. Learn it in daily life	60.0	77.6	
5. Play English tapes at home	43.1	43.1	
6. Watch English VCD	64.6	49.1	*
7. Internet	10.8	12.9	

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

#### 5.4.2 Similarities

In terms of what is the best setting to learn English, the statistics showed that a majority of parents (three-quarters from Shanghai and 70.4% from Hong Kong) indicated school as the best environment. All three groups of stakeholders from both cities did not indicate tutorial school as the ideal setting for English learning.

Approximately 40% of parents in both cities spend 1 to 3 hours a week helping their children learn English at home, which is for both cities the most numerous group.

In regards to the types of activities for parents' involvement in English learning, watching DVDs and listening to English tapes proved to be two common activities engaged in at home. Both groups of parents adopt the methods of reciting from flashcards, listening to tapes, labelling common objects, and making use of information technology.

#### 5.4.3 Differences

In terms of the best setting for learning English, there are significant differences between the two groups ( $p < .005$ ). Over half of Shanghai's teachers (58.9%) believe that English learning should be taking place in school, while only 39.2% of Hong Kong's teachers share this view. Meanwhile, a third of the teachers in Hong Kong think that if English learning is to succeed it is of paramount importance that there is collaboration between home and school, but only 13.7% of Shanghai's teachers share this view. Teachers from Hong Kong also indicated a higher preference than those in Shanghai for the need for parents to reinforce English at home.

In regards to *time parents spend with children learning English at home*, Hong Kong parents differ significantly from their Shanghai counterparts in the time they spend with children learning English at home ( $\chi^2_{(4)} = 27.259, p = .000$ ). Many Hong Kong parents (37.6%) spent more than 3 hours a week to learn English with their children while many Shanghai parents (34.3%) only spared less than one hour per week for the same purpose.

In regards to the types of activities for parental involvement in English learning, there are significant differences in two aspects ( $\chi^2_{(3)} = 14.546, p = .002$  &  $\chi^2_{(3)} = 9.221$ ,



$p = .026$ ): “watching English programmes” and “reading English materials”, whereby 21.1% of Hong Kong’s parents and 14.4% of Shanghai’s parents partake in watching TV programmes and 16.7% of Hong Kong’s parents and 6.5% of Shanghai’s partake in reading English materials daily to their children.

#### 5.4.4. Qualitative findings

Shanghai parents, due to their relatively limited English language proficiency, are not as actively involved in helping their children at home as their Hong Kong counterparts. When the researcher asked the interviewees whether they teach their children English at home, one parent mentioned that he hardly speaks English to his child and does only “a little” teaching (SHPA 02, line 36). The other parent stated “sometimes without a fixed schedule”. They all purchased tapes and VCDs as tools for learning English at home. Meanwhile, a parent from a Hong Kong bilingual kindergarten stated:

“Our home conversation is mainly English but I sometimes choose one or two days to speak Cantonese. I spend in average one hour daily in reading, and besides reading, they also read and cut newspaper and magazine, altogether around 2-3 hours. I usually read 2 English books before reading 1 Chinese book.”

From the above, it appears that parents in the two cities differ significantly in the nature and extent to which they are involved in their children’s English learning. Hong Kong parents spend more time with their children learning English and engage in more reading of English materials to their children.

In terms of the quality of resources, one parent from Shanghai mentioned:

“Choices are too many in the market, everything is about enhancing children’s English and we do not know what should we learn? We just indiscriminately buy any materials we can get. The more the better and do not know whether this is effective after paying all the money. Government should provide guidelines and rating for learning materials.” (SHPA 02, line 124-134)

One NET teacher from Shanghai mentioned that classic children's literature in English is missing and that "most of the time we can only buy books written by local authors with Chinese and English version." (SHT 01, line 65) This is no doubt due to China's stringent control of foreign publications.

A principal from a local kindergarten in Shanghai mentioned that their English teaching was done by a separate company, who provides structured curriculum and training for teachers. All the curriculum and learning materials are provided by the agent and parents pay additional fees besides school tuitions for the extra time learning English.

The above reveals that stakeholders in Shanghai want more access and choices of English information. There are insufficient resources to work with and great confusion and ignorance among parents concerning how to approach English learning and what materials to use. "The more the better" does not necessarily work in their children's favour when English proficiency is at stake. Shanghai parents have also identified the need to become better educated about foreign language issue. There is a need for clear guidelines, useful recommendations, and effective approaches.

#### 5.4.5 Interim Summary

Hong Kong parents have higher literacy demands than their counterparts in Shanghai and spend more time reading to their children and nurturing their early reading habits. Due to widespread home-school collaboration programmes, Hong Kong parents understand the importance of early storybook reading as a valuable foundation for later literacy. Their stance is supported by research findings that indicate the most successful early readers are those children who have been exposed at home to written materials (Scarborough et al., 1991) and that family literacy is a predictable indicator of children's academic achievement upon entering kindergarten (Christian, Morrison & Bryant, 1998). The active engagement of Hong Kong parents in regard to their children's English learning is also supported by research data showing that parental skill can provide rich input and scaffold the child's engagement in activities that further language development (Smith, K.E. & Landry, S.H., 2006; Dietrich et al., 2006). Furthermore, Neuman's (1999) observation of parental involvement coincides with the behaviour of Hong Kong

parents as they fulfill the following conditions necessary for the process of building English language proficiency in their young children: (1) placing books within easy reach of children, (2) enabling physical access to books, (3) practicing reading and writing development. Another indication that Hong Kong parents are doing the right thing is provided by Pianta's (2006) research, which has shown that literacy emerges when parents or caregivers provide the relational context of warmth and affection that enables children to master new skills, and by Clay (1991), who maintains that the purpose of adult-child interaction is to foster the child's development of the literacy process and not to help the child get the "right" answers. All research data indicates that more interaction time is positively correlated with a better outcome for language learning.

Hong Kong parents, however, driven by the high linguistic requirements of their city's competitive and elitist education system and their own extrinsic motivations, run the risk of imposing expectations on their children that are overly ambitious and that often backfire by implanting in their children a dislike of English and lowering their intrinsic motivation for learning the language. This negative effect could very well be at the bottom of the city's much lamented declining English standards among the new generations (Lord, 1991; Wong, 2002; Murphy, 2005) and their equally declining interest in having a great command of the English language.

In comparing the two cities, two distinct approaches emerge from the data as alternatives to preparing children for English literacy. On the one hand, Shanghai parents believe in the "maturationist" or "developmentally appropriate" approach, whereby learning takes place through a natural process, while on the other hand, their Hong Kong counterparts strongly advocate the "accelerated readiness" or "structured" approach (Tealy & Sulzby, 1986). Hong Kong parents fully support preschools in their attempt to employ a variety of methods to accelerate the development of literacy through early and intensive instruction.

In addition to orientational differences in how English language learning is approached and supported by parents in Hong Kong and Shanghai there are also differences that ensue as a result of limited materials and resources in Shanghai and a plethora of such means in Hong Kong.

## 5.5 Perceptions about NET

Many native English-speaking teachers (NETs) are employed in the pre-school education systems of Shanghai and Hong Kong. This section identifies whether or not parents prefer NETs over Chinese English teachers, the reasons why they are chosen, and the influence they have on children's English learning (see table 5-5-1). Equally, it probes societal differences in the perceptions teachers and principals have about NETs with regards to: NETs versus Chinese teachers, how NETs affect children's English learning, and the underlying reasons for hiring NETs (see table 5-5-2). Since the usefulness of NETs continues to be the subject of debates in Hong Kong (Walker, 2001) the data generated by this research could throw light on this issue at least at the preschool level.

### 5.5.1 Significant findings

The following findings are significant because even as they show across the board unanimity on how useful and coveted NETs are, they also uncover subtle differences on why they are deemed useful and what they are actually coveted for.

- A comfortable majority of parents in both cities clearly prefer NETs over Chinese teachers of English.
- The primary reason parents choose NETs for their “accurate pronunciation”.
- Most parents see NETs as “very helpful” in influencing children's English learning.
- Teachers and principals in both cities perceive a “big difference” between the way NETs and Chinese teachers teach English.
- Teachers and principals in both cities recognize that NETs are “helpful” in affecting the children's English learning.
- Teachers and principals in both cities by and large agree that NETs are hired primarily because they offer linguistic advantages to children learning English, be they in “pronunciation” or “oral practice”, and secondarily because they “allow children to experience Western culture”. Hong Kong's principals, however, are

the only group that put nearly as much emphasis on Western culture as on linguistic advantages.

- Parents, teachers and principals from both cities see NET positively, choose them for the authenticity of their speech and their usefulness in imparting western culture to preschoolers and consider them to be helpful in positively influencing the children's English learning.

Table 5-8: Parental perceptions of NET

	Shanghai (%)	Hong Kong (%)
<b>The choice for children's English teacher</b>		
1. Native English-speakers	56.9	67.5
2. Chinese teacher with proven English standard	18.1	17.1
3. Trained kindergarten teachers	17.4	10.3
4. Parents	1.4	1.7
5. Both Native English-speakers and Chinese teacher	6.3	3.4
<b>The reasons for choosing native English-speakers</b>		
1. Accurate pronunciation	55.7	46.5
2. Increase children's interest in learning English	38.2	34.2
3. Standard way of expression	19.1**	6.1
4. Let children learn more about western culture	42.7	35.1
<b>The influence of native-English speakers on children's English learning</b>		
1. Very helpful	51.7	49.6
2. To some extent helpful	34.5	35.9
3. No big effect	6.9	2.6
4. No effect at all	2.1	5.1
5. No foreigners	4.8	6.8

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

Table 5-9: Perceptions teachers and principals have about NET concerning children's English learning

	Shanghai (%)		Hong Kong (%)	
	Teacher	Principal	Teacher	Principal
<b>The difference between native-English teachers and Chinese Teachers in how they teach English</b>				
1.A big difference	74.3*	81.8	85.1	91.7
2.A slight difference	21.4	18.2	13.5	8.3
3.No difference at all	4.3	0.0	1.4	0.0
<b>The native-English teachers affect the children's English learning</b>				
1.Very helpful	34.6 *	36.4	47.3	58.3
2.To some extent helpful	39.7	54.5	40.5	33.3
3.No big effect	15.4	9.1	1.4	0.0
4.No effect at all	3.8	0.0	2.7	0.0
5.No native-English teachers	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.4
<b>The main purpose(s) for hiring native English teacher(s)</b>				
1.Allow children experience western culture	51.4 **	45.5	28.8	83.3
2.Allow children to learn legitimate English pronunciation	72.9	90.0	78.1	83.3
3.Provide more opportunities for children to practice oral English	78.6	72.7 *	75.3	100.0
4.Adopt advanced western teaching approaches	22.9	9.1	16.4	0.0
5.Allow children to simulate native accents	18.6	36.4	31.5	8.3
6.Allow children to learn writing	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0
7.Satisfy parents' demands	11.4 **	27.3	38.4	16.7

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

### 5.5.2. Similarities

On the issue of preference of NETs over Chinese teachers, a comfortable majority of parents in both cities (nearly two-thirds in Shanghai and more than two-thirds in Hong Kong) prefer a NET as their children's English teacher. Up to nearly one-fifth of parents in both cities would opt for a "Chinese teacher with proven English standards" as their language teacher of choice. Some three-quarters of Shanghai's and 85% of Hong Kong's teachers agree with the blank statement that there is "a big difference between NETs and Chinese teachers in teaching English," which is the case, even more clearly (82% in Shanghai and 92% in H.K.) among principals.

On the “reasons for choosing NETs”, parents in both cities have an identical voting pattern. The largest group (amounting to nearly half in Hong Kong and to more than half in Shanghai) see the value of NET in their “accurate pronunciation”; while the second and third largest groups (amounting to more than a third of all votes each), value them for their ability to “impart Western culture” and, respectively, to “increase the children’s interest in learning English”. Some three-quarters of teachers in both cities believe NETs are chosen for their ability to teach children “proper pronunciation” and for “providing more opportunities for children to practice oral English”. Both groups of principals have a similarly positive view on the NETs’ ability to be models of good pronunciation.

On “the influence of NETs on children’s English learning”, a majority of parents in both cities agree that NET are either “very helpful” (chosen by half of the parents in both cities) or “to some extent helpful” (chosen by more than one-third in both cities). There is also agreement on the other side of the spectrum, where minorities hold that NET have “no big effect” or “no effect at all” - the combined votes for these two options amounting to some 10% in Shanghai and 8% in H.K. Like the parents of both cities so the majority of teachers agree that NET are either “very helpful” (47% in H.K. and 35% in Shanghai) or “to some extent helpful” (41% in H.K. and 40% in Shanghai). Over 90% of principals in both cities agree that NET are either “very helpful” or “to some extent helpful” in influencing the children’s English learning.

### 5.5.3 Differences

Twice as many parents in Shanghai than in Hong Kong see as their ideal teacher a combination of “both NET and Chinese,” but since their numbers are low (at 3.4% in H.K. and 6.3% in Shanghai) they form a small minority.

In the parents’ case, there is only one significant statistical difference (with the z value of 3.00) on the issue of why NETs are chosen and it concerns the “standard way of expression”, which is the fourth and least popular choice for both cities, but chosen by three times as many parents in Shanghai than in Hong Kong (19% vs. 6%). Significant statistical differences ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 14.417, p = .000$ ) are found on the teachers’ belief that

NET are chosen to “satisfy parental demands,” considered by circa three times more teachers in Hong Kong than in Shanghai (38% vs. 11%) to be the case. Remarkably, a great difference ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 7.727$ ,  $p = .005$ ) is also evident on the belief that NETs “allow children to experience Western culture”, which is held by more than half of Shanghai and only less than a third of Hong Kong; a discrepancy that reveals much about priorities. A significant statistical difference separates the two camps of teachers on that NETs “allow children to simulate native accents”, held by circa a third of Hong Kong’s teachers and by less than a fifth of Shanghai’s. As for the principals, they diverge with significant statistical differences ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 4.921$ ,  $p = .027$ ) on that NET “provide more opportunities for children to practice oral English”, all of Hong Kong’s principals believing this to be the case while only just under a third in Shanghai. An even more crass statistical difference was registered on the NET ability to “allow children to experience Western culture”, chosen by more than 83% of Hong Kong but only by less than half of Shanghai.

While parents in the two cities agree across the board on “the influence of NET on children’s English learning”, a significant statistical difference is registered among teachers on that NET have “no big effect” on children’s English learning, a belief held by 11 times more teachers in Shanghai than in H.K (15.4% vs. 1.4%). Principals, on the other hand, disagree with significant statistical differences about the extent to which NET influence the children’s English learning, whereby more than half of Hong Kong and only a little over a third in Shanghai deem them to be “very helpful” and with reversed percentages (i.e. 55% in Shanghai and 33% in Hong Kong) “to some extent helpful”.

#### 5.5.4 Qualitative findings

The interview findings reveal several dimensions that are invisible to the quantitative data, primary among which is that parents and teachers do have reservations about employing NET only. They made pertinent comments about the insufficient time NET have to interact with children and about their inadequate knowledge of local education practices and the demands of primary schools. One parent also complimented Chinese teachers for their ability to better understand the children and to more easily accommodate their needs



One kindergarten in Hong Kong and another in Shanghai (both non-bilingual in nature) are employing NET on a part time basis. They give lessons once a week while the Chinese teachers conduct daily lessons. Hence, parents and principals maintain that exposure to NET is inadequate (HKT 01, line 05-06; SHP 01, line 21; SHT 02, line 51; SHPA 02, line 30).

Parents and teachers interviewed in the two cities were very concerned about proper pronunciation and they all thought that NET are in the best position to deliver on that count (SHPA 01, line 16; HKT 02, line 54; HKPA 02, line 129). They recognized that Chinese English teachers need to improve their pronunciation and intonation and efforts are underway to achieve this (HKP 01, line 54-55). One of the middle class parents in Hong Kong stated:

“In respect of native teachers, the advantage is the proper pronunciation but they also have accent since they are from different English speaking countries (i.e. England, Canada). However, their language is more spontaneous and natural home language. Meanwhile local Chinese teachers tend to speak instruction-oriented English with repetition, since they do not use English very frequently, they are unable to tell jokes in English, lacking the sense of humour” (HKPA 02 line 27-30).

Chinese teachers in both cities are under a double squeeze: first, they are considered second best by parents and, second, they are asked to accept a supportive role to NET even though they are class teachers.

When given a choice between an untrained NET or a trained Chinese English teacher, two out of four parents (one from each city) expressed their preference for the latter, but they all emphasized the importance of adequate training (HKPA 01, line 25 & SHPA 01, line 24). In the meantime, parents from a bilingual kindergarten in Hong Kong repeatedly stressed the proper pronunciation and training of NET, and one expressed her willingness to accept qualified Chinese teachers who grow up in Western countries and have native accents. She also strongly emphasized the importance of NET understanding child development, pedagogy, and of being capable of arousing the students' interest in learning English.

One parent from a local kindergarten in Shanghai prefers to have both teachers. Mirroring this opinion, one principal from Shanghai and another from Hong Kong, in addition to a Chinese teacher from Shanghai, suggested that it is more feasible to have NET for a short period of time and Chinese teachers for conducting the daily English lessons (SHT 01, line 62-63; SHPA 02, line 68 and line 75; HKP 01, line 8-9).

One Chinese teacher voiced resentment towards NET due to the higher salaries foreign teachers command. Moreover, Chinese principals in Shanghai reveal a greater degree of resistance towards and a more superficial level of understanding about the pedagogical methods NET employ (SHP 01, line 21).

#### 5.5.5 Interim summary

Parents in both cities overwhelmingly prefer NET to Chinese teachers of English. As an indication why this may be the case, teachers and principals from both cities acknowledge differences between the way NET and their Chinese counterparts teach English, but the underlying reason for this preference may well be that the English language is so highly valued in these societies and so valuable for upward social mobility that everyone seeks the most effective and authentic way of learning it.

In both cities, stakeholders across the board agree that the most pertinent reason for choosing NET is their proper pronunciation - teachers and principals being even more adamant than parents on this count. Parents in both cities also attach importance to NET ability to increase the children's interest in English and their knowledge of Western culture, while principals and teachers in both cities greatly value NET for giving children the opportunity to practice oral English. Given the great language distance that exists between Chinese (both Putonghua and Cantonese) and English, and the general disdain for Chinglish (Xinhuanet, 2004), NET are seen as the best source from which to learn proper pronunciation and standard modes of expression.

That NET are either "very helpful" or "to some extent helpful", is taken for granted by all three groups in both cities, the two choices combined having garnered more than three-quarters of the votes across all groups and more than 90% of the votes from principals in both cities, who constitute the most enthusiastic group on this issue.

The least convinced group, on the other hand, is a 15% minority among Shanghai's teachers who, perhaps resenting being undervalued, have voted 11 times more than their counterparts in Hong Kong for NET having "no big effect" on children's English learning. This may be creeping evidence that Chinese English teachers are beginning to feel threatened by NET and resentful of the way in which they are undervalued and NET are overvalued.

That nearly three times more principals than teachers in Hong Kong see the main purpose for hiring NET as being that they "allow children to experience western culture" seems to be the result of education authorities consciously attempting to change ingrained popular opinion about how NET ought to be best employed in educating preschoolers; most teachers still wanting NET to concentrate on improving the children's oral communication and pronunciation skills, while principals also desiring that NET are employed to impart western culture. This reflects the current rift in Hong Kong (Pearson & Rao, 2003) between the general population, who wants preschools to be just as focused on academic development as primary schools, and policy makers and administrators who, among other things, want to endow education with a stronger cultural and social aspect as well.

## 5.6 Curriculum implementation in bilingual education

Parents, teachers and principals play different roles in the process of curriculum implementation. To identify their respective levels of involvement, the following evaluates, first, what they consider to be *effective ways of learning English*; second, what they consider to be *the main factor determining the scope and content of the English curriculum*; and last, their *use of strategies* (see table 5-6-1). A second aspect probed by this section is the difficulties teachers encounter when teaching English in a bilingual setting and students have when learning it (see table 5-6-2).

### 5.6.1 Significant findings

The following findings are deemed significant not only because they show that the way in which the curriculum is implemented differs between the two cities, but also because they reveal pertinent reasons why this is the case.

- Confirming the findings on NET of the previous section, all groups consider “talking to native English-speakers” by far the most effective way of learning English.
- Teachers and principals from both cities agree that having a “curriculum designed independently” is the main factor determining the scope and content of the English curriculum.
- On issues such as teaching in groups, role play, and story telling, teachers from Shanghai diverge widely from teachers in Hong Kong, and the two groups differ generally in their pedagogical methods, Shanghai preferring games, picture/word cards, and repetition, in that order, and Hong Kong favouring singing, group teaching, and games.
- Teachers in Shanghai consider their limited ability to “express and communicate” their greatest hurdle when implementing English activities, while their counterparts in Hong Kong encounter the greatest difficulties with “pronunciation”.
- Teachers from both cities observe that the skill which is easiest to master for their

students is “listening to English instruction”, followed by “pronunciation” for children in Shanghai and by “understanding the meaning of words” for children in Hong Kong.

- Underlying the English curriculum is a general desire among teachers in both cities to have a degree of independence in deciding its form and content, and the practical realization among all groups that authentic language experiences are most effective for learning. The teaching strategies employed by educators in the two cities, however, are strikingly dissimilar and reflect two entirely separate teaching cultures, each shaped by its own material and human resources. Material limitations underlie the Shanghai teachers’ difficulties with English expression and communication while human linguistic limitations underlie the Hong Kong teachers’ difficulties with pronunciation.

Table 5-10: Curriculum Implementation in Bilingual Education

	Shanghai (%)			Hong Kong (%)		
	Parent	Teacher	Principal	Parent	Teacher	Principal
<b>Effective ways of learning English</b>						
1. Reading English materials	31.5**	23.1**	45.5**	57.3	68.9	100.0
2. Watching English TV programmes	53.8*	52.6**	90.9	68.4	73.0	83.3
3. Travelling to English-speaking countries	16.1	33.3	18.2	22.2	29.7	16.7
4. Reciting words and phrases	13.3	16.7	9.1	16.2	16.2	16.7
5. Talking to native-English speakers	84.6	74.4**	100.0	83.8	91.9	100.0
6. English lessons in kindergartens	72.0	47.4	63.6	78.6	50.0	83.3
<b>The main factor in determining the scope and content of English curriculum</b>						
1. Past experience		13.3	12.5		21.0	20.0
2. The curricula of primary schools in the same district		14.5	12.5		4.8	0.0
3. The teachers in the kindergarten		4.8	0.0		14.5	0.0
4. Designed independently with reference to information and statistics on teaching		46.8	62.5		41.9	80.0
5. The curricula of feeder Government primary schools		22.6	12.5		17.7	0.0
<b>The frequency with which the school implements the following teaching strategies</b>						
1. Teach in groups		49.3			84.6	
2. Repeated exercises		89.3			69.2	
3. Role play		57.3			29.2	
4. Story-telling		36.0			73.8	
5. Assisted by using picture cards and word cards		90.4			76.9	
6. Teach through games		90.7			75.4	
7. Teach through singing songs		84.0			84.6	
8. Use information technology		21.6			29.2	
9. Use audio/video tapes		56.0			23.1	
10. To spell and write vocabulary		14.7			19.0	

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

Table 5-11: Difficulties encountered by teachers and students when teaching and learning English

	Shanghai (%)	Hong Kong (%)
<b>Difficulties encountered when implementing English activities</b>		
1. Compiling material content	37.7	19.1
2. Designing teaching activities	31.2	16.2
3. Mastering correct pronunciation	32.5	50.0
4. Teaching English skills and knowledge	40.3	38.2
5. Organizing effective activities	23.4	16.2
6. Expression and communication	42.9	35.3
7. Restrictions from government / cultural limitations	6.5	11.8
8. No difficulty at all	1.3	10.3
<b>The skills which are easier to master for children</b>		
1. Understanding the meaning of words	41.0	40.3
2. Pronunciation	44.9	30.6
3. Recognizing words	16.7	27.8
4. Reciting	15.4	25.0
5. Writing	5.1	16.7
6. Reading aloud	2.6	8.3
7. Listening to English instructions	67.9	63.9

### 5.6.2 Similarities

There is unanimity between Shanghai and Hong Kong's teachers on the main factor determining the scope and content of the English curriculum, where "designed independently with reference to information and statistics on teaching" garners over 40% of the votes in both cities. There is across the board unanimity on effective ways of learning English, where "talking to natives" gets anywhere from three-quarters (from Shanghai's teachers) to 100% (from principals in both cities) of the votes. This further supports the findings reported in section 5.5 on the widely perceived importance of NETs in preschool English education. Approximately 40% of the teachers from both cities, as well as being the second most vexing problem, encounter difficulties when implementing English activities with "teaching English skills and knowledge". Finally, 65% of teachers in both cities observe that the skill which their students find easiest to master is "listening to English instructions".

### 5.6.3 Differences

Teachers adopt different approaches to delivering English lessons. There are significant differences in implementing the following approaches: small group teaching, drill and practice exercises, role-play, story-telling, learning through games, and making use of audio and videos; all with significant statistical differences ( $p < .05$ ). The overall pattern of frequency in adapting different approaches to teaching English is somewhat different, with Hong Kong teachers adopting the story approach and small group learning more often than their Shanghai counterparts by a high margin (use of smaller group learning: 84.6% vs. 49.3%; story approach: 73.8% vs. 36%). On the other hand, Shanghai teachers will teach English through the frequent use of picture and word cards (90.4% vs. 76.9%), drill and practice (89.3% vs. 69.2%), and playing games (90.7% vs. 75.4%). Surprisingly, given today's computer craze, around 10% of the teachers from both cities do not use information technology to assist English learning.

Teachers from the two cities ranked the difficulties they encounter when implementing English activities differently, with half of Hong Kong's teachers perceiving proper pronunciation as the greatest challenge while only a third of Shanghai's teachers experiencing the same problem. Thus a significant difference was found ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 4.615, p = .032$ ). Interestingly, Shanghai teachers worried about basic expression and communication, which they indicated as one of the major challenges (42.9% vs. 35.5%), whereas Hong Kong teachers did not encounter too much of a problem with basic communication. Instead they are more concerned with proper pronunciation.

Shanghai teachers also differed significantly in terms of planning their lessons and compiling material content ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 4.533, p = .033$  and  $\chi^2_{(1)} = 6.169, p = .013$  respectively). This indicates that Shanghai's teachers need more support with methodology and resources for English learning.

For the skills easiest to master by young children, both groups of teachers found "listening to English Instructions" to be the easiest skill to master and they all agreed on the level of mastery. Moderate differences were found on "pronunciation" between the two cities, whereby Shanghai's children seem to have fewer problems than children in Hong Kong, and on recognizing words, where Hong Kong's children seem to be superior



according to their teachers' evaluation. The only significant difference was found in writing, as some Hong Kong teachers (8.3%) chose it as the easiest skill to master, while only a few Shanghai teachers (2.65%) opted for this choice. This may be partially explained through the use of conventional methods of learning English, which place heavy emphasis on the mechanical writing of the alphabet and words at kindergarten and primary levels in Hong Kong.

#### 5.6.4 Qualitative findings

In terms of teaching approaches separating NETs and Chinese teachers of English, Hong Kong stakeholders thought that NETs are livelier and more activity oriented (refer to SHT 02, HKPA 01, HKP 01 and SHPA 01), and more spontaneous in their teaching, their teaching being more applicable to daily life and actual experience. A principal (refer to HKP 01) also mentioned that children are fond of NETs, their lessons being more enjoyable, more interesting and lively. NETs use games, activities and songs to teach. They, for example, conduct English learning in a carnival setting and children truly enjoy this type of learning.

In Shanghai, a kindergarten principal (refer to SHP 01) mentioned that Chinese teachers place heavy emphasis on skills, the didactic method of drilling, and the learning of vocabulary from flash cards, whereas native English teachers are advocating immersion and learning in a meaningful context. She also commented that, although effective, their didactic method neglects the constructivist approach to learning - without elaborating what this approach entails:

“NETs are more suitable for our immersion programme. Chinese teachers' teaching places heavy emphasis on skills that lack daily application. They concentrate on drilling with clear objectives... (SHP 01, line 41).”

“[Their teaching is] also effective in local kindergartens, but they forgot about the self-initiated and constructive type of learning (SHP 01, line 44).”

The other principal from Shanghai also mentioned that NETs have a warmer approach, as Western culture is more affectionate, and that they avoid placing high demands and learning expectations:

“Chinese teachers are more demanding, more structured in their activities. The majority of NETs are not professionally trained but they are fond of children and western culture is more affectionate. Though NET teachers think that the teaching approach of Chinese teachers is effective, they do not accept this kind of drilling (SHP 02, line 51).”

A teacher from the same city remarked that NETs have a more direct and spontaneous cognition for English learning instead of code-switching. One parent from Hong Kong (refer to HKPA 01) and one parent from Shanghai (refer to SHPA 01) also commented that the didactic method is most efficient, however, due to the young age of the children, they worried that children will lose interest and motivation as a result of this kind of mechanical drilling. One Chinese teacher (SHT 02) thought that NETs provide a better setting for English learning but their effectiveness is not as good as that of Chinese teachers. The teacher also mentioned that she makes use of different teaching aids for revision and that flash cards are very effective as a means of introducing and revising vocabulary.

In terms of each city’s teaching/learning methodology, in Hong Kong one parent (HKPA 01) described her method of helping her child learn English as one that is based on conversation and language modelling and expressed that: *“I prefer a lively way. If you use a boring way, like flash cards, children will lose their interest in learning English”* (line 48). Furthermore, based on observing her child, she believes that *“listening, speaking and reading come first at the same time, while writing comes last”* (line 85), which resembles the ‘whole language’ approach, and that, accordingly, from the age of one, she *“emphasized his listening, speaking and reading, even though he couldn’t recognize a word and only saw the pictures in the books”* (line 90).

Having explored perceived differences in teaching methodology between NETs and local English teachers, I also elicited data on preferences of the interviewees. All in all, both local teachers and NETs in Hong Kong tend to prefer more informal approaches to teaching?

A different teaching/learning environment seems to exist in Shanghai. One parent (SHPA 01), who does speak English, supports her child's English learning through tapes, VCDs and conversation. When asked about her preferences between a formal approach that uses methods such as drilling and word cards and an informal approach that uses games and role play, she unhesitatingly declared that the latter is better since it is more effective. Accordingly, she rated the "conventional" approach to teaching with a 5 and the "innovative" one with an 8.

Both principals interviewed in Shanghai describe the language environment created by Chinese teachers somewhat negatively, as one that places "*heavy emphasis on skill[s]*" that "*lack daily application*" and "*concentrate on drilling with clear objectives*" (SHP 02, line 42) that are different from the goals of immersion and slow integration of the English language; and expressed the opinion that "*Chinese teachers are more demanding and more structured [in their] activity*" (SHP 01, line 51).

One of the principals (SHP 02), from a bilingual nursery, stated that:

"We integrate English with learning themes, conduct art activities in English. More exposure to listening than speaking" (line 33) and create a language learning environment where "children are forced to speak English to foreign teachers" (line 37).

As the frontline educators of Shanghai, the teachers were in the best position to describe how and how much English is taught. The first teacher (SHT 01), who is a Western educated Chinese, said that kindergarten language teaching should be "*age- and developmentally appropriate and suitable for many learning styles that the children have*" (line 5) and that teachers, regardless whether they are Chinese or Caucasian, should "*emphasize hands-on student-directed [rather than] structured teacher-centered activities*" (line 10). She praised Chinese teachers for their "*more practical skills*" due to their ESL training, and Western teachers for their "*more natural daily conversation skills*" and their greater likelihood to use "*more games and play in the learning and teaching context*" (lines 15-16). She identified clear differences in the teaching strategies she employs for K1 and K2 students, for whom she likes to use music to facilitate their learning, and for K2 and K3 students, for whom she prefers using "*groups*

*in the class to promote cooperative learning” by having “a whole class discussion, then group work and individual work, or the other way around (think, pair, share)” since, in her experience, “students like to work both individually and collaboratively” (lines 20-24).*

The other teacher interviewed in Shanghai (SHT 02), who is a Chinese teacher working at a bilingual kindergarten, espoused a sequential and cumulative method of learning with *“vocabulary building at nursery level, then making up sentences with vocabulary at middle class, and story telling with simple sentence structure at the upper class”* where there is *“more repetition and role play”* (lines 4-7). She described her methodology as one that is based mainly on the *“game oriented approach”* with *“interactive games”* (line 11) but in differentiating between the strategies she uses for children of different ages - whereby for *“nursery class [she] will use picture cards, [for] middle and upper class [she] will use word and picture cards”* (lines 13-14) – she gave little evidence of child-centered activities.

### 5.6.5 Correlation about possible factors affecting the adoption of strategies

This section identifies and discusses correlations between different factors, which stand out and, if understood and addressed, have the potential to contribute greatly to improving preschool language education.

#### 1. Teaching time and use of strategy

Table 5-12: The correlation between English teaching time and teaching approaches

Teaching strategies ( often\ sometimes\ never)	English teaching time in K1		English teaching time in K2		English teaching time in K3	
	Shanghai	Hong Kong	Shanghai	Hong Kong	Shanghai	Hong Kong
1.Teach in groups	-.704*	-.518	.711**	-.375	-.551	-.660
2.Repeated exercises	-1.000	.723**	-1.000	.877**	-1.000	.237
3.Role play	-.068	.122	.380	.000	.399	.114
4.Story-telling	-.822**	-.571	-.735*	-.800*	-.517	-.531
5.Assisted by using picture cards and word cards	-1.000	.663*	.469	.043	.771	-.393
6.Teach through games	-1.000	.298	.438	-.268	.570	.055
7.Teach through singing songs	-1.000*	.217	-.282	-.333	-.073	-.686
8.Use information technologies	-.344	.010	.444	.292	.224	.000
9. Use audio/video tapes	.333	.384	.469*	.000	.538*	-.414
10.Ask children to spell and write vocabulary in the teaching materials	-.598*	-.421	-.614**	-.517**	-.415	-.511

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

In Shanghai, over half of the kindergartens indicated to have less than 150 minutes of English per week, and only around 15-20% of the schools to have longer lessons, anywhere from 150-300 minutes per week or 350 minutes and above; while in Hong Kong, over half of the kindergartens offer more than 150 minutes per week and around 40% offer even more English time with over 350 minutes per week or more than one hour a day. In Shanghai, a positive correlation is found between the time spent learning English and small group learning and story telling, which translates into longer time to learn English in the classroom. Teachers spend more time in small group settings,

reading stories to young children, and they tend to use video and audiotapes frequently to support English learning for 5 year olds. In Hong Kong, teaching time is negatively correlated with the implementation of more didactic strategies, such as drills and practice, recognition of words and pictures. When Hong Kong teachers have more time, they also read stories to young children.

## 2. Teacher expectations and use of teaching strategy

No correlation exists in Shanghai, but in Hong Kong the strategy of role-play is positively correlated with teachers' expectation that children listen and speak simple English. Similarly, expectations of independent reading are positively correlated with storytelling, logically so, since teachers need to nurture the children's interest in reading before they can become emergent readers.

### 5.6.6 The correlation between parental education background and their perceived effective ways to learn English

In Shanghai, parents with lower educational backgrounds tend to have high regards for didactic approaches such as the recitation of words and their repetitive matching with photos, whereas parents with higher educational backgrounds chose "travelling to English countries" and "frequent contact with native speakers" as effective ways to learn English.

Table 5-13: Parental education background and effective ways to learn English

Effective ways to learn English	Parental education background			
	Shanghai		Hong Kong	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
1. Reading English materials	-.248	-.284	-.509**	-.556**
2. Watching English TV programmes	-.108	-.120	-.354*	-.497**
3. Travelling to English-speaking countries	-.169	-.533*	-.750***	-.928***
4. Reciting words and phrases	.488*	.369	.000	.100
5. Talking to native-English speakers	-.053	-.488**	-.183	-.538*
6. English lessons in kindergartens	-.166	-.084	-.239	-.147

Note: \* p<.05; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

### 5.6.7 Interim summary

In terms of curriculum implementation and the emergence of bilingualism and biliteracy, Hong Kong teachers adopt the “whole language” approach, according to which reading, writing and oral language develop concurrently and interrelatedly (Whitmore & Crowell, 1994). Consequently, Hong Kong teachers spend more time with story telling in the knowledge that exposure to literacy-rich environments leads to rapid growth in literacy skills. Conversely, teachers in Shanghai believe that reading and writing develop sequentially and in adopting the “skills” approach they emphasize letter knowledge and phonological awareness by matching word cards and playing games.

Teachers from both cities indicate that home support, quality of teaching materials and opportunities to use English are important factors that arouse the children’s interest in learning English and increase the effectiveness of the English learning process. Therefore, preschools in both Hong Kong and Shanghai understand the need to provide literacy-rich classroom environments that are well-designed and that teachers must engage children in a variety of literacy approaches: (a) awareness of print, (b) knowledge of the relationship between speech and print, (c) text structure, (d) phonological awareness, (e) letter naming and writing (Van Kleeck, 1990). Many shortcomings, however, stand in the way of effectively implementing these approaches. Some local teachers, for instance, encounter difficulties with phonological awareness because they are not capable of proper pronunciation.

The presence of Western and Chinese teachers in the preschools of Hong Kong and Shanghai, along with reform aimed at changing the practices and outcome of education, has helped the ECEC sector in both cities pass a point of conflict to arrive at a level of synthesis between the traditional teaching methods practiced and advocated by local teachers and the imported pedagogy introduced by foreign teachers. This educational shift has forced a change in the teachers’ roles but has not yet sufficiently altered the context in which teachers are expected to perform. As a result, teachers are expected to no longer be authoritative conveyors of knowledge but learning coaches and guides to exploration and discovery; to no longer be duck-filling transmitters of accepted facts as

much as facilitators of learning not only knowledge but also values and even culture; and to no longer be conservative forces of the status quo but proactive agents of change and active participants in the transformation of education (Zhou, 2005). The educational context that would facilitate this changing role of teachers and the changing outcomes of education, however, is yet to materialize since the education systems of both cities suffer from shortcomings in access, quality and cost that remain to be addressed and that still largely determine the form and content of language education. The gathered data have therefore revealed not only that, for example, drilling and repetition are used in tandem with role-play, singing and games, but that this is so because progressive methods must coexist with traditional ones in order to satisfy culturally determined educational expectations as well as the demands of a competitive education system. In the case of Hong Kong, this seems to confirm earlier findings that the methods used to teach English by as many as 55% of the city's kindergartens - which choose to use textbooks alongside picture cards, word cards, songs and games - "have moved beyond the recommended informal approach", especially for those 32% of them that choose to also give "an increasing quantity of penmanship assignments to children from kindergarten 1 to 3" (SCOLAR, 2003).

The data also reveal that the varying degree of methodological synthesis encountered in teachers in both cities is not only the result of NETs having to acculturate to a different teaching tradition or Chinese teachers having to adopt and adapt to Western methodologies, as much as it is the result of educators being responsive to different education perspectives and agendas that force them to take control of the design of an appropriate pedagogy. Teachers employ methods they deem effective and appropriate by using as a measure the only reliable yardstick they have, namely their experience. As a result, the teaching methods used by both NETs and Chinese teachers are neither always in conformity with the developmentally-appropriate and student-centered practices advocated in the West, nor always in tune with the teacher-directed and authoritarian Chinese tradition, but are always responsive to the demands of parents and the limitations and conditions of the system under which they operate and the school where they teach.



On the other hand, the fact that teachers in Shanghai prefer games, picture/word cards, and repetition, in that order, and teachers in Hong Kong favour singing, group teaching, and games, goes to show that Western methodologies have made deeper inroads in Hong Kong than in Shanghai and that Chinese traditional methods continue to have the upper hand in Shanghai but not in Hong Kong. This could be safely interpreted as being the result of a greater degree of educational cross-fertilization achieved in Hong Kong than in Shanghai, which, given Hong Kong's longer history of interaction with and influence by the West, was to be expected.

In the case of Hong Kong, Opper's (1992) findings - that pre-school teachers failed to alter their pedagogies and that their teaching methods continue to be didactic and to stress rote learning, uniformity and conformity - do not seem to be supported by my data. However, the findings of more contemporary studies - which found that despite the government's insistence that play must be the central pedagogy of kindergarten teachers, structured teacher-directed efforts to realize play have not yet given way to a child-initiated play-based curriculum (Cheng, 2001) - still have some validity. Although there continue to be clear differences in the teachers' practices, especially if NETs are compared with Chinese teachers, there is implicit unanimity that every method, be it progressive or traditional, has its proper place and time and that old and new methods can and must coexist. Play, games, and interactive modes of teaching are consequently used side by side with instructional talk, repetition and drills, since Hong Kong teachers believe that there is no absolute right or wrong approach to teaching.

The Shanghai data confirms earlier studies that change is afoot in the city's early childhood sector (Hsueh & Tobin, 2003) and that a western approach to preschool curriculum is now more popular than ever in China (Pan, 2000), but that the process of integrating the new with the old is by no means complete, that there continues to be some resistance to Western imports, and that many of the city's educators have not yet passed the point of tensions and contradictions between Eastern and Western methods and approaches. As a result, local teachers often mask their antagonism to pedagogical imports with rhetoric and Western teachers often pay only lip service to the methods of their Chinese counterparts. In this climate, Chinese teachers feel threatened by the

degree to which they are undervalued and Western teachers have little incentive to find merit in Chinese pedagogies because they are overvalued.

## 5.7 Conclusion

The two cities' stance towards English is shaped by how immediately important the language is both for national prosperity and individual aspiration for proficiency of the powerful language- From a societal point of view, the opportunity to use English in Shanghai is limited, for many being only in classroom settings so as to endow its citizens with the ability to access scientific and technological knowledge. In this sense, one can only define the type of English-Putonghua bilingualism prevalent there as *elective*. Whereas for Hong Kong, English-Cantonese bilingualism is the historical result of colonization and both languages are needed to meet the society's daily communicative needs. Therefore, its form of bilingualism is properly defined as *circumstantial*. The two types of bilingualism represent the macro environments of the two cities. Though the two seem to differ tremendously, individuals, including parents and other stakeholders in education, in both cities attach great importance to the English language, with Hong Kong placing it much higher than Shanghai on its list of priorities. In addition, our data clearly show that parents in both cities have much higher expectations for the proficiency of the language than their respective governments.

Attitudes towards English, as the data has shown, differ because they are determined by where one fits in the social fabric and hence by how close one is to the nation's socio-political agenda. From an individual perspective, one's attitude towards English in Hong Kong is shaped by the importance the English language has in society as an official language, leading to an *integrative* motivation to learn it (see section 2.5.4 in chapter 2); while in Shanghai, where English is merely a second or foreign language, the motivation to learn it is only *instrumental*, that is, for better schooling or job market prospects. This has led to very high and even age-inappropriate linguistic benchmarks in Hong Kong, which are underscoring a fundamental divergence between the different stakeholder groups about how intensively English should be taught. In Shanghai,

differences are focused on the government's lack of encouragement for simultaneous bilingualism, an attitude to bilingualism that the parents resent.

Given the different roles English plays in Hong Kong and Shanghai and the fact that parental expectations are motivated only by their children's best interests while policy makers must also consider government ideology, it is not surprising that the findings indicate varying expectations of English competence and thus varying approaches to bilingual education. These differences are especially marked between parents and the government of Hong Kong about the appropriateness of using English as the MOI in preschools; a dissonance resulting from the government's socio-political agenda of putting Cantonese first in education and of accommodating the newcomer Putonghua in society alongside Cantonese and English. In Shanghai, the clash between parental and governmental agendas takes place around the issue of whether kindergartens should be allowed to provide English immersion programmes that would afford the English language a place in education not allowed the local dialect/language, Shanghaihua.

The data on parental involvement has revealed that Hong Kong parents lead their Shanghai counterparts in the amount of time they spend with their children using English and in the nature of the English learning activities they engage in, which are far more hands-on than those employed by parents in Shanghai. This is the case because English competence is far more common among Hong Kong's parents, who, as a result, do not have to rely solely on schools to ensure that their children learn English, which is largely the predicament of Shanghai. The data also reveals two distinct approaches to English literacy, the *maturationalist* or *developmentally appropriate* approach in Shanghai, which believes that children must be allowed to learn at their own pace and thus naturally, and the *structured* or *accelerated readiness* approach in Hong Kong, which believes that the children's development must be accelerated by adults through systematic and structured learning. This is consistent with the varying levels of linguistic competence expected of children in the two cities.

Perceptions about NETs are remarkably similar and overwhelmingly positive within the two cities, indicating that parents prefer NETs to Chinese English teachers, and that all stakeholders choose them for the authenticity of their speech and usefulness in imparting western culture, and that they are a good influence on children's English

learning. The value parents attach to NETs is in fact so great and often so devoid of criticism as to have given local teachers, especially in Shanghai (where NETs are a more recent phenomenon) the impression that they are being undervalued while NETs are being overvalued.

Few if any points of congruence between the two cities are notable in regard to methods of teaching. By and large, Hong Kong educators have begun to supplant Confucian pedagogies with Western ones, while teachers in Shanghai have merely begun to supplement their traditional teaching methods with Western imports.

## CHAPTER VI

### Implications

In light of the fact that pre-school services in Hong Kong and Shanghai have become the concern of education departments and are no longer viewed as merely childcare facilities, and that child socialization in both cities encompasses more than 95% of all children and has been transferred by parents into the hands of institutions, what presently happens in kindergartens will affect the entire spectrum of education and impact society at large. Conversely, the form and nature of the ECEC systems of Shanghai and Hong Kong are themselves social phenomena derived as a result of multidimensional influences from throughout the ecological context referred to by Bronfenbrenner (1979). As such, throwing a wide net over this continuum of direct and indirect forces that affect children and considering implications that go beyond the strict limits of their preschool environment is necessary if the complexity of the issue is to be comprehended and the proposed recommendations are to be meaningful and effective.

The following highlights the contextual factors and research findings presented in this thesis and structures the implications and recommendations bearing upon English learning/teaching at kindergarten level according to Bronfenbrenner's conceptualisation. The implications outlined below are borne out by the research findings and most are inferred by juxtaposing the questionnaire data, education policy, and socio-political realities. In an attempt to show how implications emanate from education outward, using the five-tiered model developed on the basis of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology, preschool bilingual education is assessed within the complex system of relationships encompassed by multiple levels of the environment from immediate settings of family and school to broad cultural values and social beliefs. The line between each tier of the ecological system, however, is not clear-cut and the discussion on implications to a particular tier could result in some overlapping with another.

## 6.1 MACROSYSTEM

The macrosystem encompasses the most distant but powerful influences on the child derived from regional, international and global changes that have a widespread and enduring impact on the way societies, communities and families operate. In this context, the political and economic forces that affect or guide early childhood education fall within the macrosystem level of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of human development.

The question "*To what extent have contextual factors influenced English language learning at preschool level in Hong Kong and Shanghai,*" posed at the beginning of this thesis, falls into the domain of the macrosystem. The extensive archival analysis, referenced by literature and written documents (see chapter 2) and the context analysis (chapter 3), provides the contextual discussion of the political and macroeconomic factors surrounding pre-school education in general and English provision in particular.

### 6.1.1 Political Influences

The policy of English and Chinese bilingualism has had a direct and considerable impact on English in education (EiE) at all levels, preschool included. By identifying English as crucial to national development and modernization, the government allowed the education system to place more emphasis and consequently more resources on English than ever before. This brought about an explosion of interest in English from the supply and demand sides of education, which led to the inclusion of English as a core subject in school curricula and to its indispensability, on the individual level, for upward social and economic mobility, and on the national level, for internal development and external participation. Shanghai being most open to and influenced by the outside world, the importance of English was recognised by necessity early on and the language acquired great importance first in politics and trade and then in education.

In Hong Kong the constitutional perpetuation of the status of English as an official language underscored its centrality in all language domains, education included, post

handover. The policy of biliteracy and trilingualism reinforced the importance of English for Hong Kong's present and future survival and made English, alongside Chinese literacy, a requirement of education. And last, the largely politically motivated bifurcation (into EMI and CMI streams) of the compulsory education system had as a blowback effect the need to achieve English competence at preschool in order to qualify for the much reduced but greatly coveted EMI stream.

### 6.1.2 Knowledge-based Economies and Globalization Trends

Economic considerations, both regional and global, are arguably the strongest determinants of education policies related to English especially in Hong Kong but also in Shanghai. Their education sectors have had to adjust to new and powerful economic requirements as a result of their transformation into knowledge-based economies and the globalisation of trade. In Hong Kong this has resulted in expanded, trilingual linguistic demands that can only be achieved if present and future generations are raised multilingually from kindergarten on, bringing simultaneous bilingualism to the forefront of parental concerns and forcing all stakeholders to pour more energy and money into languages. It has imposed more ambitious requirements for literacy targets even on preschoolers and it has flooded the education system with demands that have changed the way linguistic and academic ability are measured in students and teachers and the way in which private and public money is used to achieve academic and linguistic targets, transforming education into a commodity and English proficiency into a marketable asset.

In its drive to integrate with the world economy, obtain foreign know-how, and rise to global city status, Shanghai recognized the communicative and instrumental function of English and was among the first cities in China to pay special attention to English and educate its human resources bilingually (Adamson, 2004). Several changes have occurred in Shanghai's pre-primary education sector in response to internal and external economic pressures. First, the authorities have come to view the English language as a crucial component of the city's economic strategy, pushing it to the top of the education agenda and promoting it from preschool onward. Second, economic progress has

brought greater affluence and consequently higher academic expectations and a greater willingness on the part of parents to dedicate resources for the best of education - now seen as bilingual education - increasing competition for key schools and raising the academic stakes at kindergarten, now fully integrated with the compulsory education system and more often than not bilingual in nature. There is enough evidence to show what is called the 'craze' for English (Hu, 2007) in China in general and Shanghai in particular both in terms of parental expectations and policy making to promote bilingualism. However, budget constraints and the embrace of a market economy mentality have led to the government's unwillingness to increase public spending on education and thus greater private participation is encouraged, leading to the decentralization of the preschool education sector, an explosion in the cost of education, and to elitism.

## 6.2 EXOSYSTEM

The second outer layer is that of the exosystem, which defines the larger social system beyond the child's immediate reach. The parents' professional world and the social networks that engulf parents and children, alongside legislation, policies and forces that regulate and structure early childhood education, form the spectrum of the exosystem according to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory.

The question "*Considering the cultural commonalities and socio-political dissimilarities of the two cities, what roles - according to current research - do parents, teachers/principals, and policy makers play in children's English learning,*" posed at the beginning of this thesis, falls into the domain of the exosystem and an understanding of this system has clear implications for preschool education.

Since parents, teachers/principals, and policy makers occupy different positions in the education picture, they hold different perspectives in their decisions about the education of children.



### 6.2.1 The Role of Parents in Children's English Learning

In making decisions about the education of their children, parents take as reference not the government's agenda but their children's best interests and the family's material limitations. Parents pay for, direct and oversee their children's education. They want the best English instruction their budgets can afford in order that their offspring becomes competent enough to qualify for EMI or international schools in the case of Hong Kong and for key government schools in the case of Shanghai, which in turn ensure access to the tertiary education system that, in a global economy, is the gateway to lucrative and rewarding professional careers. In choosing bilingual kindergartens, the results chapter has clearly shown (see sections 5.1 and 5.2) that parents plan and pay for their children's future success because they recognize the value of such an education and in so doing they have to consider the economic and political environment they live in, social expectations, the nature of the education system, and future career prospects.

### 6.2.2 The Role of Educators in Children's English Learning

In delivering a bilingual education to their students, teachers and principals are bound by professional guidelines and the limitations of the education system they operate under in addition to government policies and parental demands. They are therefore at a point of congruence between parental and governmental expectations and as such in the middle of the dialogue and confrontation between what parents and what policy makers expect education to be and to achieve. That teachers and principals are caught in the middle by the conflicts that arise between the demands of parents and those of policy makers has been clearly born out by the tension between the data presented in sections 5.3 and 5.6 of the results chapter. In Hong Kong the main conflict is between the policy makers' call that preschool teachers should not prematurely seek English literacy but should stay within the requirements of emergent literacy (and that they should use the mother tongue as the medium of instruction) and the parental demand for just the opposite. Conversely, Shanghai's conflict is, on the one hand, the result of the policy

makers' insistence that preschools adopting a bilingual mode must not give precedence to English over Putonghua as the MOI and, on the other hand, parental over-enthusiasm for English that encourages kindergarten operators to do just that.

### 6.2.3 The Role of Policy Makers in Children's English Learning

In making education decisions, the last group, that of policy makers, must primarily consider the overt and covert objectives of the political leadership, which dictates the scope and direction of education, secondarily, the existing system that they must work with, and last, the public opinion. In promoting multi-linguistic competence among the general public, policy makers must be mindful of what benefits policy making must bring to society and of how this competence is to fit in the existing scheme of things. The policy of biliteracy and trilingualism promulgated by Hong Kong's political leadership, has, as shown in Chapter 2 (section 2.2), a threefold purpose: to prepare its young citizens for the new global economy, hence English, for political integration with the Mainland, hence Putonghua, and to uphold Hong Kong's distinctiveness, hence Cantonese. Conversely, the policy of English-Chinese bilingual education applied in Shanghai has two objectives: to educate the new generation so that Shanghai can acquire global city status, hence English, and so that China can secure its internal unity, hence Putonghua while ignoring the local dialect, Shanghaihua.

In facilitating English for preschoolers it is clear that parents are the most enthusiastic and are animated primarily by the conviction that the English language is indispensable for their children's success in life. Teachers are forced to consider how an additional language affects the children's cognitive, social and affective abilities and are thus concerned about how best to teach it and at what pace while following the prescribed curriculum. And policy makers are confined by political, economic, and structural considerations that define the scope and tone in designing language policies. This being the case, it is not surprising that parents are the most instrumental advocates for English, and teachers and principals are eager to meet the demands, while policy makers can only promote it with serious caveats.

## 6.2.4 Hong Kong: exosystem level implications and recommendations

### 6.2.4.1 EMI and CMI bifurcation after 1997

The handover has created a new political reality in Hong Kong necessitating a different socio-linguistic alignment. It is in the long-term interest of Hong Kong to accommodate Putonghua as the language of the central government especially since it is spoken by 95% of the Mainland. The government has signalled its intention to make Hong Kong's population biliterate and trilingual. The people, however, resist changes to the education system – such as restricting English as the MOI of most schools by bifurcating the system into strictly separate branches, one using English and the other Chinese as their MOI – that are designed to accommodate all three languages but with different emphases. The government's sociopolitically and economically driven policy to restrict EMI schools does not coincide with the desires of the people and is central to this debate. Since the debate is by no means resolved, parents plan early to position their children linguistically for enrolment in English-medium secondary schools, which are seen as more prestigious and as better for their future. They attempt to make their children sufficiently proficient in English by the time they finish kindergarten, thus pushing English language learning to a new level of importance for preschools.

The English programme offered in CMI schools in Hong Kong is by strict definition a weak form of bilingual education (Baker, 2001). The programme usually consists of no more than one hour a day of English instruction, which at best only leads to limited bilingualism. As the cognitive advantages bilinguals have are widely acknowledged in the academic discourse (Cummins, 1980), it is clear that the intended benefits of a bilingual education will not be forthcoming from this form of compromised bilingualism. Recent literature predominantly illustrates that students have the capacity to easily store two or more languages and bilinguals have cognitive advantages over limited bilinguals and monolinguals. The MOI policy sets it at odds with popular demand for EMI schools and contradicts Hong Kong's stated agenda for biliteracy and trilingualism (So, 2000). *The policy creates bottlenecks on entry to such schools and*

*transfers the task of accomplishing English language proficiency onto the shoulders of pre-schools, which are forced to respond by making English learning/teaching critically important and employing teaching methods that may not be age-appropriate and contravene emergent literacy objectives.* Hence, I support the argument that the current banding system does not serve Hong Kong's education objectives well and must therefore be reviewed and redesigned, or the system should be gradually phased out. In its place, a regenerated or new system should help create space for producing more balanced bilinguals the society desires and will help eliminate the backwash effect of immense pressure on schooling at kindergarten and primary levels.

#### 6.2.4.2 Mother tongue and Putonghua

The argument given above is by no means an indication to ignore the mother tongue and Putonghua, which are crucial in all respects. It is important to point out that there seems to be no evidence to suggest that the promotion of a stronger form of bilingual education, such as that adopted in an EMI school, would inevitably lead to weakened competence in pupils' mother tongue and learning of Putonghua as many policy makers assume. In fact, some research indicates that students in EMI schools are more likely to achieve balanced bilingualism (Marsh, Hau & Kong, 2000; Lee, 2002). Even more positive results (Guo, 2003; Zhu, 2004) are reported from Shanghai's experiment with bilingual education (Zhu, 2007). Even in some CMI schools where a stronger form of English-Chinese bilingual education is adopted and some subjects are conducted in English, in addition to the one-hour per day English subject, most students have demonstrated better competence in both Chinese and English (Chan, 1996).

#### 6.2.5 Shanghai: exosystem level implications and recommendations

There are clear tensions between Chinese-English bilingual education advocates and those who are against it. While the former usually see bilingual education as intercultural enrichment for pupils, the latter perceive it as a threat to national identity and even sovereignty of the nation state (see Xu, 2003; Ma, 2004, cited by Feng, 2005;

2007). As a result, the additive bilingual education model perceived to be suitable for China (Wang, 2003) is said to be a model that places emphasis only on linguistic skills without concern for cultural dimensions. Feng (2007) asserts that China needs to redefine the aim of Chinese-English bilingual education and thus reconceptualise the notion of additive bilingualism if it is to resolve existing tensions in bilingual education with regards to “*the position of mother tongue language and culture in relation to the target language and culture for language provision.*” A new conceptualization should go beyond the goal of merely accessing Western learning for utilitarian purposes by developing only linguistic competence in pupils. An intercultural stance which takes language learning as part of the general education in enriching and transforming students in cognitive, affective and behavioural terms should be embraced as the outcome of bilingual education. I further argue that such a stance is important for preschool education. As shown in 5.6, preschool teachers in Shanghai tend to follow traditional teaching methodology by emphasizing linguistic gains, but tend to be less ready to experiment with new approaches. With this stance, policy makers, teachers and parents would perhaps become open-minded towards new education philosophies and more ready to adopt new pedagogies than they currently are.

### 6.3 MESOSYSTEM

The relationship between early childhood education settings and the family, as well as interconnections among the various settings through which a child passes during childhood pertain to the **mesosystem** level of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory (1979).

In probing the question “*Due to high and increasing demand for English in early childhood, what language learning approaches are favoured by each city and what are the prevalent opinions about how to improve bilingual learning?*” the data reveals broad differences if not in theory at least in practice between and within the two cities. Shanghai still promotes a weak form of bilingual education that is driven by instrumental motivation and sees English as the key to Western knowledge and to upward mobility,

while Hong Kong, driven by integrative motivation, encourages a strong form of bilingual education with balanced bilingualism or even trilingualism as the ideal and intended outcome. Furthermore, due to the relative lack of familiarity of Shanghai's teachers with Western pedagogies, and lingering doubts about their effectiveness in Asian contexts, a rather traditional approach to English teaching is employed. In Hong Kong, additive and even simultaneous bilingualism are pursued and strong trust has been placed in Western methodologies that are child-centred, play-oriented, and pressure-free, even though traditional methods persist due to backwash from the compulsory education system and restrictions in access to English-medium instruction schools. Stakeholders in both cities, however, agree that more exposure to English and instruction by NETs rather than Chinese English teachers would most effectively contribute to bilingual learning. As an economical alternative, stakeholders approve of better trained Chinese teachers offering more hours of English.

### 6.3.1 Implications and recommendations for education authorities

#### 6.3.1.1 Curriculum guidelines

Much of the current theory on bilingualism focuses on giving children the “whole” literacy experience (Genesee, 1994 a) rather than teaching them oral basics, yet *the impetus of education in Hong Kong, and to a lesser degree in Shanghai, is on achieving concrete literacy results increasingly early in life, thus coercing preschoolers to perform tasks and acquire levels of English competence through didactic methods that are developmentally inappropriate and even coercive. In Shanghai, this is partly the result of a laissez-faire attitude on the part of education authorities whose curriculum guidelines for preschools are inadequate and have led to a general lack of standards and direction in bilingual education. In Hong Kong, the existing guidelines, though the most comprehensive in the city's history, lack specificity and are not considered sufficiently ambitious by parents, especially since they are skewed in favour of the mother tongue, leading to suspicion and mistrust.*

To change existing shortcomings, the Hong Kong Government has clearly indicated in its Curriculum Guide that preschool should cultivate children's interest and develop their English through informal, enjoyable and challenging learning which is integrated, open and appropriate to children's developmental needs and interests and that more should be done to enhance creative thinking and to make full use of the English language as a meaningful tool of communication. Education authorities in Hong Kong have cautioned that children who start learning English at an early age do not necessarily acquire desired proficiency in a language unless appropriate support is provided in terms of qualified teachers, opportunities to use the language extensively and a suitable curriculum (SCOLAR, 2003). *Despite enlightened guidelines, implementation in both cities is often inconsistent with the government in terms of appropriate support, age-appropriate developmental targets, opportunities to use the English language as a meaningful tool of communication, and providing children with active language interaction.*

English learning is a much neglected topic in the existing curriculum guide of Shanghai and Hong Kong's English learning guidelines, in an attempt to encourage the use of the mother tongue as the MOI of kindergarten, focus mainly on abstract theories instead of practical English teaching/learning. *Neither benchmarks and outcomes nor clear direction is offered by the preschool curriculum guides of Shanghai and Hong Kong in terms of English learning. They abound in what educators must do but not in how they could do it.*

The elementary school curricula of both cities, but especially Hong Kong, pose problems to preschools by forcing them to prepare children for the requirements of an examination-heavy compulsory education system. Therefore, tension arises between the recommended pedagogy for preschools and the expected competence expected by primary schools. *The primary one curriculum, therefore, tends to contradict the required practices for kindergartens, and has a negative washback effect on adaptation of a play-oriented, developmentally appropriate approach to learning English.*

Given these conditions, it is my contention that we need to find an innovative language education programme that promotes proficiency in international languages of wider communication together with proficiency in the national language. To this end,

(i) *Education authorities must develop a curriculum for bilingual preschools.* Concerns over the use of the mother tongue as the MOI, which shape language policy in both cities, must give way to the recognition that English at preschool is here to stay since demand for English competence is growing not weakening. Objections to bilingual education at preschool level - based on the notion that use of the mother tongue and not an L2 is most effective for learning - are largely unfounded since language development itself is the primary concern of kindergartens. Since language itself is what preschoolers have to master, what language they use is beside the point. Whatever language or languages they are exposed to is what they will learn and this language or languages are not going to be in the way of other knowledge acquisition. This means that kindergarten is the best place and preschool age the best time to expose children to bilingualism. Concerning fears of cognitive impairment, Diaz (1985) makes a good case that a bilingual's cognitive "flexibility" is at its maximum during the early stages of bilingual development, before balanced proficiency is attained.

(ii) *Clear language outcomes and a more comprehensive set of linguistic skills are needed.* Education authorities in both cities should move towards a policy of providing young children with a more comprehensive set of linguistic skills than the basic rudiments of the English language. They should also provide preschools with clear language outcomes. Although the two cities' curricula list out the development characteristics they do not give concrete guidelines on what is considered appropriate and what is not. This lack of specificity leaves an unacceptable degree of latitude on the part of each individual educator. A more specific set of guidelines, such as England's national literacy key stage and learning expectations, would ensure



greater adherence to the curriculum's goals and more homogeneity throughout the system.

(iii) *The curricula of different levels of the education system must be systematic and coherent.* In designing curricula, education authorities in both cities must consider how well the kindergarten curriculum complements the requirements of the elementary school curriculum and vice versa. The two must be compatible. Only complementary curricula have the potential of facilitating a smooth transition from kindergarten to elementary school, the desired application of age-appropriate pedagogies, and reciprocity in language education.

#### 6.3.1.2 Resources

Governmental restrictions have made English literacy resources scarce and inauthentic in Shanghai, leading to inadequate support for second language acquisition. In Hong Kong resources are widely perceived as abundant leading to false comfort that its English environment is adequate. *The reality is that both cities have room for improvement as far as literacy resources are concerned.*

China is a developing country lacking educational resources, including adequate financial support and qualified bilingual teachers, mainly due to unprecedented growth in English education. Immersion or partial immersion models are ideal but mean a high requirement of financial and human resources in addition to lab equipment, authentic textbooks and adequate syllabi, all being pre-conditions for successful immersion programmes. *Given China's size, the growing interest in English throughout the country, and the need to address economic inequalities between its different regions, it is unlikely that Shanghai can provide any time soon sufficient material and human resources for adequate English instruction at preprimary level across the board since competition for such resources is fierce within China.*

Hence I argue that:

(i) *In Shanghai access to Internet resources must be facilitated* since the Web provides the most accessible and cost effective information source. This will aid bilingual education not only by nurturing bilingualism but also by creating the environment needed by intercultural speakers, as espoused by Feng (2007), and tertiary socialization, as understood by Byram (1997) and Doyé (2003). English materials available online would allow teachers to integrate resources into the curriculum on an ongoing and individual basis, give learners more freedom to learn on their own, and alleviate demand for what is an obvious shortage of NETs.

(ii) *China would benefit by lifting censorship on children's books.* Given the known benefits of print-rich environments for children's language learning (Sulzby, 1991; Cox, Fang & Otto, 1997), less censorship on children's picture books would facilitate access to adequate print materials in Shanghai and contribute to a richer English environment. Access to a wide selection of children's books that contain broad and authentic representations of language and culture would encourage more story reading at home and in school, as research clearly shows (Hildebrand & Bader, 1992; Teale & Sulzby, 1987).

(iii) *National publishers should be encouraged.* Since cost rather than censorship is often preventing access to foreign books, both cities should encourage local publishers to produce cost-friendly versions of popular children's literature. Equally, local publishers should be encouraged to translate into English well-known Chinese children's books. Public libraries should have provision for children's English books, book clubs, and visiting experts to conduct early English reading workshops for parents, since early reading to children, research has shown (Bus, Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995), is one of the most important factors in emergent literacy.

### 6.3.1.3 Teacher education & benchmarks

Both cities are raising the pre- and in-service teacher training standards and are introducing legislation to better monitor teacher performance through benchmarks. *Shanghai teachers lag behind their Hong Kong counterparts in knowledge and use of Western pedagogies that are more effectively leading to English competence.*

In addition to being caught between parental and governmental demands, teachers in Shanghai find themselves ill-prepared to meet the greater professional and proficiency demands expected from them. Equally, teachers in Hong Kong have great difficulties meeting the new English pronunciation standards that parents have come to expect because of NETs. *Education reform has caught teachers ill-prepared and unsupported in their English proficiency and confidence, child-centred teaching approaches, curriculum planning, and in applying new policy objectives and principles. Consequently, in both cities and in equal measure, the relationship between teachers and education authorities is increasingly problematic and troublesome, particularly in relation to education reforms that are currently underway.*

Hence I argue that:

(i) *Teachers need updated training and ongoing support to improve their pedagogical knowledge, update teaching approaches, and become current on available resources and their proper use, so as to raise their professional competence and to improve the quality of their lessons. To this end, modular training workshops need to be designed and offered to all teachers who need help or feedback and who have not yet reached the newly imposed benchmarks.*

(ii) *Traveling abroad to be periodically immersed in native English-speaking environments is an option to improving language proficiency and confidence, which individual teachers, schools, and the government need to shoulder together. To this end, exchange and/or*

collaborative programs need to be established between Hong Kong and foreign educational institutions as well as at an intergovernmental level.

### 6.3.2 Implications and recommendations for culture and established norms

#### 6.3.1.4 Cultural expectations reflected in education

Culture influences perceptions, cognition, and value systems and is therefore deeply entrenched in how people learn. The Confucian Heritage Culture, found in varying degrees in both Hong Kong and Shanghai, generates the following idiosyncrasies in education:

*A competitive attitude to education is ingrained in children in both cities and is exacerbated by the cultural expectation that children ought to satisfy their parents through their school performance, which is part and parcel of filial piety. This has a limiting effect on the reasons why bilingualism is sought and on student motivation, as well as being the seed for the two cities' exam driven and achievement oriented education systems.*

*On a scale leading from Confucian to Socratic concepts of learning Shanghai is closer to the Confucian end of the scale and Hong Kong somewhere in the middle. This defines how English is taught and learned; repetition and drills, rote learning, norm-referenced assessment, and expository methods being characteristic of the Confucian way.*

Given these conditions, I argue that:

(i) *To facilitate learning both cities need to break away from their examination-oriented education cultures. As the National College Entrance Examination is the supreme goal of China's basic education, an examination oriented education has come to characterize Shanghai and Hong Kong. To*

avoid reducing students to numbers and scores, the culture of education in both cities must consider the whole person, which means that the examination culture should be re-examined and education practices re-evaluated. Entry to schools should be based on public examinations plus review of personal attributes and school academic results, but not solely on one examination, as is currently the case.

(ii) *Chinese teachers of English can and should be helped to alter their culturally ingrained educational expectations and traditional approaches, which contemporary research shows contradict many of the modern concepts of language learning proven to be effective.* Most teachers in Shanghai use the approach of learning English through recognition, since repetitive writing leading to memorization of characters is a key feature for learners of Chinese. That is why Chinese learning focuses on memorization and on reciting vocabulary items and sentences by reading them aloud and repetitively writing them. Belief in this didactic approach is therefore derived from the teachers' own experience of learning Chinese. This chain of transmission can be broken if the teaching of preschoolers is based on new pedagogical underpinnings.

(iii) *To change the negative effects of the dialectic learning model on student motivation and classroom culture, education must be extended to parents about the basic principles of children language acquisition and learning.* Better use of the mass media of radio, film, and television can facilitate parent education to the point where learning through play and child-initiated learning are seen as more effective learning models than the Confucian traditionalist notion of learning through hard work, thus to the point where the Asian dialectic model can be integrated with the Western dialogic model (Hammond & Gao, 2002) and problem solving and critical thinking skills acquire if not prevalence over than at least equal status with memorization and repetition. This will result in acceptance for a synergetic culture of learning that combines the best of both worlds.

## 6.4 MICROSYSTEM

Activities, relationships and roles present in the child's immediate circle of interaction represent the **microsystem** according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development (1979).

In probing the question "*What are the beliefs and attitudes of parents, teachers and principals towards bilingualism, and, based on their norms and values, what similarities and differences define their language expectations?*" the data reveals that bilingualism is perceived favourably by all stakeholder groups in both cities because it is believed to have a series of positive consequences for individuals and society. The data also shows that parents, especially in Hong Kong, have the highest language expectations from children and that in Hong Kong these expectations are mainly practical in orientation and border on literacy while in Shanghai they also have a strong cultural aspect and are more modest by calling only for oral ability.

In probing the question "*In light of the two cities' distinct socio-linguistic environments but shared cultural traditions, what is the extent and type of parental involvement and support that children receive at home in their efforts to learn English?*" the data reveals that a majority of parents have little direct input. In Shanghai this is primarily due to the fact that English proficiency is relatively rare among parents and, secondarily, because the population has high expectations from and an implicit trust in the ability of institutions to teach children English, to educate and to socialize them. In Hong Kong, the competitive nature of society and the high cost of living forces both parents to work long hours and this leaves them with little time and energy to dedicate to their children's education. Parents in both cities, therefore, play supporting roles in their children's bilingual education by encouraging schools and by paying for a bilingual education. The direct role of teaching English to children, however, is left, for the most part, to teachers and schools.

In probing the question “*What role do native English-speaking teachers (NET) play in stimulating English learning and are there differences between them and local teachers in how they create environments that enable children to feel immersed in language and culture?*” the data reveals that NETs contribute greatly to children’s expressive ability and that they facilitate a positive perception of and attitude to English among children - areas where Chinese English teachers in both cities are perceived to fall short – by using more child-centred, pressure-free and age-appropriate pedagogies than their local counterparts.

#### 6.4.1 Implications and recommendations for parents

##### Level of involvement in their children’s bilingual education

The data shows (see 5.4) that *the extent to which parents are involved in their children’s bilingual development varies according to parental education and English fluency levels and is greater in Hong Kong than in Shanghai.*

The growing importance of English forces parents to place high value on it when planning their children’s education. The data presented in section 5.4 shows that *parents place the burden of their high linguistic expectations on children and the task of achieving bilingualism primarily on teachers and schools, but not on themselves.*

Parents rely primarily on teachers and schools, on the one hand, and on English media broadcasts and Hollywood productions, on the other, as sources of language instruction and proper language modeling for their children. *The general lack of English competence among the older generations precludes most parents from acting as teachers and makes them dependent on mass institutional and second-hand sources for their children’s English needs.*

Given these conditions, I recommend:

- (i) *Aiding and motivating parents to become English proficient.* Children would receive more parental support in their efforts to learn English if and when their parents are aided and motivated to become English

proficient so that they are actually capable of offering such support and guidance to their offspring. This implies that governments and schools facilitate this process and find novel ways to do so. One such novel way is to allow parents, grandparents or other primary caregivers to attend and participate in children's English classes. Until English can be passed on from one generation to another as a living language, Shanghai's children will only be able to learn it outside of school from passive sources such as books and movies, but will be devoid of the opportunity of learning English by actively using it in their daily lives.

(ii) *Creating a richer language environment.* Especially in Shanghai, where English is not a language in daily use, both children and parents would benefit from a richer English language environment in society at large, the existence of which could be artificially created by making English broadcast media universally available to the general public. For the time being, CCTV4 is the only channel broadcasting in English in China and since it is owned and operated by the Chinese government its programming is narrow and is often delivered by non-native English speakers. Therefore, its content and the accented English it broadcasts in are largely unappealing to Shanghai's populace. Opening the airwaves to foreign media would provide greater motivation, appeal and access to those interested in learning or improving their English.

The prevalence of families with two working parents and the culturally accepted practice of childcare by nannies and grandparents ensure that a great majority of children in both Hong Kong and Shanghai are socialized and raised not by their parents but by other caregivers. *The degree to which parents are involved in assisting their children to learn English at home is limited.* Hence I recommend:

(i) *Providing a literacy 'eco-system' at home and not just at school.* Parents must be educated on the importance of providing a literacy 'eco-system' at home. This is particularly important for Shanghai, where



parents have largely deferred the responsibility for second language teaching onto schools. Parental education in this respect would bring to the forefront the importance of mutual support between schools and parents, as well as the importance of parental input for second language acquisition and maintenance. Research showing that family literacy and maternal education are predictable sources of children's academic achievement upon entering kindergarten (Christian, Morrison & Bryant, 1998) supports this. Parents must be encouraged to be involved in home literacy and taught how to achieve this. Reading to their children in English at home, nurturing good reading habits, and making the home a print-rich environment are parental responsibilities. The importance of home literacy is supported by research findings indicating that most successful early readers are children who have been exposed at home with written materials (Hiebert, 1988; Hildebrand & Bader, 1992; Smith, 1989; Teale & Sulzby, 1987) and, conversely, that the least successful readers are children who have been deprived of this advantage (Scarborough et al., 1991; Dyson, 1986). Not surprisingly, research also shows that one-on-one reading – which is something only parents but not teachers can do - has positive implications for children's understanding, allowing them a more complex grasp of the written word (Morrow, 1988).

(ii) *Empowering parents to become their children's teachers.* Society can promote parental involvement by asking parents to read books to their children that can then be brought to school to share, by inviting parents to create materials that can be displayed, and by encouraging them to participate in their children's literacy learning. Research has amply demonstrated that practicing paired reading at home and parents listening to their children reading on a systematic basis tends to be an effective means for increased literacy (Whitehurst et al., 1999), as is the age at which parents start reading to their children (Allison and Watson, 1994) and reading to children period (Bus, Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995). In addition, Landry & Smith (2006) present evidence that parental skill can provide rich input and scaffold their children's engagement in activities that further language development from birth to age

three. Last, parental involvement is also important from an affective and not just a cognitive point of view (Pianta, 2006; Hoff, 2006).

(iii) *Better home-school collaboration.* Schools can act as facilitators for parental involvement in children's bilingual education by bringing parents to the school as volunteers, by inviting them to participate in reading corner activities, by encouraging them to read to their children at home so as to nurture good reading habits in their children, and by providing them with resources such as dual language books for home reading. Offering English learning programmes for parents is a more involved manner in which to educate and encourage parents to be their children's best role models of life-long learning. Schools in collaboration with the education department can also provide resource books and training workshops for parents for story telling and book reading, and could develop parent/child e-learning websites that encourage and support home reading schemes launched at the school level. A positive, non-threatening, and collaborative school culture must be encouraged to flourish between schools and parents so that children's learning can be scaffolded and synchronized at school and at home.

(iv) *Making better use of the teaching potential of English-speaking domestic helpers to achieve immersion and simultaneous bilingualism before and while children are of preschool age is crucial* since it is known that "the early language environment of young bilingual children...will have an important impact on children's later language and literacy development" (Tabors & Snow, 2001, 163). This is particularly important for Hong Kong, where a large Philippino community of domestic helpers is already making a great and largely unrecognized contribution to bilingualism. Recent research has shown that students who have English-speaking domestic helpers at home perform better in both Chinese and English reading literacy (Tse, Lam & Lam, 2003). The government could offer free TOEFL courses to English-speaking domestic helpers wishing to extend their work visa, while schools and parents could involve them in existing home-school programmes. Focused research on this issue should furnish additional ideas.

## 6.4.2 Implications and recommendations pertaining to NETs and Chinese teachers

### 6.4.2.1 Methodology & pedagogy

Experts have observed teaching practices in Hong Kong and Shanghai preschools that employ inappropriate sequences in language teaching. The data presented in 5.6 support this and concur that traditional grammatical approaches with carefully sequenced language structure and vocabulary are employed more often than not. Grammar-based textbooks control language learning and create contexts in which language use is inauthentic. *Students learn forms of language that fulfill classroom functions but not those of the outside world.*

Child-centred, inquiry-based pedagogies, though increasingly more popular, are being prevented from becoming the norm in Hong Kong education primarily by enduring systemic and institutional structures up and down the education system. In Shanghai this is even more so the case due to limited teacher knowledge and continuing resistance to Western imports. In addition, in both cities progressive methods must coexist with traditional ones in order to satisfy culturally determined educational expectations as well as the demands of a competitive education system. *In both cities, systemic and/or psychological conditions that stand in the way of implementing progressive methods of teaching continue to exist.*

Western methodologies have made deeper inroads in Hong Kong than in Shanghai, where Chinese traditional methods continue to have the upper hand. *Given Hong Kong's longer history of interaction with and influence by the West, a greater degree of educational cross-fertilization has been achieved there than in Shanghai, but neither city is consistent in the way it applies Western methodologies in the Asian context.*

Given these conditions, I recommend that:

- (i) *Part-to-hole must give way to whole-to-part teaching.* Research shows that students need context-embedded language to understand

instruction, need to experiment with the whole in order to know what to do with the parts, and need to be immersed in meaningful activities, not submerged in the grammatical details of a new language (Cummins, 1981; Cummins & Swain, 1986). This allows them to take ownership of the learning process, and under these conditions they are more willing to take the risks that are always involved in learning new things, leading to what Gardner and Lambert (1972) call instrumental motivation.

(ii) *A content-based teaching approach should be adopted* since it provides a context for meaningful communication (Curtain, 1995; Met, 1991), most comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982; 1985), makes language learning concrete rather than abstract (Genesee, 1994) and best shows that form and meaning are not separable in language learning (Lightbrown & Spada, 1993; Wells, 1994). Passive, receptive instruction with drilling on letters and phonemes practice is ineffective. Project work, task based learning and a holistic approach to language make language learning more interesting and motivating (Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Elley, 1991), help develop valuable thinking skills (Curtain, 1995; Met, 1991), leads to deeper processing and better learning (Anderson, 1990), and develops a wider range of discourse skills than traditional language instruction because it engages higher cognitive skills (Byrnes, 2000). Hong Kong and Shanghai teachers can no longer simply use a set of techniques to make their lesson more understandable. They need to restructure their classrooms to ensure that students are actively involved in working together to solve problems. This approach is consistent with adopting a whole language approach, focusing on the learner, making learning meaningful and creating opportunities for social interaction.

(iii) *Dual language immersion should be facilitated.* The use of two teachers, one speaking exclusively English and the other Chinese, is a model of dual language immersion, similar to the one parent one language model proposed by Baker (1996). In this classroom setting children hear comments, have conversations, and receive instructions in two languages. Which language they hear depends simply on which teacher interacts with them in an

area or activity (art, music, movement, dramatic play, eating), exposing them therefore to both Chinese and English literacy activities. As children engage in activities throughout the day, the second language is always present, allowing children to simultaneously achieve a working knowledge of two languages. Children learn the second language the same way they do their first language, by hearing it used in the context of daily activities with concrete, observable referents. The advantages of this model are obvious: increased comfort and familiarity with English, greater opportunities to speak to NETs, and a better nurturing of the attitude and disposition for learning the second language. In conjunction with play-based, developmentally appropriate practices, where teachers give visual cues, use simpler speech, and repeat and restate language based on their knowledge of each child's comprehension, this kind of scaffolded learning is ideally suited to the development of balanced bilingualism. This however implies that schools have sufficient language-critical resources in the form teachers with native speaker or near-native speaker fluency.

*(iv) Literacy rich environments must be the settings for English learning at preschool.* Since there is agreement that emergent literacy begins during the period before children receive formal reading instruction, and that reading and writing develop at the same time and interrelatedly in young children, rather than sequentially (van Kleeck, 1990; Stahl & Miller, 1989; Teale & Sulzby, 1986, 1991), it is vital that children are exposed early on to literacy rich environments. Awareness of print, knowledge of the relationship between speech and print, text structure, phonological awareness, and letter naming and writing are areas of literacy knowledge (van Kleeck, 1990) that develop concurrently and whose acquisition affect the ease with which children learn to read and write (van Kleeck, 1990; Weir, 1989; Hiebert, 1988). Exposure to literacy rich environments, therefore, has shown to lead to rapid growth in literacy skills (Burns, Griffin & Snow, 1999) and to more complex language interactions (Roskos & Neuman, 2003), and placing books

within easy reach of children has been shown to be critical for early literacy (Neuman, 1999).

(v) *Use of developmentally appropriate activities and materials so that English teaching is, contextualized, authentic and, enjoyable.* Since children of preschool age have not yet been conditioned to a particular culture of learning, educators have the unique opportunity to employ only the most effective practices for children's education and must therefore rely on empirical data to determine what is developmentally appropriate. Therefore, classrooms must be child-centered (Kantor, Miller & Fernie, 1992), teachers must be guides and facilitators that scaffold learning, teaching must consider a child's natural development, learning must be student-centered, and programs must implement a developmentally appropriate approach to classroom environments and instructional practices (NAEYC, 1986).

#### 6.4.2.2 NETs versus Chinese teachers

The data from chapters 2, 3 and 5 shows that greater synthesis of modern and traditional methods is achieved due to wider use of NETs alongside or in addition to Chinese English teachers and that children benefit from exposure to child-centred, whole-literacy, and content-based approaches favoured by Western teachers. This cooperation, however, also has negative consequences in that it leads to Chinese teachers being undervalued and NETs being overvalued. Furthermore, NETs popularity with parents is the source of friction and tension between NETs and Chinese English teachers, leading at times to mutual resentment.

*Greater prevalence of NETs in Shanghai and Hong Kong schools has exposed shortcomings in language skills and pedagogy training among Chinese English teachers leading to calls for improved pre- and in-service training, benchmarks, and supervision.*

It is therefore my contention that there is a need to:

(i) *Train more Chinese English teachers to current standards* since the supply of NETs is limited in Hong Kong and especially in Shanghai. If Chinese teachers are not proficient or at least capable of basic fluency in English, they encounter difficulties in the immersion approach and communicative method that are increasingly in demand. Limited linguistic competence prevents them from communicating meaningfully with students in authentic English and code-switching encroaches upon what are supposed to be English only classes, which is currently the case because teachers believe that Chinese is conducive to English learning and teachers use Chinese to translate, clarify and give instructions. The use of Chinese in this setting serves as a useful translation tool, but runs counter to the tenets of a strong form of bilingualism, as it limits the learners' exposure to communicative English.

(ii) *Offer phonetics courses for Hong Kong teachers* since pronunciation is the greatest hurdle. Shanghai teachers show weaknesses in expression and vocabulary and need to be given the opportunity to enroll in short-term immersion programmes to become more confident speakers.

(iii) *Resource/support centers should be set up to assist teachers in their effort to improve and/or maintain their English language skills and teaching capabilities.* Given that teachers in Hong Kong and especially in Shanghai live in a largely monolingual environment it is necessary to support their efforts to maintain English fluency and pedagogical contemporaneity.

(iv) *Workshops for enhancing teaching technique and improving the teachers' English proficiency must be offered.* Ideally a consultant/adviser will visit the classroom, observe lessons and provide advice and suggestions for improving teaching techniques during post-observation conferences. Other teachers will observe the lessons and join the post-observation conference for critique. Expert review with peer participation is a common practice in China and could easily be adopted for this context.

(v) *Encouraging overseas Chinese to return home for teaching positions* would have the dual benefit of addressing the lack of qualified

personnel and would also help create a class of teachers capable of intercultural communication and thus of bridging the cultural and pedagogical gap between NETs and Chinese English teachers.

*Some schools hire NETs because they are keenly aware of the “value added” effect of having native English/foreign looking teachers on staff. The greater marketability of the school rather than the real benefits for teaching and learning English is sometimes the primary consideration for employing NETs especially in the private sector where answering to parent demand is paramount. This has given rise to a situation where schools need to hire NETs for reasons of school image and false comfort but do not have the resources or the will to hire enough NETs to make a difference in their language programmes.*

(i) *Schools should not stretch thin the few NETs that they do have just to give the impression that their language programme offers sufficient exposure to native speakers. Education departments could legislate or at least recommend a minimum contact time a NET must have with any given class.*

(ii) *In some cases, NETs could be used more meaningfully if employed to improve the language standards of the Chinese English teachers on staff.*

## CONCLUSION

My examination of the state of bilingualism in Shanghai and Hong Kong through the wide-angled lens of Bronfenbrenner’s ecology has revealed that while on the macro level English is promoted for economic self-interest and propelled by global forces, the form of preschool bilingualism advocated by the governments of Hong Kong and Shanghai is affected by protectionist instincts which in the former case view the use of English as the MOI of preschool as an impediment to Putonghua promotion and



Cantonese distinctiveness and in the latter as a threat to national identity and cultural integrity. The reservations that confine governmental enthusiasm for preschool English in the two cities have led in Hong Kong to an exosystem in which the policy of biliteracy and trilingualism is ambiguously defined, in Shanghai to conceptualizations of bilingualism that are contradictory, and in both cities to mother tongue primacy that stands in the way of early bilingual development through immersion or partial immersion. The tension between the wants of parents and policy makers has created disparate expectations of English proficiency from preschoolers and of English instruction from preschools, stamping the relationships between education stakeholders, which make up the mesosystem, and giving rise to conflicts and dilemmas that have come to shape or misshape the two cities' cultures of learning and the extent and form of their education reforms. On the microsystem level, parents struggle to assist their children's English learning as best they can, despite limitations of their own proficiency in the desired language, while teachers find themselves caught between overblown parental expectations and demands and cautious governmental policies and directives, calling into question local teachers' linguistic and pedagogical abilities and pitting them unfavourably against NETs. This seems to be common in both cities.

In comparing the cities two overarching observations come to light. First, changes that take place and actions that are taken at any one level of the ecology reverberate throughout the entire system and, secondly, the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions that govern the decisions of various groups of stakeholders differ according to the interests that define and the pressures that affect each group in equal measure to the two cities' distinct socio-economic circumstances. The first conclusion underscores the multidimensional nature of the field and validates this researcher's assumption that the quality of preschool bilingualism can only be improved if meaningful change occurs at every level of the ecology, and that being selective rather than inclusive is an exercise that promises only inconsistent, and often undesirable, results. The second conclusion I can draw from my research is surprising because I did not foresee that many of the problems which plague the two cities are the result of different parental, professional and governmental agendas of education rather than poor planning and lack of resources.

Despite complications, all stakeholders in both cities claim to make genuine efforts to expand the bilingual or trilingual abilities of their youth. The fundamental challenges that remain are, on the one hand, **the willingness of the different stakeholder groups** to find common ground and forge the future of bilingual education in cooperation and not in isolation, and, on the other, the institutional ability to adopt innovations and enact changes fast enough to keep up with the educational requirements of a knowledge society in which progress is exponential and multilinguistic ability a necessity.

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## Appendix 1 Sample of interview transcription of bilingual kindergarten teacher

### Interview of Bilingual Kindergarten Teacher

01 孔：你认为在幼儿园阶段学习英语有必要吗？Do you think it's necessary for children  
02 learning English at the kindergarten stage?

03 Dor：Yes, I believe that children learn best from age 3 to 6 and kindergarten can provide  
04 a stimulating and interesting environment for the learning of English.

05

06 孔：你对幼儿园的英语教学有没有要求？What is your requirement for English teaching at  
07 the kindergarten stage?

08 Dor：It should be age- and developmental appropriate and suitable for many learning  
09 styles that the children have.

10

11 孔：你认为中国老师和外籍老师的区别是什么？（比如：在组织英语活动时是否有语言  
12 要求等）What do you think the difference between Chinese teacher and foreign teacher? (i.e.  
13 the organisation of English activities)

14 Dor：Different teaching styles, cultural background and beliefs, emphasize on hands-on  
15 student-directed vs. structured teacher-centered activities; it does not matter if he/she is a  
16 Chinese or Caucasian.

17

18 孔：在教学幼儿英语方面，他们各自的优势是什么？What will the their advantages  
19 respectively in English teaching?

20 Dor：Chinese teachers: more practical skills as they are ESLs as well, they may  
21 understand better from the perspective of the ESL children; Caucasian teacher: more natural  
22 daily conversational skills, may have better fluency/pronunciations and expressions, may  
23 implement more games and play in the learning and teaching context.

24

25 孔：你觉得选择外教教学英语的最大目的是什么？What is the main purpose for choosing  
26 native English teacher?

27 Have children familiarize with different accents, facial appearances, and teaching styles.

28

29 孔：你在英语教学中，最经常采用的教学方法是什么？对教学效果的影响如何？What

30 approach will you frequently use for teaching English? Do you think the approach is  
31 effective?

32 Dor: For Pre K & K1, I like to use music to facilitate students' learning as they are  
33 naturally attracted by the various sounds and musical backgrounds; for K2 & K3, I prefer  
34 using groups in the class to promote cooperative learning and I usually have a whole class  
35 discussion, then group work and individual work, or the other way around (think, pair, share).  
36 Students like to work both individually and collaboratively.

37

38 孔: 你理想中的幼儿园英语教师是什么样的? What do you think the ideal English teacher  
39 should be?

40 Dor: Loving, caring, supporting, encouraging, proactive, problem solving, sharing, with  
41 great classroom management, and work collaboratively with the school team.

42

43 孔: 你理想的幼儿园英语学习是什么样的? What do you think the ideal English learning  
44 should be?

45 Dor: Learners are self-motivated, interested, always engaging and exploring, willing to  
46 share and express; resources suitable for different learning styles.

47

48 孔: 你对幼儿学习英语有没有期望? What do you expect for children's English learning?

49 Dor: As long as learners have a fond of English and see it as a practical and useful skill  
50 for one of their ways of expression.

51

52 孔: 期望是什么? 从哪些方面考核? What will be your expectation?

53 Dor: Same as above, learners will be self-motivated, interested, always engaging and  
54 exploring, willing to share and express.

55

56 孔: 你认为家长选择让孩子学习英语的心态是什么? What do you think the purpose for  
57 parents letting their child to learn English?

58 Dor: Most parents who choose to let their children learn English is because they are  
59 aware of the fact that English is a useful and essential communication tool in this world and  
60 they want to have their children well-prepared so that they are able to express themselves in  
61 English-speaking situations.

62

63 孔: 家长选择外教的原因是什么? What do you think the reason for parents choosing native

64 English teachers?

65 Dor: This answer depends on many factors. Better pronunciation? Fluency? Cultural  
66 and educational backgrounds? Experiences with teaching children? Personality?

67

68 孔: 家长的英语水平和孩子的英语学习有关系吗? Is there any relationship between  
69 parents' academic background and children's English learning?

70 Dor: Definitely, if parents are fluent English speakers and they are willing to spend time  
71 using the language to talk with their children; then the children will surely benefit from the  
72 daily conversations that they have at home, in a more relaxed and natural setting.



## Appendix 2 Sample of interview transcription of parent

### Interviewing parent of Bilingual Kindergarten

(家: parent 問: Maggie)

01 問: Mrs. Lo, 今天你接受這個訪問主要是看你的小朋友在幼稚園學習  
02 英語的情況, 以我所知, 你的小朋友現在以浸沉式學習英語, 就是雙班  
03 主任, 一位中國籍老師與一位外籍老師在同一時間三個小時幫助小朋友  
04 學習英語, 你為甚麼會讓小朋友在幼兒階段學習英語?

05 家: 因為我相信年幼的小朋友對語文學習掌握較快、較易, 發音等各方面會  
06 做得比較好, 所以讓小朋友年幼開始同時學習中英文。I let my child to learn Chinese and  
English at kindergarten stage because I believe that children can learn languages easily and  
efficiently at a younger age, and their pronunciations of the languages will be better.

07  
08 問: 是否因未來銜接、基礎、認識西方文化、拓展國際視野等原因讓小朋友  
09 學英文?

10 家: 相信是因為讓小朋友更容易適應未來的課程, 對於國際視野能否拓展就  
11 視乎小朋友會否另外閱讀書籍, 留意四週事物。The purpose I have my child to learn English at  
kindergarten stage is, to help him easily link to the curriculums in the future. As to widen his  
vision, I think it depends on extra readings and his awareness of the happenings around.

12  
13 問: 主要就是銜接, 同時越早開始發音各方面比較好。你覺得如果由你決  
14 定, 你的小朋友每日應該有多少時間學習英語才算足夠?

15 家: 在家裡我很多時間也用英語與小朋友傾談, 但其中有 1-2 日我會特別用  
16 廣東話傾談。I talk to my child in English most of the time at home, but I will use Cantonese  
instead about one or two days in a week.

17  
18 問: 有時用中文, 有時用英文, 肯定小朋友有平衡的語言。

19 家: 令他不認為英文是一種很特別的語言, 因為媽媽都會講。My child won't think English  
is a special language when he realizes that his mother can also speaks two languages.

20  
21 問: 現在你選擇的學校是用外籍老師作為英語老師, 你認為這一點是否重  
22 要, 如果用中國籍教師教授英語, 你可否接受?

23 家: 其實我也可以接受, 因為只要老師有適當的程度, 有自己的教學法, 無  
24 論是否外籍老師, 相信都會是一位好老師。Actually I can accept local English teachers if they  
have achieved certain English standard and have his/her own teaching approaches. If teachers  
have these elements, he/she will be a good teacher no matter they are local or native English  
speaking.

25  
26 問: 你認為外籍老師教英文有甚麼好處? 甚麼壞處?

27 家: 外籍老師的發音會是自己國家的口音, 例如: 加拿大、英國, 同時, 她  
28 們可能會用俚語、口語, 感覺上生活化一點。如果本地老師, 給予指示式英  
29 語, 例如: 要做甚麼, 說話內容比較重覆, 可能因為不常用英文對答, 不會  
30 用英文說笑話。Native English speaking teachers have their own accents, like Canadian or  
British, slang and colloquial language. You will feel their English is closer to our lives. As for the  
local teachers, they only speak instructional English with similar contents, like what you need to  
do. It may because local teachers don't speak colloquial English and they even won't joke in  
English.

31

32 問：如果現時給你選擇，一位外籍老師沒有受過師範訓練，另一位中文老師  
33 受過師範訓練，當然理想的可能是外籍老師又受過訓練，但若然真的要從兩  
34 者中選擇，你會如何取捨？可能外籍老師方面，我們會安排三個月的教學法  
35 介紹。

36 家：我相信我自己會選擇外籍老師，因為外籍老師令小朋友接受英文的程度  
37 較高，小朋友會知道這個語言在英國人、外國人流行，不會太著重手寫。I think I will choose  
native English speaking teachers since their teaching is more efficient to children. Children can  
realize that English is commonly used by British or foreigners, and therefore writing is not the  
main focus.

38  
39 問：小朋友明白要與外籍老師溝通就是用英語，用其他語言就無法與外籍老  
40 師溝通。

41 家：是的。如果中國人會認為像計數一樣，跟從所有規則就可以，但是未必  
42 真正懂得欣賞這種語言，要視乎老師的功力。They understand English is the only way to  
communicate with the native English speaking teachers but may not really appreciate English as a  
language. They may learn to appreciate but it depends on the teaching of the teacher.

43  
44 問：你認為在幼稚園學習英語有很多不同方法，例如：字卡、書寫，圖卡，  
45 或透過 story telling, drama, games, role play 等生活化學習，這兩類學習你較喜  
46 歡哪一類？比重如何？

47 家：我較喜歡生活化的方式，因為字卡那些比較悶，小朋友很快就失去興  
48 趣，會對語言或學習感覺很死板。I prefer a lively way. If you use a boring way, like flash cards,  
children will lose their interest in learning English.

49  
50 問：這就表示如果生活化便能令小朋友感到興趣，幫助推動她們學習？

51 家：對。

52  
53 問：你認為理想的幼兒園英語學習應該是怎樣？

54 家：維多利亞做得好好，小朋友有個很愉快的經驗。

55  
56 問：因為現時你小朋友的經驗是在浸沉式環境學習英語，長時間都有外籍老  
57 師在班內，要講英文就與外籍老師講，講中文就與中文老師講。

58 家：對。

59  
60 問：你認為外籍老師是否需要了解本地文化？本地語言？對小朋友學習有  
61 沒有幫助？

62 家：都需要，因為我小朋友曾經有幾位外籍老師，第一位是幼兒班的時候，  
63 老師主要工作是安撫幼兒；第二位與我傾談過，認為香港的教育制度太  
64 pushing，她說加拿大的小朋友不用讀書，但她都會跟從做法，她的 task 清晰  
65 一點，如果她不知道的話會覺得辛苦，不知道如何處理這麼小的小朋友，雖  
66 然她不同意，但她的學生很愛戴她，而且學習英語的成效很好，又有信心，  
67 她能夠令學生自動看書，講英文不怕醜。因此，她們需要明白我們的文化，  
68 香港始終中國人多，與加拿大普遍使用英語的情況不同，想學其他語言英文  
69 就變成第二語言。It's necessary to have native English speaking teachers to understand our local  
culture here. My child was taught by a few native English speaking teachers in the past. Once a  
teacher talked to me, she said the education policy was too pushing in Hong Kong. She mentioned  
that children in Canada didn't have to study. However, considering the culture here, she still  
followed the policy to teach even though she didn't agree with. If she didn't understand the  
cultural issue, her teaching would be very hard because she didn't know what and how to do with

the young children. Her students love her very much and her English teaching is very efficient, students are confident in using English and will read English storybooks by themselves. The situation in Hong Kong is different from Canada, English is not commonly used as in Canada, and so I think native English speaking teachers should understand our culture.

70

71 問：你的小朋友會否因為外籍老師的教授，被西方文化影響？這個影響的經驗是正面還是負面？

72

73 家：老師的影響不是太大，只是令小朋友有興趣，最主要是家長在家裡如何

74 跟進，例如：看英文卡通、英語傾談。I think that the western cultural influence is not really brought by the native English speaking teachers; they just foster children's interest in English learning. I believe that the influence is most likely brought by the parents when they follow up children's English learning at home, like watching English cartoons and having English conversations with the children.

75

76 問：你認為西方文化的影響是正面還是負面？

77 家：正面。I think the western cultural influence is positive.

78

79 問：你會否覺得現今學校對幼兒的語言要求是不是過多？

80 家：我不覺得，小朋友如果不喜歡或程度不足或未夠成熟，都跟不上大人，

81 影響不深，可能某些小朋友不能看很多書，講得不流暢，但他們一樣很開心

82 很喜歡上學。大家也有學習，不過某些小朋友學到的不多。I don't see the language requirement to children is too high. If the children don't like English, their English below standard or they are not mature enough, they can't follow the pace of learning but the influence is limited. Since some children can't do many readings, they can't speak fluently but still happy to learn. The point is they do have learnt something even it's not much.

83

84 問：小朋友的英語學習有聽、講、讀、寫，你認為哪樣比較重要？

85 家：以我小朋友的情況而言，聽、講、讀一齊，寫就最後。According to the situation of my child, listening, speaking and reading come first at the same time, writing comes last.

86

87 問：聽、講、讀就在學前階段，寫就在小學階段，小朋友甚麼年齡重視哪一方面呢？

88 家：1歲的時候重視聽、講，讀那方面，就算我給他看，他也未必可以認字，

90 只是看圖畫，到K2的時候，小朋友開始認字、拼音。When my child was one year old, I emphasized on his listening, speaking and reading, even though he couldn't recognize a word and only saw the pictures in the books. Then, starting from K2, he could recognize words and do the phonics.

91

92 問：你認為有沒有必要讓小朋友閱讀英語圖書？

93 家：有，絕對重要。Yes, absolutely important.

94

95 問：在家裡，平均每日放在親子閱讀的時間有多少？

96 家：其實很多，故事有1小時，其他如小說以外閱讀，例如：剪報，全部都

97 應該有2-3小時。Very often. An hour for storybook reading, plus other materials reading like newspaper. The reading time altogether is 2 to 3 hours per day.

98

99 問：英語比重有多少？

100 家：3分2都是英語閱讀。其實我都想小朋友看中文，但他看了2本英文後

101 才看1本中文。The portion of English reading is two third. Actually I want my child to read Chinese materials too, but he reads one Chinese book only after reading 2 English books.

- 102
- 103 問：你認為家長的英語水平與小朋友的英語學習有沒有關係？
- 104 家：有，如果媽媽有多點信心，小朋友的接受能力會較高。Yes, if parents are confident in English, children will learn efficiently.
- 105
- 106 問：你是否知道政府對幼稚園階段學習英語的政策是怎樣？
- 107 家：有點印象，不是太好，因為我曾經參加過質素視學保證(QAI)的家長訪
- 108 談，有個政府的 QAI 人員到來，她們不是太鼓勵學前階段用這麼多英文，認
- 109 為中文是母語，學好中文，小朋友開心就可以了。I only have a little bit impression on the government policy towards English learning at kindergarten stage. Once I was invited to take part in the parent interview for QAI; the officials of QAI came and said they didn't encourage the frequent use of English at kindergarten stage. They thought that Chinese as our mother language, so children only had to learn Chinese.
- 110
- 111 問：坦白說，政府的政策在 06 年前在師範、課程指引，沒有提及英語，現
- 112 在最近才提及英語作為第二語言，如果有好的老師或者小朋友有能力學習，
- 113 學校都可以介紹這種語言，這是 06 年開始的一個清晰政策。如果你認為政府
- 114 一直沒有這個政策，其實全香港幼稚園也教英文，你認為政府如果推動幼稚
- 115 園教英文有甚麼方向給家長？或學校？香港的幼師培訓是沒有提及教授英
- 116 文，而英文亦不是主要科目，需要一定合格。這個情況下，作為家長，你認
- 117 為政府要做甚麼工作對幼稚園英文學習？
- 118 家：其實做一個市場調查，看看結果，家長有甚麼 feedback，這個形式究竟
- 119 是不是好，家長的反應怎樣呢。As for the development of English teaching in kindergartens, what the government should do is to conduct a research, and then review the result to see parents' feedbacks on the policy.
- 120
- 121 問：你覺得政府的角色可以做甚麼呢？應該去培訓老師嗎？
- 122 家：市場其實已經有明顯的需求，也不去做，我覺得有點那過。I can't see any reasons for the government not to take any action on the development of English teaching in kindergartens, since there's a significant demand in the market.
- 123
- 124 問：政府現在計劃出 4300 萬培訓老師教授英語，你覺得有甚麼基本的需要
- 125 去做？甚麼形式？她們計劃拍些影片，教老師如何教，講故事要先讀好錄音
- 126 帶，然後老師可以跟著讀。你認為這類方法是治標還是治本？你認為是否對
- 127 英語老師的學術有一定要求，例如：會考英語是否合格、發音方面？而且是
- 128 否需要一個教授英語的指引，教甚麼才是適合，認字、字母、拼音、閱讀？
- 129 你對於本地老師要教授英文，有甚麼要求？
- 130 家：我自己對幼稚園英文老師的要求都相當高，因為小朋友在幼稚園年紀是
- 131 最吸收，你說甚麼小朋友都會完全跟從，例如：拼音，你教她們以後，她們
- 132 就是用那個方法拼音，所以老師的程度，是否應該英文合格、培訓，甚至對
- 133 教育理論有一定認識，我認為是需要的，基本的一個條件。My requirements to the kindergarten English teachers are very high. Since children can learn much at kindergarten stage, they will follow what you have said, like phonics, what you teach is the way they will use in the future. Therefore, English teachers basically should be qualified in English, and have trainings on teaching also knowledge of education theories.
- 134
- 135 問：你會否要求老師會考英文合格才可以教英文？
- 136 家：我會要求與中學老師的條件一樣。The requirements to the kindergarten English teachers should be the same as the college English teachers.

- 137
- 138 問：中學老師的基準很高深，這個基準很難考？幼稚園老師大部份會考要求  
139 2 科合格，以往更是中三程度，2 年前才要求會考 5 科合格，沒有大學畢業。
- 140 家：所以我選擇外籍老師，因為外籍老師的培訓不同，她們對中學與幼稚園  
141 老師的要求也差不多，老師有一定的資格。The reason I will choose native English speaking  
teachers is, the requirements of college English teachers are the same as kindergarten English  
teachers, so they will have certain qualifications.
- 142
- 143 問：如果是本地老師，你要求她們的發音等同小學或中學老師的基準，不過  
144 這個基準是為幼稚園老師而設，重視發音、教學法方面，有一定的基準，老  
145 師合格，才可以教授英文？
- 146 家：是的，可能中學老師要求有一定的學術性，幼稚園老師就不用那麼多。  
147 幼稚園老師一定要有資格才可以說服家長。I agree that kindergarten English teachers should  
achieve certain benchmarks, just like the college English teachers but may have less emphasis on  
the academic issues. English teachers must be qualified in English so as to meet with parents'  
acceptance.
- 148
- 149 問：你對於小朋友的英語現狀是否滿意？哪一方面小朋友較好？哪一方面  
150 較差？
- 151 家：我頗滿意小朋友的英語程度，閱讀、講方面都很有信心，表達能力較高，  
152 書寫就比較差，不願意寫。I am quite satisfied with my child's English level; he is confident in  
reading and speaking, also able to express himself. However, he is not good at writing and even  
not willing to write.
- 153
- 154 問：香港自從回歸之後，英文的地位比殖民時代較低，你認為有一天英文在  
155 香港的地位會下降？在教育制度下情況如何？
- 156 家：我認為情況可能較極端，某些人會注重中文，英文程度不高，但中上家  
157 庭，會更加注重小朋友的雙語發展，看看小朋友能夠適應全球化，所以會兩  
158 極化。I think the situation is quite extreme. Some people will focus on Chinese because their  
English level is not high. The middle class families will focus on children's bilingual development  
to prepare their children for the globalization.
- 159
- 160 問：普通話在香港會比英語更重要嗎？
- 161 家：我認為這個趨向值得留意，因為很多小朋友現在也說普通話，但普通話  
162 不會取代英語，因為廣東話一直沒有被取代，我相信不同背景的人群也有不  
163 同的焦點。We should keep an eye on this trend. Children now also speak Mandarin but  
Mandarin won't replace English, just like Cantonese has never been replaced. Therefore, I believe  
that different groups of people will have different focus.
- 164
- 165 問：現在請你評級，1 是最低，10 是最高，你認為英文、廣東話及普通話對  
166 你小朋友的重要性如何？
- 167 家：英文與普通話都是 10，廣東話是 7。The importance of English and Mandarin is 10;  
Cantonese is 7.
- 168
- 169 問：你對外籍老師及本地教英文的老師的喜好，會如何作出評級？
- 170 家：外籍老師是 8，本地老師是 6。My preference to native English speaking teacher is 8; local  
teacher is 7.
- 171
- 172 問：傳統教學及較自由教學的成效，你會如何評級？

173 家：活動教學是 8，非傳統教學是 5。The effectiveness of small groups teaching is 8; traditional teaching is 5.

### Appendix 3 Sample of interview transcription of mainstream kindergarten principle

#### 校长的访谈

Principals interview, two principals one from local kindergarten with Chinese teachers to teach English, and the other one is bilingual kindergarten, with English teachers in the immersion setting

01 孔：幼儿园双语教学的基本情况是什么样的？What is the format of bilingual teaching in  
02 your school?

03 蒋：因为收费问题，所以自己学校是不能开设英语课的，所以吸引了一个英语培训机构  
04 它是按照课本来教的。它应该是英语教学，谈不上双语机构提供教材，培训老师，老师  
05 经过培训上岗。老师是幼儿园自己的教师，但是要经过考核才能上岗。老师有一定的学  
06 历，经过教法培训后，发证书上岗。在一个学期的教学当中，有教研组活动。每所使用  
07 其教材的幼儿园互相观摩交流。对于老师来说，可以增加收入；同时教的是自己班上的  
08 孩子，平时可以帮孩子复习。这是本园老师教学的一个很大的好处。Due to the fee of  
09 charge, we contracted out the English learning section as the extra curricular activities to an  
10 English learning organization. This organization will offer us English learning books and  
11 teachers' training. Students pay extra fees and lessons will be conducted after school. The  
12 classes are conducted by the teachers of our nursery, they received training and have to pass  
13 the competence test from the organization before teaching English. The kindergarten will  
14 have some exchange activities each year with the other kindergartens, which are also using  
15 the same English learning books. Therefore, incomes of our teachers can be increased and  
16 they can revise the learning content with their children in the class.

17  
18 孔：外教的情况是怎么样子的呢？How about Net teachers?

19 蒋：家长希望有外教，但是我觉得没有实现真正意义上外教的作用。我觉得，  
20 和外教一起上课应该有一些文化。但是外教是一个礼拜一次，家长反映效果不是很好，  
21 或者和外教接触的机会比较少。Parents have strong preference to have a native English teacher  
22 come to school. Native English teachers supposed to instill some cultural values but now they  
23 only come once a week, parents think it is not effective enough.

24  
25 孔：外教上课的时间有多少？How long will be the lesson conducted by native English  
26 teacher?

27 蒋：外教一次是45分钟。规定是英语课不占用正常的课时，因此是5点以后上课。  
28 每周上两次，每次35分钟。机构要求周六也上课，但是我们课时都已经完成。那么就  
在周六举行英语大活动，这周大班，下周小班这样。把这一阶段的英语学习的内容通过  
游戏等形式进行复习。The lesson is 45 minutes each time and it only conducted after 5pm once

a week because English class is not a regular lesson. As for the lesson conducted by Chinese teachers, it is 35 minutes each time twice a week and the English learning organization arrange revision on Saturday.

29

30 孔：英语教学的时间是怎么安排的呢？How do you arrange the English teaching?

31 蒋：每天都有英语教学，是本园教师。它是一个主教，一个副教，副教是配班的。她们  
32 也有分工，教新课，由主教负责，副教就负责复习。它是每天都有的，每天上下午都有  
33 即使只有 20 分钟也可以。更多是节日，举行英语大活动。Everyday we have English  
34 lessons conducted by Chinese teachers, one class teacher and one teaching assistant. After the  
35 class teacher introduces a new topic, the assistant will responsible for revision. Revision  
36 session will be 20 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes in the afternoon. We will have  
37 special English activities if there is any festival celebration.

38

39 孔：冰厂田幼儿园的外教情况是怎么样的？How is the native English teaching at local  
40 nursery?

41 蒋：冰厂田没有外教，这涉及到费用的问题。收了 100 的英语特色费就不能收外教费了  
42 ，而我们六一幼儿园的外教是额外收费的，有外教的是 110，无外教的是 50。Local  
43 nurseries do not have native English teacher due to the fee of charge. We charge \$100 for  
44 English learning but not for native English teachers. On the other hand, affiliated nurseries  
45 will charge extra fee \$110 for native English teachers and \$50 for local English teachers.

46

47 孔：冰厂田和六一的英语教学相比较，情况如何？How do you compare local nursery and  
48 affiliated nursery?

49 蒋：冰厂田比六一的教学效果好，最明显是孩子用英语表达的习惯要好。还有对英语的  
50 敏感性要好，兴趣也孔。我们这边的英语区角是没人去的。兴趣是需要一定技能的，能  
51 用的话等好奇心消失后对英语也就没有兴趣了。The teaching is more effective in the local  
52 nursery and the children there are used to express in English. Children are sensitive to  
53 English and the nursery is able to instill their interest to learn. However, children in the  
54 affiliated nursery do not go to English interest corner in the classroom. Motivation should  
55 pair with curiosity, if children are not interested, they are not motivated to learn.

56 另外，冰厂田的英语教学更符合应试教育的要求，它的教学内容和小学的内容比较接轨。  
57 Besides, local nursery's English teaching complies with the format of examination-oriented  
58 curriculum, the teaching content is quite similar to the primary school ones.

59 教材是老师自己编的，是老师的思维方式，但是不一定符合英语学科的要求。后来的双



60 语活动是和主题活动结合的，用英语组织美工活动等。它的英语增加的不是增加孩子的  
61 英语表达，而是听力，他的一种理解能力，对英语的应用能力。双语就应该是这样的，  
62 而不是用英语去教汉语。英语好的老师直接影响到孩子的英语表达能力，同时幼儿园的  
63 英语氛围比较好，也影响到教师水平的提孔。Teachers design the materials and  
64 curriculum but they may not meet the curriculum goal of English subject. We integrate  
65 English with learning themes and conduct art activities in English. Children have more  
66 exposure on English's listening but not speaking. Listening is part of the comprehension  
67 skill, application to daily experience. This is the way of ideal bilingualism. We are not  
68 teaching English. Only teachers with good English will directly influence children's interest  
69 and expressive skills. At the same time, better atmosphere in the nursery to learn English and  
70 also to enhance teachers' English proficiency.

71 蒋：我觉得语言的学习就是一种环境，语言是一种工具，学了就是为了用的。我们是真  
72 正的双语。我们小小班的孩子，在第一学期还不明显，但是到了第二学期后，她们能听  
73 懂老师在说什么，也能表达，能和老师互动。语言环境很重要。因为老师只懂英文，孩  
74 子必须用英文和老师交流，孩子在这种“强迫”性的环境中，慢慢得由被动变成主动  
75 I think that language learning depends mainly on environment. Language is just a tool, and  
76 opportunities to use the tool is very important. For example, in the pre nursery class, from  
77 second term onwards, children have great improvement in English, they first comprehend and  
78 able to express in simple words, more interaction with native English teachers. Language context  
79 is important, since children are forced to speak English to native English teachers in the  
80 beginning, and later will be developed as an active English learner.

78  
79 孔：外教和中教都全部说英文，她们之间的差别是什么？What is the difference between  
80 native English teacher and local English teacher?

81 蒋：是整个生活的环境不同。而中教还是集中在课堂用语，生活用语缺乏，因为她自身  
82 就缺乏生活语言环境，也缺乏用语言的习惯，或者正确的表达方法。但是这样也许孩子  
83 在应试教育中好一点。公办园的英语更强调“训练”，目的性很强，而我们这不会这样，  
84 会慢慢熏陶。Native English teacher is more suitable for our immersion programme. Chinese  
85 teachers teaching English will heavily emphasis on skills and lack of daily application. They  
86 concentrate on drilling with clear objectives, the approach which is quite different from our  
87 nursery, immersion and slowly integration of English language.

85  
86 孔：幼儿的学习效率怎么样？How efficient is the children's learning?

87 蒋：公办园的这种形式看上去效率很孔，但是忽视了孩子的自主建构能力。English learning

in local nursery is also effective but they neglect children's self-initiated and constructive type of learning.

88

89 孔：中国老师和外籍老师的区别是什么？What is the difference between native and local  
90 teacher?

91 蒋：中国老师更容易给孩子提供帮助和支持，让孩子失去了主动性。Chinese teachers will  
92 provide more support and assistance to children, so that children will be too dependent and  
93 lack of initiatives.

94

95 孔：中文教师和外籍教师在组织英语活动时是否有语言要求？他们的区别是什么？

96 What is the difference in the requirement for organizing English activities between native  
97 English teacher and local English teacher?

98 石：我觉得中文教师没有什么优势，发音就是没有外国人好。中教可能比较了解孩子，  
99 可以帮助孩子复习英语。中国的教学结构比较死，这和师生比有关系。没有孩子不喜欢  
100 外教的，因为她们对孩子没有要求，孩子没有压力。但到了中国老师那马上就有压力。

101 强化训练时中国老师会比外教的方法多，效果也好。也就是在教学方法上。I think that  
102 native English teacher have accurate pronunciation and the local English teachers don't.

103 However, local teachers understand children better so that they can help children to revise.

104 Most children like native teacher since they do not have demands or expectation on  
105 children. Chinese teachers believe in effective training and they adopt different teaching  
106 strategies.

107 外教基本上没有学前教育专业出身的，但是孩子还是喜欢她们。这和文化是有关系。而

108 且外教对于中国教师的一些教法承认有效，但是不接受。Majority of native English

109 teachers are not professional trained but they are fond of children, since western culture are  
110 more affectionate. Though native English teachers think that the teaching approach of

111 Chinese teachers is effective but they do not accept this kind of drilling.

112 蒋：我们的这种外教还不如中国教师来教。外教要在生活的环境当中和孩子交流，这样  
113 才能发挥外教的作用。如果在课堂的时间内，是不行的。外教也知道他今天的任务是什

114 么，这些单词要复习。Native English teacher will be more effective in immersion setting  
115 than conduct a lesson.

116

117 孔：您对幼儿园的英语教学有没有要求？Do you have any requirement for the English  
118 teaching?

119 蒋：冰厂田是有语言要求的，即使在美术活动中，也有语言要求。外教在组织其他的活

120 动时，比如美术活动时，是没有语言要求，但是在语言活动中有语言要求。Yes, I require  
121 them to follow certain syllabus for English lesson.

122

123 孔：你选择外教的目的是什么？Why do you choose native English teachers?

124 蒋：满足家长的要求。To fulfill parents' demand.

125

126 孔：你理想的幼儿园英语学习是什么样的？What is the ideal setting or approach to learn  
127 English at kindergarten stage?

128 蒋：有教材，由外教来教。有教材，从语言角度来讲学科系统性的问题，外教解决了英  
129 语的应用问题。Should have proper teaching materials, then we are able to learn  
130 systematically. Native English teacher can solve the problems of application of language.

131

132 孔：您对幼儿学习英语有没有期望？期望是什么？从哪些方面考核？What is your  
133 expectation in English teaching? how to evaluate?

134 蒋：不学肯定比学好。有期望，既然我们收费了有教材，那么最起码孩子的发音要标准，  
135 有一定的词汇量。Expect proper pronunciation from children and vocabulary learning from  
136 the lessons.

137

138 孔：对幼儿的英语学习情况有没有考核呢？Is there any assessment for their learning?

139 蒋：有考核的，但是考核没有评分标准，凭感觉，就是看孩子的发展。孩子的兴趣，表  
140 达，用英语的习惯，发音是否标准，老师是否有教学机智。如果孩子没有兴趣，那老师  
141 不是好老师。我更看重兴趣，其次是词汇量等。We don't have formal assessment and we  
142 mainly assess on their interest in English learning, English expression, use of English, and  
143 proper pronunciation. I will focus on their interest in learning English first and then the  
144 learning of vocabulary.

145 石：我的期望更孔一些，投入和回报是不同的要求的。我希望孩子的语言成为一种习惯，  
146 有英语思维。但是事实上不能全部达到的，我想有一部分可以达到。这和不同的伙伴有  
147 关系。用英语讲简单的英语故事，这是大班的要求。不同班级有不同的目标。希望能接  
148 纳不同的文化，在我们这样的幼儿园里应该有这样的发展。My expectation is that English  
149 speaking should become routine in the classroom. I expect children to have English  
150 cognition but will have different expectation for different age groups. For the upper class  
151 children, they should able to tell simple story and also aware of different culture.

152 蒋：对教英语的中国老师还是有要求的，象机构对老师进行培训，不合格就没有证书就

153 不能教英语。当然老师是有差异的，但是至少发音上有把关的，而且对教英语的观念上  
154 也有把关。孩子对英语真的是有兴趣，而且会有自信心。我们幼儿园有孩子考级通过，  
155 但是他们用英语的习惯和英语正确的表达方法是弱于你们（世纪）幼儿园的。We should  
156 require the local English teachers. For instance, I think that teachers should receive special  
157 training and pass the competence assessment. Children should be motivated to learn and are  
158 subjected to assessment of their English ability. The bilingual kindergarten with native  
159 English teacher is better in building up their routine of speaking English and proper  
160 pronunciation.

161  
162 孔：你理想中的幼儿英语教学情况是怎么样的？What is your ideal setting of English  
163 teaching?

164 蒋：考虑到成本的话，我会选择一到两个外教在幼儿园，教英语还是由中国教师教，外  
165 教和孩子一起玩，比如一起早锻炼，主要是增加孩子在生活中的语言环境。外教要组织  
166 的是活动，而不是课时。外教在英语学习中起到的是环境的作用。多途径学英语。

167 Due to the financial constraint, I think that one or two native English teachers should stay in  
168 the nursery. English lesson will be conducted by Chinese teachers and native English teachers  
169 will be responsible to do informal lessons or play with children, for example, morning  
170 exercise time, provide an ideal setting to learn English during their daily experience. Native  
171 teacher will organize activities but not teaching lesson, so that children can through different  
172 channel to learn English, even part of the living experience.

173  
174 孔：家长选择英语学习的态度是什么？What will be the attitude of parents towards  
175 children's English learning?

176 蒋：很多家长就要求孩子能通过考级，并不要求他的真正的英语应用能力。现在的家长  
177 都认为英语是很重要的。特别是英语下到小学一年级后，家长对英语的要求就更迫切了。  
178 Most of the parents want their child to have graded learning, and will be regularly assessed  
179 on their grading. They do not request any application of skills. Parents adhere the importance  
180 of English learning, especially now English curriculum begins at primary one. The demands  
181 from parents are higher than the past.

182  
183 孔：家长选择外教的原因是什么？Why do parents choose native English teachers?

184 蒋：一般有两种，一是玩玩啊，外教会和孩子做游戏，二比较功利一点，因为外教表达  
185 要标准，要丰富，更有利于孩子的英语学习。这和家长的教育观念有关系。还有一种是  
186 攀比心态。Parents want the native English teachers to play with their child, or they want

187 their child to learn proper English from native teachers.

188

189 孔：家长的英语水平和孩子的英语学习有关系吗？ Is there any correlation with Parents'  
190 English proficiency and children's proficiency in English?

191 蒋：这不取决于家长的学历，而是家长肯花在孩子身上的时间。和家长自己英语水平怎  
192 么样关系不大。因为英语不好的家长，会明白，我自己读不好我肯定不教孩子，那我用  
193 什么办法呢？就用磁带等。当然英语好的家长对于上小学后的孩子学习会有好处，因为  
194 那时有成绩了。幼儿时期不是学习的时期，而是习惯的养成时期。 It depends on the time  
195 parents learn with children. I do think it is related to the education level. If parents  
196 are weak in English, they will buy lots of audio tapes for children.

## 關於幼兒英語學習問題問卷調查 (家長版) Questionnaire for Parents on English Activities in Hong Kong Kindergartens

爲了瞭解父母對幼兒學習英語的觀點，以及目前幼兒英語學習的狀況，從而幫助探討和研究如何促進幼兒語言能力(尤其是第二語言)的發展，我們希望能籍著這份問卷收集各位的意見，作爲整體分析之用。

問卷內容絕對保密，敬請放心填寫。謝謝合作！

此問卷爲選擇題，請在您所選項目的空格內打“✓”，如果是多選題，會在題目中注明，否則請只要選擇一個答案。

With the aim to have an in-depth understanding of the ways to implement quality childhood language education, in particular second language, this questionnaire is designed to collect information on the current situation of children learning English, as well as the parents' opinions on their children learning English.

Please be assured that all information collected will be treated with strict confidence and be used for integrated analysis only. Thank you!

This questionnaire consists of multiple-choice questions, please ✓ the appropriate boxes as required. If you are not required to select more than one answer, please just ✓ one box.

### 基本資訊 Background Information

#### 關於幼兒 About your child :

1. 出生日期 Birthday : \_\_\_\_\_年 Year \_\_\_\_\_月 Month
2. 幼兒性別 Gender : 男 Boy 女 Girl
3. 幼兒自出生起接觸的語言是 Mother tongue : 廣東話 Cantonese 普通話 Putonghua 英語 English
4. 幼兒在家主要由誰照顧 Person who takes care of your child : 母親 Mother 父親 Father 保姆 Baby sitter 其他親戚 Other relatives
5. 幼兒第一次接觸英語的時間 The age when your child first contacted English : \_\_\_\_\_ (可填寫幼兒的月齡 you may fill in your child's month/age)
6. 幼兒有規律地開始學習英語的時間 The age when your child started learning English regularly : \_\_\_\_\_ (可填寫幼兒的月齡 you may fill in your child's month/age)

#### 關於母親 About the mother :

1. 母親的教育背景 Educational background :  
小學 primary 初中 secondary 高中 tertiary 大學 university 碩士 master
2. 母親接觸英語的機會 Frequency of using English :  
沒有 None 工作中使用英語 In workplace 生活中使用英語 In daily life  
工作和生活中都使用英語 Both in workplace and daily life

3. 母親在家裏主要用哪種語言與孩子交談？ What language does the mother use to communicate with the child at home?

- 廣東話 Cantonese     英語 English     普通話 Putonghua  
 廣東話和英語 Cantonese and English     普通話和英語 Putonghua and English

**關於父親 About the father :**

1. 父親的教育背景 Educational background :

小學 primary  初中 secondary  高中 tertiary  大學 university  碩士 master

2. 父親接觸英語的機會 Frequency of using English :

沒有 None     工作中使用英語 In workplace     生活中使用英語 In daily life  
 工作和生活中都使用英語 Both in workplace and daily life

3. 父親在家裏主要用哪種語言與孩子交談？ What language does the father use to communicate with the child at home?

- 廣東話 Cantonese     英語 English     普通話 Putonghua  
 廣東話和英語 Cantonese and English     普通話和英語 Putonghua and English

**問卷 Questions :**

1. 您為孩子選擇幼稚園的時候，您會考慮的因素有：（最多選擇 3 項）

- 幼稚園的歷史     交通是否方便     幼稚園的教育理念  
 幼稚園的物理環境（比如園舍、戶外場地、玩具等）     教師的專業素質  
 幼稚園的教育特色（比如音樂特色、美術特色等）     幼稚園是否有英語教學

What do you think are the criteria for parents in selecting a kindergarten? (select maximum 3 items)

- History of the kindergarten     Convenient transportation     Mission of the kindergarten  
 Facilities of the kindergarten (e.g. campus, playground, toys)  
 Professionalism of teachers     Characteristics of the educational services of the kindergarten (e.g. curriculum of music or art education)     English teaching is available in the kindergarten

2. 您認為孩子開始學習英語的最佳時間是：

- 0-1 歲     1-3 歲     3-6 歲     6 歲以後

The best age for children to start learning English is:

- 0-1     2-3     4-6     After 6 years old

3. 您認為孩子學習英語和母語哪個更重要？

- 英語     母語     一樣重要     都不重要     不清楚

Learning English or learning their mother tongue, which do you think is more important to children?

- English     Mother tongue     both are important     neither of them are important  
 I am not sure

4. 您認為學習英語對孩子母語的學習有：

- 促進作用      阻礙作用      沒有關係

How would learning English affect children's learning on their mother tongue?

- It facilitates the learning of their mother tongue  
It creates an adverse effect on the learning of their mother tongue  
No effect at all

5. 您認為幼兒在幼稚園階段學習英語是：

- 非常有必要      有必要      沒有必要      無所謂

Do you think it is necessary for children to learn English at the kindergarten stage?

- Very necessary      Necessary Not necessary No comment

6. 您認為幼兒在幼稚園階段學習英語的好處是：（只選 1 項）

- 有助於上學以後的英語學習      可以增加孩子的自信心  
可以拓展孩子的視野,初步瞭解不同的文化      為孩子以後的發展打好基礎  
其他 \_\_\_\_\_

What is the advantage for children in learning English at the kindergarten stage?  
(select one item)

- It facilitates their learning of English in the future  
 It helps children build confidence  
 It widens children's vision and helps them to learn more about different cultures  
 It lays a sound foundation of their future development      Others: \_\_\_\_\_

7. 孩子的英語學習中,哪方面是您最希望看到的：（只選一項）

孩子可以簡單的聽和說英語      孩子喜歡聽和說英語      孩子喜歡閱讀英文讀物

孩子可以認識字母和一些單詞      孩子可以寫字母和一些單詞

孩子會主動地聽和說英語或者看英文讀物      其他 \_\_\_\_\_

What ability do you want children to develop? (select one item)

- listen and speak simple English  
 able to recognize some letters and words  
 like to listen to and speak English  
 able to write some letter and words  
 like to read English  
 speak, read or listen to English actively  
 Others: \_\_\_\_\_

8. 對於幼兒的英語學習,您最重視下列哪些方面：（最多選 3 項）

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 理解字詞的意思 | <input type="checkbox"/> 發音     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 認字      | <input type="checkbox"/> 背誦     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 寫字      | <input type="checkbox"/> 朗讀技巧   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 聆聽      | <input type="checkbox"/> 瞭解西方文化 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 對英語的興趣  |                                 |



What do you think is/are important to children in learning English? (select maximum 3 items)

- understanding meaning of words     recognizing words     writing      
 listening     interest in learning English     pronunciation     reciting      
 reading aloud  
 understanding western culture

9. 您認為讓幼兒學習英語的目的應該是：（此項為多選題，最多選3項）

- 瞭解英語文化                                     打好學習英語的基礎  
 配合兒童語言發展的需要                     使兒童不落後于其他同齡的兒童  
 銜接小學一年級課程                         培養對英語的興趣  
 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose(s) to let young children learn English at the kindergarten stage is/are: (You may have more than one answer. Please select maximum 3 items)

- To understand western culture  
 To lay a sound foundation of learning English in the future  
 To match children's linguistic developmental needs  
 To equip children with the same level of competence as other children of the same age  
 To link with Primary One curriculum  
 To nurture children's interest in learning English  
 Others \_\_\_\_\_

10. 在幼稚園階段，您希望孩子的英語水平：（可以多選）

- 沒有要求     可以進行簡單的聽說  
 能認識字母和一定數量的單詞                 可以獨自閱讀簡單的英文讀物  
 可以書寫一些簡單的辭彙                       對英語充滿興趣

What standard do you want your children to achieve in learning English at kindergarten? (select one or more items)

- No requirement at all                     Speak and listen simple English  
 Recognize letters and some words         Read simple English materials on their own  
 Write simple English words                 Have interest in learning English

11. 您的孩子在家裏接觸下列英文資料的機會：

	每天	經常	偶爾	從不
觀看英文電視節目	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
閱讀英文讀物	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
觀看英文碟片	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
聽英語磁帶	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
收聽英語廣播	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is the frequency with which your child is in contact with the following at home:

Never	Everyday	Always	Sometimes
Watching English programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading English materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watching English VCD/DCD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening to English tapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening to English broadcastings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. 您孩子所在的班級有外籍教師或英語國家兒童嗎？ 有  沒有  
 Are there any native-English speaking children or native-English teachers in your child's class?  
 Yes  No

如果有，您認為這對於孩子的英語學習的影響為：

- 非常有助於孩子的英語學習  對孩子的英語學習有些幫助  
 影響一般  沒有影響

If yes, how do you think they will affect your child's learning in English?

- Very helpful for him/her to learn English  To some extent helpful for him/her to learn English  
 No big effect  No effect at all

13. 您和孩子一起學習英語的時間為：  
 每周多於 3 小時  每周大概為 1-3 小時  每周少於一小時  沒有

How long will you learn English together with your child?

- More than 3 hours a week  1 to 3 hours a week  Less than 1 hour a week  
 Never

14. 您在家裏會讓幼兒溫習幼稚園裏學習的英語嗎？  
 堅持每次都復習  經常會  偶爾會  從來不會  
 Do you ask your child to review what they have learned at school?  
 Every time  Always  Sometimes  Never

15. 您給孩子購買英文學習的資料的花費大概有：  
 每月少於 20 元  每月在 20-50 元之間  每月多於 50 元  沒有

How much do you spend on English learning materials for your child?

- Less than \$20 a month  \$20-50 a month  More than \$50 a month  None

16. 您認為幼兒學習英語最好的途徑是：  
 家長教  補習班  學校學  家庭教師

What do you think is the best way for children to learn English?

- Taught by parents    Supplementary class    Learned from school    Taught by private tutor

17. 您認為對於孩子的英語學習有效的方法是：（可以多選）

- 閱讀英語讀物    觀看英文電視節目    到英語國家旅行    記憶單詞和句型

和說英語的人經常交往    幼稚園的英語教學    其他 \_\_\_\_\_

What is/are the most effective way(s) for children to learn English? (select one or more items)

- Reading English materials    Watching English TV programmes  
 Traveling to English-speaking countries  
 Reciting words and phrases    Talking to native-English speakers  
 English lessons in kindergartens    others

18. 您認為影響孩子英語學習興趣的因素有：（至多選3項）

- 孩子的年齡    教師的教學水平    教材的趣味性  
 教師的國籍    家庭的環境    應用英語的機會

What is/are the reason(s) that affect(s) your children's interest in learning English? (select maximum 3 items)

- Children's age    Level of teaching    Interesting learning materials  
 Teachers' nationality    Family environment    Chance to use English

19. 您通過什麼方式教孩子學習英文？（此項為多選題）

- 字母或單詞卡片    閱讀英文讀物時    物品上貼上相關單詞  
 日常生活中隨機    孩子在家時間播放英語磁帶  
 看英語碟片    電腦網路    其他 \_\_\_\_\_

What have you done to help your child learn English? (You may select more than one answer)

- Letter cards or word cards  
 Reading English materials  
 Paste English word cards on different goods and utensils  
 Learn it in daily life  
 Play English tapes at home  
 Watch English VCD  
 Internet  
 Others \_\_\_\_\_

20. 您認為您的孩子在幼稚園學習英語能否達到您的目的：

- 完全能達到    能達到    部分達到    不能達到

Do you think that English learning in kindergartens can achieve your goal(s)?

- Completely achieved    Achieved    Partly achieved    Cannot achieve

21. 在給孩子選擇英語教師方面，您會選擇：

- 外籍教師    具有一定英語水平的本地教師    幼稚園的教師    其他

Who would you choose to be your child's English teachers?

- Native teachers    Chinese teacher with proven English standard    Teachers at the kindergarten    Others

22. 您選擇外籍教師的原因：

- 語音準確    增加孩子對英語學習的興趣  
表達規範    可以讓孩子接觸英語文化  
其他 \_\_\_\_\_

The reason for you to choose native teachers is:

- Accurate pronunciation     Increase children's interest in learning English  
 Standard way of expression     Let children learn more about western culture  
 Others \_\_\_\_\_

23. 您選擇本地教師的原因是：

- 更容易與孩子溝通    可以用中文解釋孩子不懂的英文  
知道更多學習英語的方法    其他 \_\_\_\_\_

The reason you choose Chinese teacher is:

- Easier to communicate with children  
 Can use Chinese to explain what they cannot understand in English  
 Know more ways to learn English  
 Others \_\_\_\_\_

24. 您對於您的孩子現在的英語水平現狀：

	非常滿意	滿意	一般	不滿意
口語能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
聽力水平	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
閱讀能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
書寫能力	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
英語興趣	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
學習英語的信心	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are you satisfied with your child's English standard now?

	Very satisfied	satisfied	acceptable	not satisfied
Oral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confident in English learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

幼稚園英語活動問卷調查 (教師)  
**Questionnaire for Teachers on  
English Activities in Hong Kong Kindergartens**

爲了瞭解有關香港幼稚園推行英語活動的狀況，以便探討和研究如何推行優質的幼稚教育課程，本問卷將收集所得資料，用作整體分析之用，內容絕對保密，請放心填寫。謝謝您的合作！

此問卷分爲兩部分，請在您所選項目的空格內打“✓”或者在\_\_\_\_\_上填寫您的答案。

With the aim to have an in-depth understanding on the way to implement quality kindergarten education, this questionnaire is designed to collect information on the current situation on the implementation of English activities in Shanghai kindergartens. Please be assured that all information collected will be treated with strict confidence, and be used for integrated analysis only. Thank you!

This questionnaire comprises three parts, please ✓ the appropriate boxes or write your answers on the \_\_\_\_\_.

**答卷人基本資訊 Personal information of interviewee**

您的性別：Gender

女 female       男 male

您的年齡：Age

25 以下 below 25     25-34     35-44     45 以上 45 or above

您的教齡：How long have you taught?

3 年以內 within 3 years     3-5 年 3-5 years     6-10 年 6-10 years     10 年以上 more than 10 years

您作爲幼兒教師的教齡：How long have you been a childhood educator?

3 年以內 within 3 years     3-5 年 3-5 years     6-10 年 6-10 years     10 年以上 more than 10 years

您現在任教的班別：(如不止一個班別，可多選) What level(s) are you teaching (you may choose more than one)?

小組 Pre-nursery class     幼兒班 Nursery class     低班 Lower class     高班 Upper class

您的母語是：Your mother tongue is:

廣東話 Cantonese     英語 English     其他 Other, please specify - \_\_\_\_\_

**I. 有關幼稚園英語活動的情況 English Activities in Kindergartens**

2. 每周英語活動平均所佔的時間：

幼兒班：每周平均 \_\_\_\_\_ 分鐘

低班：每周平均 \_\_\_\_\_ 分鐘

高班：每周平均 \_\_\_\_\_ 分鐘

Time for English activities:

K1 : \_\_\_\_\_ min /week on average

K2 : \_\_\_\_\_ min /week on average

K3 : \_\_\_\_\_ min /week on average

2. 讓幼兒在幼稚園階段學習英語的目的是：（最多可選 3 項）

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 符合家長要求      | <input type="checkbox"/> 打好學習英語的基礎      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 配合兒童語言發展的需要 | <input type="checkbox"/> 使兒童不落後于其他同齡的兒童 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 迎接全球化挑戰     | <input type="checkbox"/> 銜接小學一年級課程      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 其他 _____    | <input type="checkbox"/> 培養對英語的興趣       |

The purpose(s) to let young children learn English at the kindergarten stage is/are:  
(select maximum 3 items)

- To fulfill parents' request
- To lay a sound foundation of learning English in the future
- To match children's linguistic developmental needs
- To equip children with the same level of competence as other children of the same age
- To link with Primary One curriculum
- To meet the challenges of globalization
- To nurture children's interest in learning English
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

3. 您認為訂定英語教學範圍及內容的最主要準則是：（請選一項）

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 參照以往經驗     | <input type="checkbox"/> 配合同區小學的英語課程 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 參照本園教師的情況  | <input type="checkbox"/> 參照教學資料，自行制定 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 配合政府銜接小學課程 |                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 其他 _____   |                                      |

The main factor in determining the scope and content of the English curriculum is:  
(select one item)

- Past experience
- The curricula of primary schools in the same district
- The teachers in the kindergarten
- Designed independently with reference to information and statistics on teaching
- The curricula of feeder government primary schools
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

4. 您認為孩子開始學習英語的最佳時間是：

- |                                |                                |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 歲 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 歲 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 歲 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 歲以後 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|

The best age for children to start learning English is:

- |                              |                              |                              |  |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 | <input type="checkbox"/> After 6 years old |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|

5. 您認為孩子學習英語和母語哪個更重要？

英語 母語 一樣重要 都不重要 不清楚

Learning English or learning their mother tongue language, which do you think is more important to children?

English Mother tongue both are important neither of them are important I am not sure

6. 您認為學習英語對孩子母語的學習有：

促進作用 阻礙作用 沒有關係

How would learning English affect children's learning of their mother tongue?

It facilitates the learning of their mother tongue

It creates an adverse effect on the learning of their mother tongue

No effect at all

7. 您認為幼兒在幼稚園階段學習英語是：

非常有必要 有必要 沒有必要 無所謂

Do you think it is necessary for children to learn English at kindergarten stage?

Very necessary Necessary Not necessary No comment

8. 您認為幼兒在幼稚園階段學習英語的好處是：（只選1項）

有助於上學以後的英語學習 可以增加孩子的自信心

可以拓展孩子的視野，初步瞭解不同的文化 為孩子以後的發展打好基礎

其他 \_\_\_\_\_

What is the advantage for children to learn English at the kindergarten stage? (select one item)

It facilitates their learning of English in the future It helps children build confidence

It widens children's vision and helps them to learn more about different cultures

It lays a sound foundation of their future development Others: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. 孩子的英語學習中，哪方面是您最希望看到的：（只選一項）

孩子可以簡單的聽和說英語 孩子喜歡聽和說英語 孩子喜歡閱讀

英文讀物

孩子可以認識字母和一些單詞 孩子可以寫字母和一些單詞 孩子會

主動地聽和說英語或者看英文讀物 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

What ability do you want children to develop? (select one item)

listen and speak simple English

able to recognize some letters and words

like to listen to and speak English

able to write some letter and words

like to read English

speak, read or listen to English actively

Others: \_\_\_\_\_

10. 對於幼兒的英語學習，您最重視下列哪些方面：（最多選 3 項）

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 理解字詞的意思 | <input type="checkbox"/> 發音     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 認字      | <input type="checkbox"/> 背誦     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 寫字      | <input type="checkbox"/> 朗讀技巧   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 聆聽      | <input type="checkbox"/> 瞭解西方文化 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 對英語的興趣  |                                 |

What do you think is/are important to children in learning English? (select maximum 3 items)

- |   |  |  |                                   |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> understanding meaning of words | <input type="checkbox"/> recognizing words             | <input type="checkbox"/> writing       | <input type="checkbox"/>          |
| listening   | <input type="checkbox"/> interest in learning English  | <input type="checkbox"/> pronunciation | <input type="checkbox"/> reciting |
| aloud   | <input type="checkbox"/> understanding western culture | <input type="checkbox"/> reading       |                                   |

11. 在英語教學中，您贊同：

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 把英語教學和其他領域的活動結合起來 | <input type="checkbox"/> 單純地進行英語教學 |
|--|------------------------------------|

Which one is the better way of teaching English?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teach English and other subjects at the same time | <input type="checkbox"/> Teach English independently |
|--|--|

12. 推行英語活動時，您所採用以下教學策略的頻率：（請圈上適當的答案）

	經常	很少	偶爾	從不
(a) 採用分組教學 .....	1	2	3	4
(b) 重復練習法 .....	1	2	3	4
(c) 角色扮演 .....	1	2	3	4
(d) 通過講故事來教英語 .....	1	2	3	4
(e) 配以圖卡、字詞卡教英語 .....	1	2	3	4
(f) 通過玩遊戲方式教英語 .....	1	2	3	4
(g) 通過唱歌方式教英語 .....	1	2	3	4
(h) 通過資訊科技（電腦軟體）教英語 .....	1	2	3	4
(i) 採用錄影帶 / 錄音帶教英語 .....	1	2	3	4
(j) 默寫記憶法 .....	1	2	3	4

The frequency with which your school implements the following teaching approaches during English activities: (Please circle your answer)

	Always Sometimes	Seldom	Never
(a) Teach in groups .....	1	2	
3                      4			
(b) Repeated exercises .....	1	2	
3                      4			
(c) Role play .....	1	2	
3                      4			



(d) story-telling .....	1	2
3            4		
(e) Assisted by using picture cards and word cards .....	1	2
3            4		
(f) Teach through games .....	1	2
3            4		
(g) Teach through singing songs .....	1	2
3            4		
(h) Use information technologies .....	1	2
3            4		
(i.e. computer software)		
(i) Use audio/video tapes .....	1	2
3            4		
(j) Ask children to spell and write .....	1	2
3            4		
vocabulary in the teaching materials		

13. 推行英語活動時，所遇到的困難是：（最多可選 3 項）

- 編寫教材內容                       教學活動的設計  
 掌握正確發音                       教授英語的知識和技巧  
 組織有效的活動                       表達及溝通技巧  
 受政府 / 文化的約束或者限制       沒有困難  
 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

The difficulty (difficulties) that teachers meet when implementing English activities is/are: (select maximum 3 items)

- Compiling material contents       Designing teaching activities  
 Mastering correct pronunciation    Organising effective activities  
 Teaching English skills and knowledge       No difficulty at all        
 Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Expression and communication       Restrictions from government / cultural limitations

14. 採用現時的教法，您認為兒童吸收及掌握英語的難易程度：

- 十分容易       容易       尚可       不容易

Do children find it easy to learn and master English by adopting the current teaching approaches?

- very easy       easy       acceptable       not easy

15. 兒童學習英語時，最易掌握哪些方面：（最多選 3 項）

- 理解字詞的意思                       發音  
 認字                                       背誦  
 寫字                                       朗讀技巧  
 聆聽英語的指示                       其他 \_\_\_\_\_

The skill(s) that children find it (them) the easiest to master when learning English is/are: (select maximum 3 items)

- Understanding the meaning of words       Pronunciation  
 Recognizing words     Reciting     Writing       Reading aloud  
 Listening to English instructions     Others \_\_\_\_\_

16 你認為貴校現時採用的英語教學法，對兒童學習的成效是：（請圈上適當的答案）

		很有成效	有成效	一般	沒有成效
興趣方面	1	2	3	4	
信心方面	1	2	3	4	
英語能力 / 水平方面	1	2	3	4	

Are you satisfied with children's learning effectiveness in English by adopting the current teaching approach(es) in your school? (Please circle your answer)

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Acceptable	Not Satisfied
Interest	1	2	3	4	
Confidence	1	2	3	4	
English skills/abilities	1	2	3	4	

17. 在幼稚園階段，您希望孩子的英語水平：（可以多選）

- 沒有要求                                       可以進行簡單的聽說  
 能認識字母和一定數量的單詞       可以獨自閱讀簡單的英文讀物  
 可以書寫一些簡單的辭彙               對英語充滿興趣

What standard do you want your children to achieve in learning English at kindergarten? (select one or more items)

- No requirement at all       Speak and listen simple English  
 Recognize letters and some words     Read simple English materials on their own  
 Write simple English words     Have interest in learning English

18. 您孩子所在班級有外籍教師或者英語國家兒童嗎？如果有，您認為這對於孩子的英語學習的影響為：

- 非常有助於孩子的英語學習       對孩子的英語學習有些幫助  
 影響一般                                       沒有影響

Are there any native-English speaking children or native-English teachers in your child's class? If yes, how do you think they will affect your child's learning in English?

- Very helpful for him/her to learn English       To some extent helpful for him/her to learn English  
 No big effect                                       No effect at all

19. 您認為幼兒學習英語最好的途徑是：

- 家長教     補習班     學校學     家庭教師

What do you think is the best way for children to learn English?

Taught by parents  Supplementary class  Learned from school   
Taught by private tutor

20. 您認為對於孩子的英語學習有效的方法是：（可以多選）

閱讀英語讀物  觀看英文電視節目  到英語國家旅行  記憶單詞和句型

和說英語的人經常交往  幼稚園的英語教學

What is/are the effective way(s) for children to learn English? (select one or more items)

Reading English materials  Watching English TV programmes  Traveling to English-speaking countries

Reciting words and phrases  Talking to native-English speakers

English lessons in kindergartens

21. 您認為影響孩子英語學習興趣的因素有：（至多選3項）

孩子的年齡  教師的教學水平  教材的趣味性

教師的國籍  家庭的環境  應用英語的機會

What is/are the reason(s) that affect(s) children's interest in learning English? (select maximum 3 items)

Children's age  Level of teaching  Interesting learning materials

Teachers' nationality  Family environment  Chance to use English

## II. 關於英語教師的情況 English Teachers

22. 您認為教授幼兒英語的教師應該是：（請按照選擇的先後順序，以1-4排列）

受過幼稚教育專業訓練的外籍教師  沒有受過幼稚教育專業訓練的外籍教師

本園本地教師  聘請的具有英語文憑的本地老師

Who do you think should teach English in kindergartens? (rank the items from 1-4 according to your preference)

Trained Native teachers  Non-trained Native teachers  Local teachers of the kindergartens

Local teachers with English diplomas

23. 您認為聘請外籍老師教授英語的主要目的是：（最多可選3項）

讓幼兒接觸西方文化  讓幼兒學習正統的英語發音

增加英語會話的機會  學習西方先進的教學模式

讓兒童模仿外國口音  讓幼兒學習書寫

滿足家長要求  其他 \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) in hiring native English teacher(s)? (select maximum 3 items)

Allow children to experience western culture

Allow children to learn proper English pronunciation

Provide more opportunities for children to practice oral English

- Adopt advanced western teaching approaches
- Allow children to simulate native accents
- Allow children to learn writing
- Satisfy parents' demands
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

24. 您認為本園老師教授英語的優勢是：

(至多選 3 項，並請按照選擇的先後順序，以 1-3 排列，1 為首選)

- 瞭解兒童需要與興趣
- 活動設計靈活多樣
- 易於培養兒童對英語的興趣
- 與幼兒熟悉
- 更容易與孩子溝通
- 可以用中文解釋孩子不懂的英文

What advantages do you think the teachers of your kindergarten have in teaching English? (select maximum 3 items and rank them from 1-3 according to your preference, where 1 represents your first choice)

- Understanding the needs and interests of children
- Flexibility in designing activities
- Easier to nurture children's interests in English
- More familiar with children
- Easier to communicate with children
- Using Chinese to explain what children cannot understand in English

25. 您認為本園老師教授英語在哪些方面需要改進和提高：

(請按照選擇的先後順序，以 1-3 排列)

- 英語發音
- 英語活動的設計和組織
- 英語教學方法
- 英語活動和其他的活動的整合
- 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

What aspects of English teaching do you think the teachers of your kindergarten should enhance? (rank the items from 1-3 according to your preference)

- English pronunciation
- Design and organisation of English activities
- English teaching approaches
- The integration of English activities with other activities
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

26. 您認為外國教師和本地教師教英語的差別：

- 相當大
- 比較大
- 很小
- 沒有差別

Do you think there is a difference between native teachers and Chinese teachers in teaching English?

- A very significant difference
- A big difference
- a slight difference
- No difference at all

幼兒園英語學習問卷調查表 (校長版)  
**Questionnaire for Principals on  
English Activities in Kindergartens**

此問卷旨在瞭解有關幼稚園推行英語學習活動的現狀，以幫助探討和研究如何推行優質的幼稚教育課程。收集所得的資料僅作整體分析之用，且絕對保密，敬請放心填寫。謝謝您的合作！

此問卷分為兩部分，請在您所選項目的空格內加“✓”或者在\_\_\_\_\_上填寫您的答案。

With the aim to have an in-depth understanding on the way to implement quality kindergarten education, this questionnaire is designed to collect information on the current situation on the implementation of English activities in kindergartens. Please be assured that all information collected will be treated with strict confidence, and be used for integrated analysis only. Thank you!

This questionnaire comprises two parts, please ✓ the appropriate boxes or write your answers on the \_\_\_\_\_.

答卷人基本資訊 **Personal information of interviewee**

您的性別：Gender

- 女 female                       男 male

您的年齡：Age

- 25 以下 below 25     25-34     35-44     45 以上 45 or above

您的教齡：How long have you taught?

- 3 年以內 within 3 years     3-5 年 3-5 years     6-10 年 6-10 years  
 10 年以上 more than 10 years

您作為幼稚園園長的時間：How long have you worked as a kindergarten principal?

- 3 年以內 within 3 years     3-5 年 3-5 years     6-10 年 6-10 years      
10 年以上 more than 10 years

**問卷 Questions：**

1. 您認為讓幼兒在幼稚園階段學習英語的目的是：（最多可選 3 項）

- 符合家長要求                       打好學習英語的基礎  
 配合兒童語言發展的需要         使兒童不落後於其他同齡的兒童  
 迎接全球化挑戰                       銜接小學一年級課程  
 其他 \_\_\_\_\_                       培養對英語的興趣

The purpose(s) to let young children learn English at the kindergarten stage is/are:  
(select maximum 3 items)

- To fulfill parents' request  
 To lay a sound foundation of learning English in the future  
 To match children's linguistic developmental needs

- To equip children with the same level of competence with other children of the same age
- To link with Primary One curriculum
- To meet the challenges of globalization
- To nurture children's interest in learning English
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

2. 您認為確定英語教學範圍及內容的最主要準則是：（請選一項）

- 參照以往經驗
- 參照本園教師的情況
- 配合政府銜接小學課程
- 其他 \_\_\_\_\_
- 配合同區小學的英語課程
- 參照教學資料，自行制定

The main factor in determining the scope and content of the English curriculum is:  
(select one item)

- Past experience
- The curricula of primary schools in the same district
- The teachers in the kindergarten
- Designed independently with reference to information and statistics on teaching
- The curricula of feeder government primary schools
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

3. 您認為孩子開始學習英語的最佳時間是：

- 出生即開始
- 3歲以後
- 6歲以後

The best age for children to start learning English is:

- Since their birth
- After 3 years old
- After 6 years old

4. 您認為孩子學習英語和母語哪個較重要？

- 英語
- 母語
- 一樣重要
- 都不重要
- 不清楚

Learning English or learning their mother tongue language; which one do you think is more important to children?

- English
- Mother tongue
- both are important
- neither of them are important
- I am not sure

5. 您認為學習英語對孩子母語的學習有：

- 促進作用
- 阻礙作用
- 沒有關係

How would learning English affect children's learning on their mother tongue language?

- It facilitates the learning of their mother tongue language
- It imposes an adverse effect on the learning of their mother tongue language
- No effect at all

6. 您認為幼兒在幼稚園階段學習英語是：

- 非常有必要
- 有必要
- 沒有必要
- 無所謂

Do you think it is necessary for children to learn English at kindergarten stage?

Very necessary Necessary Not necessary No comment

7. 您認為幼兒在幼稚園階段學習英語的好處是：（只選 1 項）

有助於上學以後的英語學習 可以增加孩子的自信心

可以拓展孩子的視野，初步瞭解不同的文化 為孩子以後的發展打好基礎

What is the advantage for children to learn English at their kindergarten stage? (select one item)

It facilitates their learning of English in the future It helps children to build confidence

It widens children's vision and helps them to learn more about different cultures

It lays a sound foundation for their future development Others: \_\_\_\_\_

8. 孩子的英語學習中，哪方面是您最希望看到的：（只選一項）

孩子可以簡單的聽和說英語 孩子喜歡聽和說英語 孩子喜歡閱讀英文讀物

孩子可以認識字母和一些單詞 孩子可以寫字母和一些單詞

孩子會主動地聽和說英語或者看英文讀物 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

What ability do you want children to develop? (select one item)

listen and speak simple English

able to recognize some letters and words

like to listen to and speak English

able to write some letters and words

like to read English

speak, read or listen to English actively

Others: \_\_\_\_\_

9. 對於幼兒的英語學習，您最重視下列方面：（最多選 3 項）

理解字詞的意思

發音

認字

背誦

寫字

朗讀技巧

聆聽

瞭解西方文化

對英語的興趣

What do you think is/are important to children in learning English? (select maximum 3 items)

understanding meaning of words recognizing words writing

listening interest in learning English pronunciation reciting

reading aloud understanding western culture

10. 在英語教學中，您贊同：

把英語教學和其他領域的活動結合起來 單純地進行英語教學

Which one is the better way in teaching English?

Teach English and other subjects at the same time       Teach English independently

11. 在幼稚園階段，您希望孩子的英語水平：（可以多選）

- 沒有要求      可以進行簡單的聽說  
能認識字母和一定數量的單詞      可以獨自閱讀簡單的英文讀物  
可以書寫一些簡單的辭彙      對英語充滿興趣

What standard do you want the children to achieve in learning English at kindergarten? (select one or more items)

- No requirement at all      Speak and listen simple English  
Recognize letters and some words      Read simple English materials on their own  
Write simple English words      Have interest in learning English

12. 您的學校有外籍教師或者英語國家兒童嗎？如果有，您認為這對於孩子的英語學習的影響為：

- 非常有助於孩子的英語學習      對孩子的英語學習有些幫助  
影響一般      沒有影響

Are there any native-English speaking children or native-English teachers in your kindergarten? If yes, how do you think they will affect children's learning in English?

- Very helpful for them to learn English      To some extent helpful for them to learn English  
No big effect      No effect at all

13. 您認為幼兒學習英語最好的途徑是：

- 由家長教      補習班      在學校學      家庭教師

What do you think is the best way for children to learn English?

- Taught by parents      Supplementary class      Learned from school

Taught by private tutor

14. 您認為對於孩子的英語學習有效的方法是：（可以多選）

閱讀英語讀物      觀看英文電視節目      到英語國家旅行      記憶單詞和句型

和說英語的人經常交往      幼稚園的英語教學

What is/are the effective way(s) for children to learn English? (select one or more items)

- Reading English materials      Watching English TV programmes      Traveling to English-speaking countries  
Reciting words and phrases      Talking to native-English speakers  
English lessons in kindergartens

15. 您認為影響孩子英語學習興趣的因素有：（至多選3項）

- 孩子的年齡      教師的教學水平      教材的趣味性



- 教師的國籍      家庭的環境      應用英語的機會

What is/are the reason(s) that affect(s) children's interest in learning English? (select maximum 3 items)

- Children's age      Level of teaching      Interesting learning materials  
Teachers' nationality      Family environment      Chances to use English

16. 您認為教授幼兒英語的教師應該是：（請按照選擇的先後順序，以 1-4 排列）

- 受過幼稚教育專業訓練的外籍教師       沒有受過幼稚教育專業訓練的外籍教師

- 本園的本地教師       聘請的具有英語文憑的本地老師

Who do you think should teach English in kindergartens? (rank the items in 1-4 according to your preference)

- Trained Native teachers       Non-trained Native teachers       Local teachers of the kindergartens

- Local teachers with English diplomas

17. 您認為聘請外籍老師教授英語的主要目的是：（最多可選 3 項）

- 讓幼兒接觸西方文化       讓幼兒學習正統的英語發音  
 增加英語會話的機會       學習西方先進的教學模式  
 讓兒童模仿外國口音       讓幼兒學習書寫  
 滿足家長要求       其他 \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think is/are the main purpose(s) to hire native English teacher(s)? (select maximum 3 items)

- Allow children experience western culture  
 Allow children to learn legitimate English pronunciation  
 Provide more opportunities for children to practice oral English  
 Adopt advanced western teaching approaches  
 Allow children to simulate native accents  
 Allow children to learn writing  
 Satisfy parents' demands  
 Others \_\_\_\_\_

18. 您認為本園老師教授英語的優勢是：

（至多選 3 項，並請按照選擇的先後順序，以 1-3 排列，1 為首選）

- 瞭解兒童需要與興趣       活動設計靈活多樣  
 易於培養兒童對英語的興趣       與幼兒熟悉  
 更容易與孩子溝通       可以用中文解釋孩子不懂的英文

What advantages do you think the teachers of your kindergarten have in teaching English? (select maximum 3 items and rank them in 1-3 according to your preference, where 1 represents your first choice)

- Understanding the needs and interests of children  
 Flexibility in designing activities  
 Easier to nurture children's interests in English  
 More familiar with children

- Easier to communicate with children  
 Using Chinese to explain what children cannot understand in English

19. 您認為本園老師教授英語在哪些方面需要改進和提高：

(請按照選擇的先後順序，以 1-3 排列)

- 英語發音       英語活動的設計和組織  
 英語教學方法    英語活動和其他的活動的整合  
 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

What aspects of English teaching do you think the teachers of your kindergarten should enhance? (rank the items in 1-3 according to your preference)

- English pronunciation  
 Design and organisation of English activities  
 English teaching approaches  
 The integration of English activities with other activities  
 Others \_\_\_\_\_

20. 您認為外國教師和本地教師教英語的差別：

- 相當大       比較大       很小       沒有差別

Do you think there is a difference between Native teachers and Chinese teachers in teaching English?

- A very significant difference       A big difference       a slight difference  
 No difference at all

21. 貴園英語教學的收費標準為：(按一學期計算)

- 30-100 元       100-240 元       240-400 元       400 元以上

What is the fee for English teaching at your school? (per school term)

- \$30-\$100       \$100-\$240       \$240-\$400       more than \$400

22. 幼稚園負責英語教學的老師人數：(若無聘請，請填上“0”)

- (a) 本園老師 (幼稚園老師) \_\_\_\_\_ 人  
 (b) 本地老師 (聘請的本地老師) \_\_\_\_\_ 人  
 (c) 外籍老師 (聘請的外籍老師) \_\_\_\_\_ 人

How many teachers are responsible for English teaching at your school? (fill in '0' if you have not hired any)

- (a) Teachers of your kindergarten (kindergarten teachers) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) Local teachers (employed Chinese teachers) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) Native teachers (employed native teachers) \_\_\_\_\_

23. 從事英語教學的本園老師是：

- 專門教學英語       既從事正常教學工作也教學英語       其他 \_\_\_\_\_

The teacher(s) who teach(es) English at your school:

- Teach English only  
 Teach English and be responsible for other normal teaching duties as well

Others \_\_\_\_\_

24. 在選擇本園教師教學英語注重的標準：（請圈上適當的答案）

非常重要 重要 一般 不重

要

英語水平較好	1	2	3	4
英語語音標準	1	2	3	4
有較強的活動組織能力	1	2	3	4
瞭解幼兒的興趣和需要	1	2	3	4
擁有教學熱誠	1	2	3	4

What are your criteria for selecting English teachers? (please circle the appropriate answer)

	Very important	important	acceptable	not important
Good English level	1	2	3	4
Correct pronunciation	1	2	3	4
Strong activity organisational skills	1	2	3	4
Understanding the needs and interests of young children	1	2	3	4
Enthusiasm in teaching	1	2	3	4

25. 如有聘用外籍及本地老師，以下兩欄均需填寫。

外籍老師	任教英語的本地老師
已受訓人數：_____ 人	已受訓人數：_____ 人
持有：	持有：
中專幼稚園教育文憑 _____ 人	中專幼稚園教育文憑 _____ 人
大專幼稚教育文憑 _____ 人	大專幼稚教育文憑 _____ 人
本科幼稚教育文憑 _____ 人	本科幼稚教育文憑 _____ 人
其他資格 _____ 人	其他資格 _____ 人
正在受訓人數 _____ 人	正在受訓人數 _____ 人
聘用外籍老師時會考慮哪些因素： （最多選3項）	聘用本地老師時會考慮哪些因素： （最多選3項）
<input type="checkbox"/> 英語科的成績	<input type="checkbox"/> 英語科的成績
<input type="checkbox"/> 有關英語教學的工作經驗	<input type="checkbox"/> 有關英語教學的工作經驗
<input type="checkbox"/> 表達及溝通能力	<input type="checkbox"/> 表達及溝通能力
<input type="checkbox"/> 瞭解幼兒發展和需要	<input type="checkbox"/> 瞭解幼兒發展和需要
<input type="checkbox"/> 曾接受英語教學的培訓	<input type="checkbox"/> 曾接受英語教學的培訓
<input type="checkbox"/> 擁有教學熱誠	<input type="checkbox"/> 擁有教學熱誠
<input type="checkbox"/> 發音正確	<input type="checkbox"/> 發音正確
<input type="checkbox"/> 對待兒童有愛心	<input type="checkbox"/> 對待兒童有愛心
<input type="checkbox"/> 薪金水平	<input type="checkbox"/> 薪金水平
<input type="checkbox"/> 其他 _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他 _____

他們負責教授的班別為：（可多選） <input type="checkbox"/> 小班 <input type="checkbox"/> 中班 <input type="checkbox"/> 大班	他們負責教授的班別為：（可多選） <input type="checkbox"/> 小班 <input type="checkbox"/> 中班 <input type="checkbox"/> 大班
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i. 如同一老師持有多項教學資格，則只需填寫最高的資歷。

Please fill in both columns if your school has both local and native teachers.

Native Teacher(s)	Local Teacher(s) who Teach(es) English
Number of trained teacher(s): ____ ※Holder(s) of: Kindergarten education diploma issued by secondary technical schools ____person(s) Undergraduate diploma in kindergarten education ____person(s) Postgraduate diploma in kindergarten education ____person(s) Other qualifications ____person(s)	Number of trained teacher(s): ____ ※Holder(s) of: Kindergarten education diploma issued by secondary technical schools ____person(s) Undergraduate diploma in kindergarten education ____person(s) Postgraduate diploma in kindergarten education ____person(s) Other qualifications ____person(s)
Teachers under training ____person(s)	Teachers under training ____person(s)
The factor(s) that you will consider when you hire a native teacher: (select maximum 3 items)	The factor(s) that you will consider when you hire a local teacher: (select maximum 3 items)
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic results in English <input type="checkbox"/> Experience in teaching English <input type="checkbox"/> Strong abilities in expression and communication <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding the developmental needs of young children <input type="checkbox"/> Training received in English teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiasm in teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Correct pronunciation <input type="checkbox"/> Being kind to children <input type="checkbox"/> Salary <input type="checkbox"/> Others	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic results in English <input type="checkbox"/> Experience in teaching English <input type="checkbox"/> Strong abilities in expression and communication <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding the developmental needs of young children <input type="checkbox"/> Training received in English teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiasm in teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Correct pronunciation <input type="checkbox"/> Being kind to children <input type="checkbox"/> Salary <input type="checkbox"/> Others _____
The level(s) they teach: (select all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> K1 <input type="checkbox"/> K2 <input type="checkbox"/> K3	The level(s) they teach: (select all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> K1 <input type="checkbox"/> K2 <input type="checkbox"/> K3

※If a teacher possesses more than one qualification, fill in the highest one only.

## Appendix 7 Consent form (English Version)

### Consent Form

#### Purpose of the Study

I hereby consent to participate as a subject in a research project entitled "Bilingual preschool education: a comparative study between Hong Kong and Shanghai" conducted by Maggie Koong in her capacity as EdD for the School of Education at Durham University.

#### Study Procedures

I understand that I will complete an interview having to do with the preschool education of children and the beliefs, attitudes, expectations, involvement and perceptions that are peculiar to me. My opinions in this regard are sought by random choice and on a voluntary basis solely for academic purposes. The questionnaire must be returned to the researcher within two weeks of receiving it.

#### Voluntary Participation

I understand that participants are under no obligation to be part of this study and that they may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without providing the investigator with a reason. The decision not to participate in the study or to withdraw from it will not affect the way in which I or my children are treated by the participating school at this time, or in the future.

#### Risk to the Participant

I also understand that this project is not expected to involve risks of harm any greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

#### Benefits of the Study

The results obtained through my participation will contribute to a better understanding of education in my country and will benefit parents, teachers and principals in their pursuit for closer participation in the process of children education and especially English language learning in preschoolers.

#### Confidentiality Clause

All results of the study will be kept confidential. The results of this project will be coded in such a way that my identity is permanently safeguarded and that my name will not be physically attached to any of the final data that I produce. I understand that the results of this research may be published or reported to government agencies for purely academic purposes, but that my name will not be associated in any way with any published or disclosed results and that I will not be identified in any presentations of this study.

#### Questions about the Study

I understand that if I should have any questions regarding the study I hereby agree to partake in or if I shall be interested in its findings I can contact Mrs. Maggie Koong at mkoong@victoria.edu.hk.

Consent

I have read this consent sheet in full. My questions and concerns have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

## 同意书

### 研究目的

我同意参加孔美琪在攻读 Durham 大学教育学院教育博士学位期间进行的题目为“学前双语教育：上海和香港两地的比较研究”的研究。

### 研究过程

我知道我在参与此项研究中，将要接受一次访谈，访谈内容是我对于幼儿的英语学习的态度、信念、期望、参与以及对幼儿英语学习的认识和理解。基于学术研究的目的，我自愿接受访谈，回答访问者提出的问题。

### 自愿参与

我知道，作为参与者，我没有义务参与这项研究，并可以在研究的任何时间中选择退出，且无需给出任何理由。不参与研究和随时退出研究都将不会影响现在以及未来该学校对待我和我的孩子的方式和态度。

### 参与的风险

我也知道，参与这项研究不会有任何大于那些在日常生活中所面临的风险。

### 研究的益处

通过我的参与所得到研究结果将会有助于更好的理解我国的教育，也将会使家长、教师和校长在参与幼儿的教育特别是学前阶段的英语语言的教育过程中受益良多。

### 保密条款

研究的所有结果都应该保密。这份研究的结果会以某种方式编码，我的身份将被永久保密，我的名字也不会出现在最后的资料中。我理解，基于学术研究的目的，研究的结果将可能出版或者报道给政府相关部门，但是我的名字将不会出现在任何出版或者呈交的结论中，并且在任何的对该项研究的介绍中，我也是匿名的。

### 研究的疑问

我知道，如果对于这项研究有任何的疑问，或者我想了解研究的结论，我可以通过 [mkoong@victoria.edu.hk](mailto:mkoong@victoria.edu.hk) 联系孔美琪。

### 同意

我已经阅读了这份同意书的内容。我的疑问和我所关心的问题已经得到了令我满意的回答，因此我同意参与这项研究。

参与者姓名

参与者签名



